"Everywhere Was a Mirror of Everywhere Else":

Creating and Overcoming Dividing Lines in Salman Rushdie's

Shalimar the Clown

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Pro gradu -tutkielmani käsittelee kulttuuristen, sosiaalisten ja poliittisten rajojen luomista ja ylittämistä Salman Rushdien romaanissa *Shalimar the Clown* (2005). Tutkin erityisesti sitä, miten rajojen vetäminen ja ylittäminen vaikuttavat tilojen ja identiteettien rakentumiseen. Tilaa käsittelevässä osiossa keskityn kirjan päätapahtumapaikkoihin eli Intian ja Pakistanin välisen konfliktin repimään Kashmiriin, toisen maailmansodan aikaiseen Strasbourgiin ja Elsass-Lothringeniin sekä 1990-luvun alun Los Angelesiin. Identiteettiä puolestaan käsittelen kirjan neljän päähenkilön, Shalimarin, Boonyin, Maxin ja Indian/Kashmiran kautta.

Tulkitsen *Shalimar the Clownin* olevan Rushdien reaktio vuoden 2001 syyskuun 11. päivän terrori-iskuihin ja niiden jälkeiseen poliittiseen ilmapiiriin, jota on hallinnut ajatus läntisen ja islamilaisen maailman välisestä konfliktista. Tämän vuoksi käytän tutkielmani teoreettisena tukipylväänä Samuel P. Huntingtonin teoriaa sivilisaatioiden yhteentörmäyksestä. Sen keskeisenä teesinä on, että kylmän sodan jälkeisessä maailmassa kansainväliset konfliktit ovat yhä useammin sivilisaatioiden välisiä. Tärkeimmiksi sivilisaatioiksi nousevat juuri läntinen ja islamilainen, joista lännen malliesimerkkinä nähdään Yhdysvallat. Toisin kuin useimmissa muissa teoksissaan, Rushdie ei *Shalimar the Clownissa* niinkään pohdi brittiläistä imperiumia ja sen vaikutuksia, vaan keskittyy juuri Yhdysvaltojen rooliin maailmanpolitiikassa.

Toisaalta näen *Shalimar the Clownin* reaktiona dekolonisaation ja nationalismin väkivaltaisiin ilmenemismuotoihin kahden toisilleen vihamielisen valtion välissä sijaitsevissa Kashmirissa ja Elsass-Lothringenissa. Kulttuurien sulatusuunina pidetyn Los Angelesin kautta katson romaanin puolestaan käsittelevän sitä, miten monikulttuurisuus on integraation sijaan usein johtanut tilanteeseen, jossa eristäytyneiden ja vihamielisten etnisten ryhmien välisiä muureja ei edes yritetä ylittää. Tuodessaan esiin yhteyksiä, joita näillä sekä ajassa että tilassa kaukaisilla paikoilla on, teos pohtii sitä, miten globalisoituvassa maailmassa kaikki liittyy yhteen. Teoreettisena apunani käytän Benedict Andersonin ja Eric Hobsbawmin ajatuksia nationalismista, Stuart Hallin ja Amartya Senin pohdintoja identiteetistä sekä Homi K. Bhabhan ajatuksia kummastakin aiheesta.

Rajojen luominen ja niiden ylittäminen vaikuttavat myös kirjan päähenkilöiden elämään. Osoitan, kuinka kashmirilaiset Boonyi ja Shalimar yrittävät molemmat omalla tavallaan palata jonkinlaiseen menneen ajan paratiisiin, jossa rajojen rikkominen ei vielä ollut tuonut erilaisuutta heidän identiteettiinsä. Maxia ja Indiaa/Kashmiraa puolestaan käsittelen monikulttuurisina ja hybridisinä henkilöinä, joiden identiteetit rakentuvat juuri rajojen ylittämisten varaan. Käsittelemällä rajoja tilan ja identiteetin kautta osoitan, kuinka sekä rajojen luominen että niiden ylittäminen aiheuttavat ongelmia ja kuinka joidenkin rajojen kadotessa toisia syntyy. Näen *Shalimar the Clownin* teoksena, joka kiinnittää lukijan huomion rajojen merkitykseen nykymaailmassa samalla, kun pyrkii kyseenalaistamaan ja häivyttämään tuota merkitystä ja tekemään rajoista ylitettäviä.

Avainsanat: tila, identiteetti, sivilisaatioiden yhteentörmäys, nationalismi, globalisaatio

Contents

1   Introduction

> At twenty-four the ambassador's daughter slept badly through the warm, unsurprising nights. She woke up frequently and even when sleep did come her body was rarely at rest, thrashing and flailing as if trying to break free of dreadful invisible manacles. At times she cried out in a language she did not speak. (Rushdie 2006a, 3)

It is with words telling of restless sleep that Salman Rushdie begins his 2005 novel *Shalimar the Clown*. The dreams of the ambassador's daughter turn out to be premonitions of a future nightmare. The words she is moaning are not words of a language unknown to her but the sound her father will make after his assassin has cut his throat and his life's blood is fleeing him. This event – the assassination of Maximilian Ophuls, former US ambassador to India – is the beginning of a tale of love and hate, secrets and betrayal, globalisation and terrorism that to a large extent revolves around Kashmir, situated in the north-western region of the Indian subcontinent between India, Pakistan, and China.

This is not, however, the first time Rushdie writes of Kashmir. His second novel and the breakthrough of his literary career, *Midnight's Children* (1981), opens in that very place with the narrator Saleem Sinai's grandfather Aadam Aziz, who while praying one fine morning hits his nose on a tussock of earth. It is the year 1915, and Kashmir is described in the following manner:

> In those days there was no army camp at the lakeside, no endless snakes of camouflaged trucks and jeeps clogged the narrow mountain roads, no soldiers hid behind the crest of the mountains past Baramulla and Gulmarg. In those days travellers were not shot as spies if they took photographs of bridges, and apart from the Englishmen's houseboats on the lake, the valley had hardly changed since the Mughal Empire, for all its springtime renewals … (2006b, 5)

The Kashmir of *Midnight's Children* is still enjoying its golden days of peace and tolerance, but looming beyond the horizon is a violent future with army camps and soldiers. *Midnight's Children*, however, is not a tale of Kashmir but a tale of India and of Pakistan in a larger context, and it quickly moves to other places, to Amritsar and Bombay and later to Pakistan and Bangladesh, spanning most of the Indian peninsula.

What *Midnight's Children* does not tell is why Kashmir turned into a territory riddled with army camps, camouflaged trucks, and soldiers lurking in the mountains. The transformation was brought on by the Kashmir conflict, a conflicts which dates back to 1947, the year of Indian and Pakistani independence. Due to the partitioning of the subcontinent into two separate countries, the princely states in the British colony, including Kashmir, were allowed to choose which they wished to join. Geographically, Kashmir could have chosen either since it had land borders with both India and Pakistan. Population-wise, it was predominantly Muslim, but had a Hindu ruler. This ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, decided to play a waiting game in the hopes of creating an independent kingdom (Lal 147-148). This game was brought to an abrupt halt when Pakistani troops began invading Kashmir. The Maharaja had to appeal to India for military help, and was forced to accede the state to India on 26 October, 1947 (Lal 148-149). This and the consequent arrival of the Indian army in Kashmir led to the first Indo-Pakistani war. The cease-fire line, later named the Line of Control, was established on January 1st, 1949, and has ever since been the de factor border between India and Pakistan in the region (Lal 148). The two countries have subsequently fought three more wars, in 1965, 1971, and 1999, all of them involving Kashmir in one way or another.

The conflict remained unsolved for decades, but at the end of the 1980s, it started to escalate, leading to communal violence, protests, and general unrest (Margolis 74-75), and finally to a full-scale insurgency (Nadir). The reasons behind the insurgency were various. Globally, contemporary freedom movements in, for instance, Romania, the Philippines, Burma, and Nepal, as well as the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, encouraged the people in Kashmir to try their own luck (Verghese 17). Regionally, Kashmir had become a sensitive border state for India because of the wars it had fought with Pakistan. For fear of further conflict, India looked askance at and tried to curtail any political opposition

in the state. Consequently, "[d]emocracy and state institutions were never allowed to work and corrupt electoral processes plagued the state-building process" (Nadir). Throughout the entire conflict, India had been transporting more troops into Kashmir to keep the state under its control (Kumar 183), creating the situation described in the above quote from *Midnight's Children*.

It took nearly a quarter of a century for Rushdie to return to Kashmir in full force, which he finally does in *Shalimar the Clown*.[1] The novel portrays Kashmir's fall from a paradise of tolerance into a society defined by dividing lines. It is fair to argue that Rushdie chose this particular subject for this particular book at least partly because the issue of terrorism has made Kashmir more visible internationally. After the terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center on 11 September, 2001 (referred to as 9/11 below), and the commencement of the US-led war on terror, South Asia, including Kashmir, has received more attention from the West than at any other time after the fall of the Soviet Union (Nadir). In other words, *Shalimar the Clown*, his first novel since 9/11 seems to be Rushdie's response to the terrorist attacks, the war on terror, and the on-going Indo-Pakistani conflict in Kashmir. The issue is relevant; after all, as Nadir points out, "the South Asian region has [or at least had before the war on terrorism] the highest annual number of fatalities as a result of acts of terrorist violence in the world" (Nadir). The popularity of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism in the area has grown, partly due to India interfering in Kashmiri politics and preventing the "dissident population" from expressing their opposition and criticism in a democratic manner (Kumar 181). Pakistan's involvement is significant as well, since the

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[1] He did touch upon the issue in an allegorical way in the fairytale-like story *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990). In the novel, a young boy called Haroun travels with his father, a renowned storyteller, to the Valley of K, formerly known, among other names, as "Kosh-Mar", meaning "nightmare". Also, the short story "The Prophet's Hair", published in *East, West* (1994) is set in Kashmir and describes, most prominently, the destructive forces of fundamentalist religious beliefs.

country is known to act as a training base for Muslim fundamentalists and terrorist organisations. The war on terror made Pakistan an important ally for the United States, which in turn led Americans to take increasing interest in the ongoing conflicts in the area, Kashmir included (Cohen). Thus, instead of focusing on the effects of British colonialism on the Indian subcontinent, a prominent theme in most of his other novels, in *Shalimar the Clown* Rushdie turns his mind to the status of the United States as a world hegemon. I will follow his example, leaving the discussion of manifestations of the British Empire to a minimum. However, the novel does not concentrate on Kashmir alone. It also explores, among other matters, the themes of multiculturalism and global terrorism in Asia and in the West, and even makes a detour into World War II Strasbourg and the France of the French Resistance.

The novel revolves to a great deal around its four major characters, each of whom presents a different viewpoint into the novel's central issues. The title character, Shalimar the clown, is a Kashmiri Muslim who lives in a Kashmiri village and belongs to a traditional Kashmiri troupe of entertainers. He is a superbly talented tightrope dancer, able to perform tricks that seem almost impossible. Shalimar falls in love with Boonyi, a Kashmiri Hindu, a fellow villager, and a dancer in the same troupe of performers. In tolerantly multicultural Kashmir, their religious difference does not stand in the way of marriage, and so they become husband and wife. Boonyi, however, has a restless spirit, and she is not satisfied with her lot.

At this point in the story in walks Maximilian Ophuls, originally a French Jew from Strasbourg, a hero of the French Resistance, and now the American ambassador to India. In this capacity, Max pays an official visit to Kashmir, where he is entertained by the villagers of Pachigam. Among the dancers is Boonyi, who sees in Max an opportunity to escape her dull life. She seduces him, moves to Delhi, and becomes his mistress. When Shalimar learns of Boonyi's infidelity, something snaps. He swears he will kill his wife, her lover, and any offspring their affair might produce. He is so consumed by hatred and rage that he enrols in a

terrorist movement, training himself to be an assassin.

Meanwhile, Boonyi and Max's affair is passing its prime. Boonyi becomes addicted to several drugs and eats herself into a formless mound of fat. When Max decides it is time to rid himself of the former object of his desire, Boonyi reveals her last asset: she is pregnant with his child. Knowledge of the affair is leaked out and Max has to abandon his position as ambassador. His enraged wife snatches Boonyi's child and sends the mother, now a fallen woman, back to Kashmir, where she eventually meets her death in the hands of her husband Shalimar, a fate that awaits Max as well. The daughter snatched away from Boonyi, however, proves to be the connecting point of the novel, perhaps even its most central character. She is a true creation of hybridity and the crossing of boundaries: she is of Kashmiri Hindu and French Jewish blood, born in India but brought up in Britain, finally ending up in Los Angeles. She is named India by her step-mother, Max's wife, but her real mother Boonyi called her Kashmira (I will henceforth, for the sake of clarity, refer to her as India/Kashmira).

Shalimar the Clown is by no means Rushdie's best novel. Its critical reception was varied, with some praising the writer's remarkable wit and use of language and others making comparisons to earlier and critically more successful works, mostly *Midnight's Children*. For instance, Lee Siegel, in his review of the novel, is of the following opinion:

> In *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie wrote stories that flowed into each other; they tempted the reader's imagination with the chimera of a universal human destiny resonating out of particular fates. Everywhere in the novel seemed a part of everywhere else. Now Rushdie seems to perceive reality itself as having been constructed along the lines of *Midnight's Children*. As a result, he no longer seems to be making art. He seems to be writing novels that insistently annotate and reiterate what he believes to be a priori truths about life. It is as if his artistic vanity were too great to accept the fact that the upheaval of his life had no rhyme, reason or large significance, and so he defensively has to make reality look like a function of his creative will. (28)

In other words, what *Shalimar the Clown* lacks is the kind of subtlety present in *Midnight's Children*. Siegel seems to think that the novel draws too many parallels, forges too many connections, sees too many similarities between disparate places and people. In saying that

everywhere is a part of everywhere else, Rushdie generalises too much and too explicitly; he tries to force the world into interconnected patterns. On the other hand, it is precisely this connection-forging and parallel-drawing that makes the novel so intriguing. It makes one wonder whether it could indeed be viable to regard the world as a tightly interconnected place where everywhere truly is a mirror of everywhere else. It also makes one question any worldviews that emphasise differences at the expense of similarities, that divide the world sharply into "us" and "them", and, finally, that have achieved prominence in world politics since 9/11.

Politics, according to Rushdie, is about what is the truth and what is not the truth. Thus, "[i]f writers leave the business of making pictures of the world to politicians, it will be one of history's great and most abject abdications", since it is one of the fundamental functions of literature to question what is held to be the truth (Rushdie 2010, 100). Since 9/11, one of these truths has come to be the assumption that there is a clash of civilisations in operation in the world, of which 9/11 itself is seen as a most shocking demonstration. *Shalimar the Clown* seems to be Rushdie's response to this particular political truth. It depicts the world as, above all else, interconnected. This connection-drawing is also noted by critics discussing the novel, but it is not tackled in depth. Critical writing on Rushdie has mostly, if not solely, concentrated in one way or another on issues termed postcolonial. The same path has been followed with *Shalimar the Clown*, which has, for the most part, been viewed as a book about the effects of the end of colonialism as well as a book about migration and globalisation. Space and territory are issues often discussed in relation to the novel (see Detmers, Ganaparthy-Doré, Tygstrup), as well as violence in general and terrorism in particular (see Bastos Martins, Mendes, Morton, Pesso-Miquel, Siddiqi, Stadtler). However, it seems that none of the critics have moved beyond the surface to examine how *Shalimar the Clown* connects space and identity, although the theme is openly presented and discussed in the

novel.

Thus, it is the primary purpose of this thesis to examine the intertwining of space and identity in *Shalimar the Clown*. More specifically, the examination will concentrate on the cultural or civilisational dividing lines that define their construction: how these lines are drawn, how they shift, and how they are overcome. Since I see the novel as Rushdie's response to international politics after 9/11, I have also deemed it appropriate to employ as part of my theoretical framework the clash of civilisations thesis by Samuel P. Huntington. This thesis, as will be explained in depth in section 2 below, divides the world into large cultural entities, in many cases defined by religion, and sets these entities in opposition to each other. Its most central tenet is that international conflicts after end of the Cold War will primarily happen between these civilisations, the most important of which are the Muslim and the Western ones. Because the thesis was published almost a decade prior to 9/11, it seemed at the time of the attacks that Huntington had made an accurate prediction about the future of international conflicts. However, as will be further explored in section 2, Huntington's thesis is not as original as its popularity would warrant. For one thing, civilisations are not so very different from nations, which according to Benedict Anderson, Eric Hobsbawm, and Homi K. Bhabha, are imagined communities, culturally, socially, and politically produced constructions. What also connects nations and civilisations is their presupposition that difference should only exist outside them, while within, similarity rules. The same has been argued of identity, which is often seen as synonymous with similarity and opposite to difference. However, as Stuart Hall and others after him have argued, identity is never singular and pure, a point also argued by such thinkers as Amartya Sen, Cynthia Weber, and Edward Said in relation to Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations. Furthermore, the theory section will contextualise the issues discussed by connecting them to relevant historical developments in the twentieth and the twenty-first century, same historical developments that

loom in the background in *Shalimar the Clown*. Lastly, the issues that this thesis is concerned with are also widely explored within postcolonial studies. Thus, postcolonialism will provide a loose framework for the following discussions, in which it will not be tackled head on but rather in circuitous ways.

The analysis of this thesis will be divided into two sections. In the first one I will concentrate on boundaries and borders as they exist within space, particularly spaces that are culturally, socially, and politically produced. My argument is that borders, being part of space itself, are also produced and constructed in cultural, political, and social situations. Thus, the first subsection shows the transformation of Kashmir from a tolerant society seemingly with no dividing lines into a fragmented society where divisions are primary. In the second subsection, Kashmir's transformation is complicated by presenting the conflict that caused it as a nationalist dispute between India and Pakistan. Furthermore, a parallel is drawn between Kashmir and World War II Strasbourg in Alsace, situated between Germany and France: they are both located on disputed borderlands, and both have been made violent by nationalist causes. Los Angeles, the third main locations of the novel, is shown to be a multicultural metropolis without a centre, a prime example of the outcome of global migration, cut through by communal divisions that occasionally cause violent conflicts. Finally, there is also a discussion of terrorism as a sign of globalisation, a border-crossing phenomenon, occupying an in-between space on the margins of nation-states and civilisations.

In the second analysis section, in contrast, I will concentrate on how *Shalimar the Clown* discusses configurations of identity in a globalising world. I will focus on the novel's four major characters, introduced above, and how they construct their identities in adherence and in opposition to social, cultural, and political boundaries and borders. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to talk about the identities of the characters without talking about space at the same time. This is due to the numerous and pervasive allegorical roles provided

for them. Thus, in the first subsection, both Boonyi and Shalimar are equated, in their own ways, with Kashmir. Their tales follow the same downhill slide as their birthplace, a road leading from tolerance and peaceful coexistence to intolerance and communal violence. They both end up leading marginal existences, Boonyi as an outcast in the village of her birth and Shalimar as a member of a terrorism movement. I will also argue that they both try to return to a point in the past, try to regain their lives as they were before things went wrong, thus failing to move forward. The second subsection, on the other hand, presents Max and India/Kashmira, neither of whom has much difficulty moving forward. Unlike Boonyi and Shalimar, whose identities are to a great extent defined by traditional cultural boundaries, Max and his daughter are hybrid beings, their identities characterised by multiple different and often contradictory traits. Because they have inhabited numerous different places and crossed numerous borders and boundaries separating those places, they have become almost rootless. Only almost rootless, because, as I will show, they too can be read as allegories of space: Max as representing the neoimperialist superpower might of the United States and India/Kashmira, up to a point, the two locations contained in her names. As I will demonstrate in the course of this thesis, although *Shalimar the Clown* poses many questions pertaining to the issues summarised here, it provides few, if any, straightforward answers. It attempts to show the world as it is: a complicatingly interconnected place that is, at the same time, contradictory, divided, and fragmented.

2   "Enemies are essential": The Clash of Civilisations and Identity

September 11, 2001, could have been just another Tuesday, if not for four passenger airplanes, hijacked by Muslim terrorists, flown into the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York and into the Pentagon in Washington DC, one crashing on a field in Pennsylvania. Instead, at least in the English-speaking world, it came to be known simply as 9/11. Scholars and practitioners of international politics in the United States had not been expecting such an event. They had believed that liberalism was on its victory march to conquer the globe, yet "liberals failed to predict how destabilizing illiberal individuals willing to martyr themselves for what they believed was a higher cause, a greater good, and a purer ideal than anything liberalism had to offer could be when they were unleashed in a direct attack against the mainland of the world's only remaining superpower" (Weber 152). There was, however, one scholar who seemed to have an explanation for what had happened. The American political scientist Samuel P. Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilisations became a household name among many policy-makers and scholars (Weber 152-153).

Although made famous by Huntington, the concept of "a clash of civilisations" originates in an article by Bernard Lewis called "The Roots of Muslim Rage" (1990), which discusses the rise of Islamic fundamentalism during the 20th century. In the article, Lewis states that "[i]t should by now [that is, by 1990] be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both" (411). Following in Lewis's footsteps, Huntington introduced his thesis of civilisational clashes in an article "The Clash of Civilizations?", published in the American political journal *Foreign Affairs* in 1993, and further elaborated on it in his 1996 book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. The basic tenet of

Huntington's thesis is that in the post-Cold War world, "the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural entities" (2002, 28). Since local politics is to a large extent about culture and ethnicity, global politics is, by extension, about civilisations. The ideological superpower rivalry of the Cold War has thus been replaced by the clash of civilisations (*ibid.*). As Huntington sums up his predictions for global politics,

> Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future. (1993, 22)

This does not mean that clashes within civilisations do not occur. They do, but it is the inter-civilisational ones that have the potential to escalate into larger, even global, conflicts as groups or states belonging to the same civilisation come to the aid of their kin. For example the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir, summarised in the introduction and depicted in *Shalimar the Clown*, according to Huntington involves a substantial chance of growing into a larger and more violent conflict between the Islamic and the Hindu civilisations (2002, 28). He maintains that at the local level, there will be conflicts over the control of territory and people between adjacent groups on different sides of a civilisational fault line. At the level of global politics, "states from different civilizations compete for relative military and economic power, struggle over the control of international institutions and third parties, and competitively promote their particular political and religious values" (Huntington 1993, 29). Most of the local conflicts will be, according to Huntington, between Islam and its neighbouring Hindu, Orthodox, and Western civilisations, whereas the global ones will be between "the West and the rest" (2002, 183). Huntington does acknowledge, however, that "[d]ifferences do not necessarily mean conflict, and conflict does not necessarily mean violence" (1993, 25). Conflicts can thus be non-violent as well as violent. They can mean, for

instance, opposing opinions or seemingly irreconcilable cultural customs as well as bloody battles and war. The reason for concentrating on conflicts involving violence is Huntington's claim that "[o]ver the centuries … differences among civilizations have generated the most prolonged and the most violent conflicts" (*ibid.*), of which the Indo-Pakistani dispute over Kashmir is a prime example.

Huntington's definition of the major civilisations of the world begins with the distinction between civilisation in the singular and civilisations in the plural. Civilisation in the singular is quite simply the opposite of barbarism. This idea is closely linked to an us-versus-them mentality, where "we" represent civilisation and "they" barbarism (Huntington 2002, 40). On the other hand, one must take into consideration the fact that there is no one universal definition for civilisation; instead, there are "many civilizations, each of which [is] civilized in its own way" (Huntington 2002, 41). In other words, "they" have as much of a civilisation as "we" do. According to Huntington, civilisation cannot be separated from culture, and what supposedly causes conflicts between different civilisations is the in-built assumption of the superiority of one's own culture and way of life (*ibid.*), implying that what causes problems is seeing one's own civilisation as the only proper one, the opposite of the barbarism of others.[2] Culture, on the other hand, is in Huntington's view roughly synonymous with religion because "[t]he crucial distinctions among human groups concern their values, beliefs, institutions, and social structures", which derive to a large extent from religion. As a consequence, "the major civilizations in human history have been closely identified with the world's great religions" (Huntington 2002, 42). Thus, the seven major contemporary civilisations that Huntington identifies with certainty are Sinic (Chinese), Japanese, Hindu,

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[2] At the same time, Huntington also collapses the distinction of civilisation in the singular and civilisations in the plural into one. In other words, both definitions are at work simultaneously, as can be deduced from his emphasis that there are many civilisations, all civilised in their own way, and that conflicts occur when they interpret the others' different ways of being civilised as barbarism.

Islamic, Orthodox, Western, and Latin American. There is also possibly a Confucian and an African civilisation, and Huntington ponders on the possibility of a Jewish one as well. I will return to this in the analysis section.

Of special interest from the point of view of this thesis are the Islamic, the Hindu, and the Western civilisations. According to Huntington, the defining features of the Western civilisation are the "ideas of individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free markets, [and] the separation of church and state", all of which "differ fundamentally" from the concepts and ideas defining other civilisations (1993, 40). What also looms behind the differences between "the West and the rest" are certain defining developments in European history, among them the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution (Huntington 1993, 30). On the other hand, as its name already suggests, the Islamic civilisation is defined exclusively through religion. Nevertheless, Huntington maintains that there are "many distinct cultures and subcivilizations" within Islam, "including Arab, Turkic, Persian, and Malay" (2002, 45). There is not much more information provided on the characteristics of the Islamic civilisation, although its clash with the West and with other civilisations is discussed in great detail. It seems to be enough for Huntington to say that "[a]ll major scholars recognize the existence of a distinct Islamic civilization" (*ibid.*). The Hindu civilisation is defined in solely religious terms as well, with emphasis on its long history and its central role in the culture of the Indian subcontinent. Huntington does acknowledge that India has a substantial Muslim population and several other, smaller ethnic minorities, but it is the centrality of the Hindu religion that in his opinion defines that particular civilisation (*ibid.*).

Huntington maintains that civilisations are comprehensive, meaning that any one part cannot be understood without reference to the civilisation to which it belongs (2002, 42). In other words, it is impossible to understand for instance Pakistani culture without reference to

the Islamic civilisation of which it is a part. Considering the issue from the opposite direction, Huntington argues that civilisations are the largest cultural entities with which people identify short of the human race. They "are the biggest 'we' within which we feel culturally at home as distinguished from all the other 'thems' out there" (Huntington 2002, 43). However, as will be shown in the analysis section, following this definition proves difficult when discussing hybrid communities such as the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* that simply cannot be equated with any one civilisation. Furthermore, according to Huntington, civilisations change over time, they evolve and adapt; new ones may emerge and old ones decay and die, or they may merge into each other (2002, 43-44). In other words, Huntington argues that civilisations are not monolithic entities. This proves to be a tricky point for him, since although the changing nature of civilisations is openly acknowledged, the theory as a whole seems to be based on the assumption that certain divisions are essential and basically unchanging. I will return to this below.

In short, Huntington sees some of the civilisations, most specifically the Islamic one, as religious groupings. According to Hobsbawm, "[r]eligion is an ancient and well-tried method of establishing communion through common practice and a sort of brotherhood between people who otherwise have nothing much in common" (68), thus bearing a striking resemblance to nationalism (although Hobsbawm also stresses that it is unclear whether religious identity has any correlation with national identity). After all, according to Anderson, nations are imagined communities simply because the people inhabiting them will never know the majority of their co-nationalists; instead, they have to create a mental image of a community where there is none readily visible in the "real" world (6). To transform seemingly unconnected people into a seemingly unified grouping, one must come up with

some basis for such unification. With nations, it can be anything from, among other things, language, ethnic background, religion, geographical location, or common history.[3] Thus, nations are the product of "artefact, invention and social engineering" (Hobsbawm 10). They do not exist without the people who believe in their existence, thus making them creations of the mind rather than the world outside it. All these characteristics work well with Huntington's civilisations as well: they are huge entities bringing together people from a multiplicity of different cultural and historical backgrounds, speaking a multiplicity of languages, and scattered across vast geographical areas. Their unity and commonality can only exist in imagination and discourse. As Bhabha summarises the issue, "[n]ations [as well as civilisations], like narratives, lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye" (1990a, 1). In other words, nations, and by extension civilisations, are created and sustained by constantly narrating their existence, relating and reinventing their past to create their present (Bhabha 1990b, 293). This is also the case with the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown*, as will be seen in the analysis section.

The unity of imaginary communities such as nations or civilisations is, thus, not so much a matter of geographical territory as it is about their cultural and political construction as unified entities. These are the two parallel sides incorporated in the term 'space': actual, tangible, geographical land and socially, culturally, and politically produced space (Nayar 134). Most nations incorporate both of these sides, but it is arguably the latter definition of space that holds most weight. The same could be argued about civilisations: in Huntington's formulation, they are not geographical as much as cultural entities, holding their unity in people's minds more than anywhere else. Thus, the primacy of socially, culturally, and politically produced space is also emphasised by the fact that the nation is first and foremost a

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[3] For a more thorough discussion, see for instance Anderson, Hobsbawm, and Renan.

construction of imagination, the end result of feelings of belonging and attachment to a place or space (Nayar 146). In other words, as Hobsbawm says, "[n]ationalism comes before nations" (10); or, as Brennan formulates the issue, nationalism invents nations (49).

The existence of nationalism prior to the nation has not, however, been the case in many instances during the twentieth century, which has been characterised by the decolonisation of the non-Western world (Best et al. 81). The two world wars left Western colonial empires in a vulnerable position, giving their colonies opportunities to pressure them for independence. The nationalist movements that had developed in many colonies forced the colonisers to reconsider the respective advantages and disadvantages of trying to maintain their hold on these areas (Best et al. 104). On the other hand, in the process of decolonisation,

> independent states were created out of existing areas of colonial administration, within their colonial frontiers. These had, obviously, been drawn without any reference to, or sometimes even without the knowledge of, their inhabitants and therefore had no national or even protonational significance for their populations. (Hobsbawm 171)

Because of this, leaders in these newly-independent nations have found it difficult to make people relinquish their communal and tribal ties in favour of national ones (*ibid.*), as will be seen in the analysis section in relation to Kashmir. Pakistanis, for instance, began to see themselves as Pakistanis only gradually after the establishment of Pakistan (Hobsbawm 71). According to Hobsbawm, there is no evidence that "Pakistan was the product of a national movement among the Muslims" of the then British colony. Rather, it was "a reaction against an all-Indian national movement which failed to give adequate recognition to the special feelings or requirements of Muslims" (Hobsbawm 70). The partition of the subcontinent was not the goal of the Muslim League until late in the process, and "the bulk of ordinary Muslims thought in communal and not in national terms, and would not have understood the concept of national self-determination as something which could apply to belief in Allah and His Prophet" (*ibid.*). The partition of the subcontinent is thus a consequence of the inability of the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League to find a common ground for the

establishment of a single successor state for British India. The incompatibilities of the two sides were political as well as religious, but not national, since there was no pervasive nationalist sentiment present among the population (Best et al. 249). As a consequence, two new states came into being in August, 1947, followed by the deaths of hundreds of thousands who found themselves on the wrong side of the border (or the "religious divide", as Best et al. refer to it). As mentioned in the introduction and further discussed in the analysis section, the lingering dispute in Kashmir is also a legacy of this politico-religious division (*ibid.*) that later developed into a nationalist one as well.

Decolonisation and the formation of nation states were thus two of the main characteristics of the 20th century. However, to complicate an already fragile situation, soon after being freed from colonial rule, "the Third World was pitched into the era of globalization, in which the sovereignty and independence for which they had fought in the middle years of the century stood in danger of being eroded by the forces of international finance" (Best et al. 331). Thus, while they expected independence, what they received was interdependence instead. It is the "linkages and interconnections that transcend the nation states" that have caused the rise of resistance movements (McGrew 65), among them the Islamic ones that, as mentioned above, prompted Bernard Lewis to write about a clash of civilisations. In other words, globalisation ushered in new configurations of space that were no longer stable. When relatively established territorial boundaries are rendered increasingly insignificant by global trade, massive migration, and the proliferation of global communication networks, the identities attached to those boundaries are questioned as well, leading to reactions such as the rise of some Muslims against what could be perceived as Western hegemony (McGrew 66). Furthermore, as McGrew points out, globalisation also "stimulates the search for new identities, so challenging the traditional 'integrating' ideologies which have defined the boundaries of the 'national' political community" (92). Indeed,

according to McGrew, this has resulted in the crisis of the territorial nation state. After all, crossing the borders and other boundaries of a nation that is, to a large extent, defined by those borders and boundaries, makes distinctions between inside and outside blur, questioning the whole ideology of a community based on sharply drawn boundaries (McGrew 87). As Hall expresses it, these crossings are "making the world in reality and in experience more interconnected" (1992, 299). I will return to the issue below in relation to identity.

Interestingly, globalisation is characterised by seemingly opposite developments taking place at the same time. From one point of view, the world is homogenising, becoming more alike, as borders and boundaries of all kinds, territorial as well as cultural and psychological, are losing their meaning and tangibility in a world where they seem to be there for crossing rather than dividing. To follow Rushdie's postulation in *Shalimar the Clown*, everywhere has become a part of everywhere else. On the other hand, one can, at the same time, also see developments pointing to the opposite direction: the world is fragmenting and drifting apart. This has led to the breaking-down of old, seemingly stable identities which have, instead, become fragmented and decentralised. In other words, globalisation has both highlighted the differences between various cultures, people, nations, and so forth, while at the same time it has blurred those differences like it has blurred all sorts of boundaries and borders (McGrew 74-75). As has already been alluded to, many of these self-same developments have also affected the creation and recreation of identities in a globalising world. In relation to nations, this has manifested itself by both the erosion and the strengthening of national and local identities as well as the emergence of new, hybrid identities (Hall 1992, 300). These issues will be explained more thoroughly below and discussed in the analysis sections in relation to *Shalimar the Clown*. First, however, we will return to Huntington and explore the connection between identity and civilisation.

As noted above, the clash of civilisations thesis revolves around the concept of

"civilization identity", which could be defined as the widest possible identity a person can have short of being a human. Huntington argues that the differences between and the commonalities within civilisations are intensified by increasing interaction between people from different civilisations (1993, 25). Economic modernisation and the social changes that follow it are separating people from their traditional, local and national, identities. What has, to a large extent, "moved in to fill this gap" is religion, often in the form of fundamentalism (Huntington 1993, 26). As Huntington summarises, religion connects people across national borders, uniting them into civilisations (*ibid.*). This rise of religious and cultural identities during the past decades can easily lead to conflicts because "cultural characteristics and differences are less mutable and hence less easily compromised and resolved than political and economic ones" (Huntington 1993, 27). Huntington further elaborates on the problem in the following:

> In class and ideological conflicts, the question was "Which side are you on?" and people could and did choose sides and change sides. In conflicts between civilizations, the question is "What are you?" That is a given that cannot be changed. (*Ibid.*)

It would thus seem that for Huntington, in spite of all the talk of civilisations not being monolithic and difference not necessarily leading to conflicts, cultural or civilisational identity is not something that can be overcome. It is and remains a dividing factor among human beings.

Huntington does not, however, claim that people only have one identity. He acknowledges the existence of multiple identities competing and reinforcing each other, but also maintains that these identities can be arranged on a scale according to how narrow or broad they are (Huntington 1993, 24, 2002, 128). The broadest and hence the most important identity is the cultural (civilisational) one. He furthermore states that "[w]e know who we are only when we know who we are not and often when we know whom we are against" (2002, 21). Identity is defined in relation to an Other, which in the world of civilisations refers to

someone from a different cultural background. This resembles the way in which, according to Volpp, the national identity of the United States is constructed: it is in opposition to people categorised as foreigners or outsiders in the United States. After 9/11, as a response to the threat of Islamist terrorism, these outsiders have increasingly been people who appear to be Middle Eastern in origin (Volpp 78-80). This seems to support Huntington's conclusion that "cultural identification is dramatically increasing in importance compared to other dimensions of identity" (2002, 128). He maintains that when conflicts occur between people from different civilisations, the identities most relevant to them will be the ones to step in, obscuring all other affiliations. In civilisational fault line conflicts, the relevant identities will be, by definition, civilisational (Huntington 2002, 266-267). As will be discussed in section 3.1 below, the importance of identities that could be interpreted as civilisational also increases in the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* as the conflict escalates.

What Huntington does next is a leap from identity and difference to identity and hate. What, according to him, emerges from civilisational clashes is a "hate dynamic" "in which mutual fears, distrust, and hatred feed on each other" (2002, 266). He further maintains that "[f]or people seeking identity and reinventing ethnicity, enemies are essential, and the potentially most dangerous enmities occur across the fault lines between the world's major civilizations" (2002, 20). Huntington's understanding of identity and difference as opposite concepts is what explains most of the problems in his thesis. As Cynthia Weber points out, Huntington, along with International Relations theory in general, assumes that identity and sameness reduce the possibility of instability and conflicts whereas difference produces and heightens them (153). She provides an apt summary of Huntington's thesis: "we have conflict because we have differences, and these differences/conflicts are located between identities. For Huntington, identity is a civilization, and difference is located at the fault lines between civilizations" (Weber 162).

Weber goes on to ask an important question: "what if both sameness and difference produce both order and disorder?" (156). Cultural difference in itself or the desire to change cultural difference into cultural identity are not the only causes for conflicts. Conflict is also located in the desire to be a pure identity, a desire that is impossible to achieve (*ibid.*). Contrary to Huntington's thesis, Weber suggests that fault lines could be located within identities (civilisations) as well as between them. In other words, attempts to divide the world into rigid and preordained blocks causes as much, if not more, problems than seeing it in terms of multiple simultaneously overlapping and conflicting groupings (Weber 167-170). As will be seen the in the following subsection, this also applies to the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown*.

In her thinking, Weber follows Stuart Hall and his work on identity and subjectivity in the postmodern world. According to Hall, the feeling that one has a unified identity is but "a comforting story or 'narrative of the self'" (1992, 277), thus bearing a striking resemblance to nationalism as described above. In truth, there is "no fixed, essential or permanent identity"; instead, identity is continuously formed and transformed "in relation to the ways in which we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us" (*ibid.*). Thus, thinking in this area has in recent decades shifted from the politics of identity to the politics of difference (Hall 1992, 280). The same can also be noted in the clash of civilisations thesis: Huntington is primarily interested in the (in his view seemingly insurmountable) differences between civilisations and the clashes those differences supposedly cause, not so much on the internal workings of civilisations and civilisational identities. In other words, the differences present on the margins have become more important than the perceived identity of the centre. Curiously, this process is also duplicated in imperialism. According to Andrew, in the old European formulation, imperialism referred to civilisation extending outwards, from the centre to the margins. However, in the current globalising, postcolonial era, this process has

turned on its head, when the centre is increasingly being challenged from the margins. As Andrew points out, by "insist[ing] on the self-containment and purity of the 'Western' culture or civilisation", Huntington, among others, manifests his resistance to the boundary-crossing phenomenon of the margin talking back to the centre (2004, 224).[4]

This same fascination with difference is also present in the global marketplace, as can be deduced from the increasing "marketing of ethnicity and 'otherness'" (Hall 1992, 304), at least as far as the West is concerned. For instance, there is a fast-growing section of commercial activities concentrated on the proliferation of ethnic products, such as food and handicrafts (*ibid.*), represented in *Shalimar the Clown* by the Kashmiri businessman Yuvraj who, in the middle of a drawn-out conflict, manages to profitably export Kashmiri papier-maché boxes, rugs, shawls, and other local products to the rest of India and to the US as well (the character of Yuvraj is discussed in more detail in section 4.2). In fact, the entire novel could be seen as an example of the commercialisation of the "exotic". After all, Rushdie is "seen by many Indians as a purveyor of marketable Euro-American fantasies about Indian and other 'Oriental' cultures" (Huggan 70). According to Huggan, literature about India has become so popular at least partly because it is seen to allegorically or metaphorically represent the whole of India, which can then be easily consumed by Western readers. In addition to other writers categorised as Indian, such as Arundhati Roy and Bharati Mukherjee, Rushdie has contributed to this trend by writing books about exotic India for the consumption of Westerners while at the same time criticising such consumption in those very same books (Huggan 81). Shortly put, he has inadvertently fed the illusion that the whole of India could be stuffed between the covers of a book, quite like Huntington is upholding and strengthening

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[4] This movement of interest from the centre to the margins has prompted Rushdie to propose "a new thesis of the post-frontier", referring to a time in which frontiers have become permeable but, nevertheless, have never been more important. Terrorism, according to him, is merely one example of such permeable frontiers, alongside with business and finance as well as art and science (Rushdie 2003, 425-426).

the illusion that for instance all Muslims could be fitted within a single civilisation, within the singular and unified identity provided by that civilisation.

The view, presented by Hall, that any singular, unified identity is impossible is also advocated by Edward Said and Amartya Sen in their criticism of the clash of civilisations thesis. Said points out that the numerous debates on how to define a culture or a civilisation have undermined the possibility of a fixed identity (581). According to him, "the truly weakest part of the clash of civilizations thesis is the rigid separation assumed among civilizations, despite the overwhelming evidence that today's world is in fact a world of mixtures, of migrations, of crossing over" (587). Said places emphasis on cooperation and shared humanity, on the exchange and dialogue going on between different cultures, rather than on a thesis that highlights difference and incites to conflict and violence (583, 590).

Sen, on the other hand, emphasises the impossibility to arrange a person's multiple identities on an unchanging scale according to their relative importance. In other words,

> The same person can be, without any contradiction, an American citizen, of Caribbean origin, with African ancestry, a Christian, a liberal, a woman, a vegetarian, a long-distance runner, a historian, a schoolteacher, a novelist, a feminist, a heterosexual, a believer in gay and lesbian rights, a theater lover, an environmental activist, a tennis fan, a jazz musician, and someone who is deeply committed to the view that there are intelligent beings in outer space with whom it is extremely urgent to talk (preferably in English). (Sen xii-xiii)

What importance the person in question assigns to these multiple identities is entirely determined by context and changes from one situation to another (*ibid.*).[5] Violence, on the other hand, is often caused by the belief that there are "choiceless identities" or "singular affiliations", identities that are given and cannot be changed or rejected, identities that

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[5] Here, Sen echoes Hobsbawm, who writes that "[m]en and women [do] not choose collective identification as they [choose] shoes, knowing that one could only put on one pair at a time. They had, and still have, several attachments and loyalties simultaneously". Furthermore, "[f]or long periods of time these different attachments would not make incompatible demands on a person, so that a man might have no problem about feeling himself to be the son of an Irishman, the husband of a German woman, a member of the mining community, a worker, a supporter of Barnsley Football Club, a Liberal, a Primitive Methodist, a patriotic Englishman, possibly a Republican, and a supporter of the British Empire" (Hobsbawm 123).

dominate all other affiliations (Sen xv, 20). In relation to nationalism, Anderson refers to them as unchosen because they seem 'natural' (143). Huntington's civilisations provide, according to Sen, just such a choiceless identity, something which is inevitable and unchanging and cannot be escaped. Huntington cannot see the difference between "the various affiliations and loyalties a person who happens to be a Muslim has, and … his or her Islamic identity" (Sen 61). In other words, Sen argues that a person's Islamic (or Western, or Hindu) identity is not his or her predominant identity in every situation, and seeing it as such will narrow one's perception of identity beyond justification.

Identity could thus be described as fluid: it changes according to circumstances. One of the main characteristics of the modern, globalising world is migration, another phenomenon for which the central theme is the crossing of borders. However, as McLeod argues, "[a]lthough migrants may pass through the *political* borders of nations, crossing their frontiers and gaining entrance to new places, such 'norms and limits' can be used to exclude migrants from being accommodated inside the *imaginative* borders of the nation" (210, see also Nayar 149-150). From another viewpoint, national (and, by extension, all other) boundaries are built by leaving some groups out, because nations are imagined and constructed in opposition to what is left outside them (Volpp 81-82). In other words, migrants may live in a place but do not belong to it, which seems to be the case especially with the characters of Max and India/Kashmira in *Shalimar the Clown*, as will be noted in section 4.2. As a consequence of the difficult nature of belonging, Hall argues, migrants "must learn to inhabit at least two identities, to speak two cultural languages, to translate and negotiate between them" (1992, 310). They inhabit "an intervening space" (Bhabha 1994, 7). They are like Olga Simeonovna, a potato witch from the imaginary nation of Astrakhan and India/Kashmira's neighbour in Los Angeles, who describes her location in *Shalimar the Clown* with the following words:

> "I live today neither in this world nor the last, neither in America nor Astrakhan. Also I would add neither in this world nor the next. A woman like me, she lives someplace in

between. Between the memories and the daily stuff. Between yesterday and tomorrow, in the country of lost happiness and peace, the place of mislaid calm." (Rushdie 2006a, 11)

The 'in-between', in Bhabha's theorising, provides a link between what are ordinarily viewed as binary oppositions because it, by definition, belongs to both and neither of them. It is like a bridge, or a crossroads, where the two sides can meet (1994, 13). Or, in a different formulation, it is a border, an intermediate location, which both joins and separates places (McLeod 217). The in-between is an important concept for the formation of identity, because "the boundary becomes the place from which *something begins its presencing*" (Bhabha 1994, 5, italics in the original). Dascălu argues that the power of "the migrant, the one in-between, the hybrid person" is in his or her "enormous opportunity for resistance" (131-132). After all, it is the margin that can challenge and question the centre (Dascălu 10-11). It is easier for migrants, who inhabit an in-between space and whose identities cannot be equated with either side of that space, to question those cultural identities. They are the ones that create in-between, hybrid identities for themselves. As Bhabha says, such wandering people alienate frontiers because they cannot be contained by them (1990b, 315).

However, in relation to identity, it is also important to take into consideration that how a person identifies himself or herself may have very little correlation to how other people identify him or her (Sen 6). The result can be "misdescription of people belonging to a targeted category, and an insistence that the misdescribed characteristics are the only relevant features of the targeted person's identity" (Sen 7). In other words, a Muslim is always predominantly a Muslim, regardless of the context and the issue at hand. This kind of viewpoint denies the roles that reasoning and choice play in the definition of identities. A person should be allowed to decide what his or her relevant identities are and weigh their relative importance in different situations (Sen 24). Sen does implicitly acknowledge that the way others see and define us has a great influence on how we see ourselves, but in his fervent

emphasis of choice and reasoning he does not bring the issue forth enough. Being identified over and over again in strictly religious terms can result in a situation where the dominant identity is indeed thought to be religious. Arguing for commonalities and multiple identities can prove to be as difficult as arguing for sharply defined differences and pure identities. I will return to this in greater detail in the analysis sections.

Nevertheless, Sen is right in questioning the basis of the clash of civilisations thesis. It could be that what Huntington sees as a clash is, in fact, "something much more ordinary which merely looks like a civilisational clash to determined seekers of depth and profundity" (44). There may be, as he formulates it, "an accidental correlation between cultural prejudice and social observation", which produces a theory seemingly explaining some important contemporary events (104). Or, in the words of Huntington, the thesis "provides an easily grasped and intelligent framework for understanding the world, distinguishing what is important from what is unimportant among the multiplying conflicts, predicting future developments, and providing guidelines for policy makers" (2002, 36). On the other hand, there are people like Sayyid who apply different viewpoints: Sayyid argues that, although often done, Islamism should not be interpreted as a distortion of Islam because there is no essence to Islam, and if there is no essence, there cannot be distortions either, only constructions (258). He continues in the same vein by pointing out that although certain characteristics are often attached to it, nothing is inherently Western except in discourse and rhetoric (265). Thus, the conflict between the West and the Islamic world is, in his viewpoint, a conflict between discourses, not cultures (266). The same logic works for the clash of civilisations thesis as well. As has been argued above, Huntington's thesis is based on the presupposition that certain divisions are essential. However, if one concludes that there is no essence to Islam or the West, there is also no essence to the divisions between them. Both the civilisations and the fault lines separating them are thus constructed, not essential. As will be

discussed in depth in the analysis sections, this is also what *Shalimar the Clown* seems to be suggesting.

As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, Huntington's thesis has in recent years been connected to 9/11, to the 'war on terror', and to terrorism. However, as will be explained below, by ingraining the clash of civilisations in their political thought, it has been easier for US policy-makers to draw attention away from the roots of the issue, and from the fact that terrorism has its history. According to Cronin, terrorism refers to violence against a more powerful opponent with the aims of disrupting normal daily life and disseminating fear to force a change of policies. It often involves, among other things, assassinations, bombings, kidnappings, and hijackings (Cronin xi). This is what happened on the 11th September 2001, and this is what the eponymous character turns to in *Shalimar the Clown*, as will be explored in more detail in the analysis section. But this is only the definition for "regular" terrorism. Terror, as opposed to terrorism, is "[a] systematic policy of violence and intimidation by an existing government intended to further the domination and control of its own population" (*ibid.*). As will be seen in the analysis section, this is what India seems to be involved in in Kashmir.

Furthermore, as opposed to terrorism and terror, state sponsored terrorism is, in Cronin's definition, less risky and visible than open war, as well as having the plus side that it facilitates denial much more easily (xii-xiii). Crudely put, it involves providing equipment and training to others who do the terrorising.[6] This is what, for instance, the United States had their hand in during the Soviet war in Afghanistan in 1979-1989. The Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in December 1979, supposedly to try to quell the rise of fundamentalist Islam on their doorstep. However, in the West, and especially in the US, this was seen as a further

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[6] It would seem to me that terrorism, terror, and state sponsored terrorism, while ostensibly referring to different matters, all involve roughly the same kind of activities. Only the perpetrators vary.

development in the Cold War as well as an attempt to "threaten Western access to oil". The United States promptly became a major supporter of the Islamic rebels fighting against the Soviets, providing funding, weapons, and training (Best et al. 288-290, 473).[7] Furthermore, the Afghan war strengthened the sense of solidarity among the world's Muslims: participants to the anti-Soviet *jihad* arrived from the Middle East, South-East Asia, and even from the West (Best et al. 473). As Best et al. summarise, "[t]he war in Afghanistan provided a generation of young Muslims with a sense of purpose and military skills, thus giving new meaning to *jihad*. The 1989 Soviet withdrawal … confirmed their belief that armed struggle was superior to any political strategy. … The Afghan experience served to radicalize Islamist movements" (473-474). Thus, the US inadvertently contributed to the growing popularity and power of fundamentalism, Islamism, and terrorism as well as being indirectly involved in terrorism itself. However, there are other matters as well behind the rise of Islamist movements, among them the decline of oil wealth in the 1980s and 1990s, increase in population, and widespread unemployment in the countries of the Middle East. These all seem to point to the failure of the decolonised states to take care of their people economically, "provid[ing] an opening for Islamists to push Islam as an alternative model of developmentalism based on the Islamic principles of equality and justice" (Best et al. 458).

After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the United States seemed to have emerged victorious, strengthening the conception that a new paradigm was

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[7] This is what *Shalimar the Clown* says about the American support for Afghan fighters and the distribution of weapons to other Muslim fighters in other locations: "The Afghans had freedom fighters of their own, and the United States decided to support these fighters against its own great enemy, which had occupied their country. U.S. operatives in the field - CIA, Counter-Terrorism and Special Units personnel - took to referring to these fighters as the Muj, which sounded mysterious and exciting and concealed the fact that the word *mujahid* meant the same thing as the word *jihadi*, 'holy warrior.' Weapons, blankets and cash poured into northern Pakistan, and some of this aid did reach the Muj. Much of it ended up in the arms bazaars of the wild frontier zone, and a percentage of it reached Azad Kashmir. After a while the fighters gathering in the Pakistani-controlled Kashmir started calling themselves the Kashmiri Muj. The ISI provided them with powerful long-range missiles which had been intended for the Afghan front, but had unfortunately been diverted along the way" (Rushdie 2006a, 338). I will return to the issue of US involvement in state sponsored terrorism in relation to Max in section 4.2.

emerging in world politics, one "in which Washington would impose its values, for good or ill, on the rest of the world" (Best et al. 491). This perception gave fresh reasons for some Islamists and Islamic movements, such as Al-Qaeda, to oppose the growing hegemony of the US. They "tapp[ed] into feelings shared by the majority of Muslims worldwide, namely that as nations and people they have been treated without fairness, equality, justice, honour or dignity" (Best et al. 475). The United States did little to alleviate the situation. After 9/11, it declared a "war on terror", and President George W. Bush famously asserted that "you're with us or you're against us", thus with a few words negating the possibility of a diplomatic and multilateral solution (Best et al. 522). With "its heavy-handedness and lack of political nuance" the "war on terror" managed to strengthen Muslim solidarity: rhetorically pitting the West against the Muslim world, the conflict could easily be interpreted as a "war on Islam", again covertly providing support for the clash of civilisations thesis. Because what is important here is not whether Huntington's thesis is accurate, but whether it is seen and used by others as if it were (Dunn 1-2). And, as Sen rightly points out, "[t]he reductionism of high theory can make a major contribution, often inadvertently, to the violence of low politics" (xvi). It could be argued that this is precisely what has happened to Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilisations. As noted by Dunn, in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, many leading Western policy-makers as well as the leaders of the terrorist group Al-Qaeda were convinced that there indeed was a clash of civilisations in process (1, 4). According to him, the concept of the clash is so deeply ingrained in Western political thought that it becomes nigh impossible to contemplate the possibility that Islamic militancy may have other goals apart from wanting to destroy the 'Western civilisation' (4). It was thus easy to interpret terrorism as a symptom of a larger conflict between "the secular West (or, some argued, the Judaeo-Christian West)" and "the fundamentalist (or Islamic) East", and the "war on terror" as a prelude to a full-scale clash of civilisations (Best et al. 538).

The issues discussed above, as has been hinted, are taken up by Rushdie in *Shalimar the Clown*. With regard to the clash of civilisations thesis, or any other theory that supposedly provides help in interpreting situations, the novel forces the reader to consider how the interpretation of a situation simultaneously changes its very being, and how there are always multiple viewpoints to interpret a situation. As will be discussed in the following section, there are no great religious dividing lines in Rushdie's fictional Kashmir before people from outside bring them in and apply them to the situation at hand. In other words, *Shalimar the Clown* is concerned with how discourse is used to interpret "reality" and how "reality" begins to resemble discourse. It is a novel about how "high theory" can affect people's daily lives. It is also a novel about a globalising world in which differences have become central, a world simultaneously fragmenting and becoming more interconnected, and the difficulties in constructing one's identity in such a world.

3 Everywhere is Everywhere Else: Configurations of Space in *Shalimar the Clown*

As I will show in the following two subsections, *Shalimar the Clown* discusses and reflects on different configurations of space, ushered in by decolonisation, nationalism, and globalisation. Of primary importance in discussions on space is that it is constructed and reconstructed culturally, socially, and politically. I will demonstrate below how several different constructions of the same space may exist simultaneously, often clashing with each other. This is what happens to Kashmir in the course of the novel, as will be explored in section 3.1.

Furthermore, in section 3.2 I will show how the novel reflects on the interconnections between spatially and temporally remote and seemingly unconnected places, namely Kashmir, Strasbourg and Alsace-Lorraine, and Los Angeles, pondering how they are simultaneously different and similar. I will also tackle the ambiguous nature of globalisation as well as nationalism, decolonisation, and multiculturalism.

3.1 "Rowed through Paradise on a River of Hell": Kashmir's Fall from Grace

In the beginning, there was only Kashmir. The partitioning of the Indian subcontinent into two separate states had not yet taken place. India and Pakistan had not yet gained their independence. There was only Kashmir, where Muslims and Hindus as well as people of other religions lived contentedly and peacefully side by side, a place renowned for its tolerance and mixing of traditions. At least this is seemingly the case at the beginning of the tale of Kashmir in *Shalimar the Clown*. In the following discussion, I will map the transformation of this initially boundary-blurring community into a territory riven by violence and sectarian conflicts.

The Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* at first could be seen as a critique of Huntington's thesis of the clash of civilisations. According to him, as noted earlier, civilisations are the largest cultural entities that people identify with short of the human race. If one follows Huntington's line of thinking, the two civilisations one should consider with regard to

Kashmir are the Hindu and the Muslim ones. As the names themselves imply, both are characterised solely in religious terms. However, Rushdie did not write, in *Shalimar the Clown*, about a community divided along religious lines. Instead, the Kashmiri people in the novel seem to place their shared identity as Kashmiris higher than their different belief-systems, adopting a flexible and boundary-blurring attitude to what Huntington views as "crucial distinctions among human groups" (2002, 42). As Shalimar's father Abdullah Noman, himself a Muslim, ponders, "[t]he pandits of Kashmir, unlike Brahmins anywhere else in India, happily ate meat. Kashmiri Muslims, perhaps envying the pandits their choice of gods, blurred their faith's austere monotheism by worshipping at the shrines of the valley's many local saints, its pirs. To be a Kashmiri, to have received so incomparable a divine gift, was to value what was shared far more than what divided" (Rushdie 2006a, 104).

The Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* is initially an "unparalleled paradise on earth" (Rushdie 2006a, 95), where the following scenario, related by Boonyi's father Pyarelal Kaul (himself a Hindu), is in all its unlikelihood entirely possible:

> "Today our Muslim village, in the service of our Hindu maharaja, will cook and act in a Mughal – that is to say Muslim – garden, to celebrate the anniversary of the day on which Ram marched against Ravan to rescue Sita. What is more, two plays are to be performed: our traditional *Ram Leela*, and also *Budshah*, the tale of a Muslim sultan. Who tonight are the Hindus? Who are the Muslims? Here in Kashmir, our stories sit happily side by side on the same double bill, we eat from the same dishes, we laugh at the same jokes. We will joyfully celebrate the reign of the good king Zain-ul-abidin, and as for our Muslim brothers and sisters, no problem! They all like to see Sita rescued from the demon-king, and besides, there will be fireworks." (Rushdie 2006a, 88-89)

This is Kashmiriyat: "Kashmiriness, the belief that at the heart of Kashmiri culture there was a common bond that transcended all other differences" (Rushdie 2006a, 138). In the novel, it is the village of Pachigam, home to two of the novel's main characters, Shalimar and Boonyi, that symbolically stands in for the entire Kashmir and represents the heart of Kashmiriyat. In this place, no one meta-narrative is allowed to gain a dominant position (Bradley and Tate 91). It is a village of performing artists and cooks, both of whom happily cross religious and

cultural boundaries: a place where a Muslim actor can play a Hindu god and where Hindu

cooking can be introduced into the Muslim cuisine and vice versa. In Pitkin's words, it is

possible to see this fictional pre-partition Kashmir "as a model for the ordinary yet remarkable

capacities of human societies to include and accommodate many historical strands and

varieties of people and to handle conflicts (mostly) without violence" (259). In all its

peacefulness and tolerant coexistence it truly seems a paradise on earth,[8] depicting, in

Tygstrup's words, "perfection that occasionally verges on the kitschy, but also foreshadows a

destruction" (208).

The above-mentioned incomparable divine gift of being a Kashmiri could refer to what

Brennan calls "the evocation of deep, sacred origins" which "becomes a contemporary,

practical means of *creating* a people" (50, italics in the original). Furthermore, even while the

Kashmir-before-the-partition is depicted as a paradise on earth, I would argue that *Shalimar*

the Clown also shows it to be a *created* paradise, not a god-given gift but an outcome of social

and cultural processes. This seems to be in line with Bhabha when he states, echoing

Anderson's famous formulation of imagined communities, that "[n]ations, like narratives,

lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye"

(1). According to Bhabha, the nation is

> a contested cultural territory where people must be thought in a double-time; the people
> are the historical 'objects' of a nationalist pedagogy, giving the discourse an authority
> that is based on the pregiven or constituted historical origin or event; the people are also
> the 'subjects' of a process of signification that must erase any prior or originary
> presence of the nation-people to demonstrate the prodigious, living principle of the
> people as the continual process by which the national life is redeemed and signified as a
> repeating and reproductive process. (1990, 297)

Simply put, the existence of the nation, or by extension any such entity, is taught to its people

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[8] Interestingly, Ganapathy-Doré points out that "Rushdie's representation of the bygone ways of Kashmiriyat is closer to the Muslim conception of paradise [than to any Western one] because it combines not only peace, harmony, and abundance but also a festive atmosphere and sensual delight" (34).

as historical fact, which the people then perform in their daily lives, thus validating the teachings by action. However, what is also important in the forming of a nation or a community is forgetting. Since national unity is very often effected by brute force, it is imperative for the survival of the nation that its nationals forget that which could set them apart (Renan 11, Bhabha 1990, 310-311). The Kashmiris in *Shalimar the Clown* do precisely this. They have their myths and their histories, of which the following tale is a prime example:

> *In the middle of the fifteenth century the Sultan Zain-ul-abidin succumbed to a deadly Disease, viz. a poisonous Boil on the Chest, and would certainly have died, had it not been for the intervention of a scholarly Doctor, a Pandit whose Name was Shri Butt or Bhat. After Dr. Butt or Bhat had cured the King of his Illness, Zain-ul-abidin told him he should ask for a very precious Gift, for had he not given the King himself renewed Life, the most precious of all Gifts? "I need nothing for myself," Dr. Butt or Bhat replied, "but sire, under the Kings who came before you my Brothers were persecuted without end, and they are in need of a Gift at least as valuable as Life." The King agreed to cease the Persecution of the Kashmiri Pandits at once. In addition, he made it his Business to see to the Rehabilitation of their devastated and scattered Families, and allowed them to preach and practice their Religion without any Hindrance. He rebuilt their Temples, reopened their Schools, abolished the Taxes that burdened them, repaired their Libraries and ceased to murder their Cows. Whereupon a Golden Age began.* (Rushdie 2006a, 99-100, italics in the original)

When the Kashmiris read this story, they choose to concentrate on the good Muslim king and his deeds of tolerance and cross-cultural goodwill towards the Hindus of Kashmir. What they choose to forget is the previous kings' persecution of the same Hindus. Following the above quote of Bhabha, this tale and others like it construct Kashmir as a community of tolerance and peaceful coexistence of different religions. These principles, set firmly in the state's remembered history, are validated when the Kashmiris realise them in their daily life. I will return to the issue of memory and forgetting below.

However tolerant the Kashmir of *Shalimar the* Clown is initially presented, the coming doom can be glimpsed prior to its taking place. The first foreshadowing comes in the guise of the "pot war", a quarrel between Pachigam and the neighbouring village of Shirmal. In the words of the narrator, "[b]efore Shalimar the clown and Boonyi were born there had been the villages of the actors and the villages of the cooks. Then times changed" (Rushdie 2006a, 76).

Pachigam, originally a village of actors, started to provide both food and entertainment, "a rounded service which offered both sustenance for the body and pleasure for the soul" and consequently "didn't have to share the feast-day cash emoluments with anyone" (*ibid.*). However, the inhabitants of Shirmal, a village of cooks, did not take well their neighbours' intrusion into their professional territory. What followed was the pot war: the men of Shirmal attacked Pachigam with the mind to wreak havoc amongst their rivals' cooking equipment, but were driven away "with broken heads" by Pachigam men (Rushdie 2006a, 77). The outcome was astonishment and dread, although, apart from some bruises and black eyes, no one was seriously hurt:

> The pot war horrified everyone in Pachigam even though they had come out on the winning side. They had always thought of their neighbors the Shirmal villagers as being more than a little weird, but nobody had imagined that so outrageous a breach of the peace was possible, that Kashmiris would attack other Kashmiris driven by such crummy motivations as envy, malice and greed. (*ibid.*)

As the local prophetess Nazarébaddoor predicted, this incident was to be the pebble that started the avalanche. Interestingly, the first sign of division in Kashmiriyat presented in *Shalimar the Clown* is caused by the crossing of a traditional boundary, the creation of a village that is hybrid not only in its cultural and religious but also in its occupational makeup. Furthermore, the roots of this conflict can be found in the Kashmiris' economic aspirations rather than in cultural difference.

Then came the day the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir began. Pachigam and Shirmal had set their quarrels aside for the time being to perform for Kashmir's ruling Maharaja in the renowned Shalimar garden. In a magic realist trope typical of Rushdie, at the same time as rumours of an army of looting, raping, and killing Pakistani marauders start circulating, two of the novel's main characters, Shalimar and Boonyi, are born.[9] What follows

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[9] It is at the moment the Pakistani troops enter Kashmir that Boonyi and Shalimar are born, not at the moment of

is a succession of unconfirmed reports and circulating gossip that slowly begin to take more substantial forms, begin, as the two-month-old Pakistan itself, to "move across the frontier from the shadow-world of rumors into the 'real'" (Rushdie 2006a, 107). As these rumours move from the shady territory of hearsay into the world of fact, they also begin their work of establishing divisions. Because of them, some people choose to side with Pakistan "because here in Kashmir a Muslim people is being prevented by a Hindu ruler from joining their coreligionists in a new Muslim state", while others reject the newly-founded nation that urges its invading horde to loot Kashmir with promises of "gold, carpets and beautiful women" (Rushdie 2006a, 108).[10] As Morton asserts, by setting the Kashmiri people "in the middle of these contending rumours" of India and Pakistan's claims over Kashmir, the narrator of *Shalimar the Clown* "conveys the way in which the conflict in Kashmir is overdetermined by multiple historical narratives" (349). It is caught in the middle of what, at least at first glance, seems to be a conflict between the Hindu and Muslim civilisations, thus seemingly validating Huntington's thesis. What is also caught in the middle of this inter-civilisational conflict is inter-civilisational tolerance.

Finally, "at the behest of the fleeing maharaja [the ruler of Kashmir who had been forced to accede Kashmir to India to receive the Indian army's help] … the army had driven back the kabaili marauders but had stopped short of driving them out of Kashmiri territory, leaving them in control of some of the high mountainous areas to the north, Gilgit, Hunza, Baltistan" (Rushdie 2006a, 120-121). The de facto and, at least from the point of view of the

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the subcontinent's partition into India and Pakistan, as Morton suggests (354).

[10] There seem to be many interpretations on how the conflict in Kashmir actually started, which explains why *Shalimar the Clown* only tells of the events through rumours. According to Lal, "Pakistan, suspecting that the Maharaja was likely to accede to India, decided to take Kashmir by force", and sent invading troops across the border (148). The Pakistani version of the situation was that there was "a spontaneous uprising in Kashmir because of the Hindu maharaja's policies of 'ethnic cleansing'", and that Pakistanis merely "came to the assistance of their coreligionists" (Lal 148-149). The Indian view is that the Maharaja had "entered a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan for the maintenance of … essential supplies and … services" and that, despite the Agreement, Pakistan "tried to strangulate Kashmir economically and finally invaded it" (Verghese 8).

Kashmiris, a completely arbitrary partition of Kashmir had taken place.[11] The arbitrariness of the Line of Control, separating the Indian and Pakistani sides, is well depicted in the following extract. It presents the hilariously self-contradictory view of the Indian army towards the line, as expressed by the army commander Kachhwaha:

> The de facto line of partition existed and so had to be adhered to and the question of whether it should exist or not was not a question. There were Kashmiris on both sides who treated the line with contempt and walked across the mountains whenever they chose. This contempt was an aspect of Kashmiri ingratitude because it did not recognize the difficulties faced by the soldiers at the line of partition, the hardships they endured in order to defend and maintain the line. (Rushdie 2006a, 121)

For a nation or a community to exist, people have to believe in its existence. The same goes for lines of partition. The Kashmiris do not believe in the existence of the line drawn through their community, making the Indian army's defence and maintenance of it seem ridiculous. After all, as Rushdie has stated elsewhere, it is of importance to cross lines of all kind and "not to be contained or defined by anyone else's idea of where a line should be drawn" (2003, 434), even though this might lead to conflicts as much as adhering to them. However, although the Kashmiris of *Shalimar the Clown* follow this piece of advice when it comes to the Line of Control, the division of the state does have its tangible effects on their everyday lives.

Pachigam's lot in this turns out to be the arrival of the Indian army camp Elasticnagar and its commander, the aforementioned Kachhwaha, who come to defend Indian interests and integrity in Kashmir. The name Elasticnagar evokes at least two different images. On the one hand, one can imagine its borders to stretch like an elastic band, to swallow up more and more land, more and more of the Kashmiri territory. On the other, like an elastic band, it also

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[11] As was discussed in section 2, this is what Hobsbawm refers to when he points out that during the decolonisation process, many "independent states were created out of existing areas of colonial administration, within their colonial frontiers". These frontiers had been drawn without consultation with or even without the knowledge of the people living in the area (Hobsbawm 171).

remains tight around the surrounding territory, metaphorically holding the village of Pachigam by the throat. Not so tight as to suffocate but tight enough so that it can be felt.

There are also indirect consequences caused by the army's extended stay in Kashmir. In a touch of magic realism and more than a hint of allegory, Rushdie makes the military hardware and metal junk dumped by the Indian army into the valley to come to life and take a human form. "The men who were miraculously born from these rusting war metals … went out into the valley to preach resistance and revenge. They were the iron mullahs" (Rushdie 2006a, 144). These preachers of hellfire and damnation are represented in the novel by Bulbul Fakh, who comes to Shirmal, "stirring things up, inciting violence and advocating a firebrand Islam that was positively un-Kashmiri and un-Indian as well", also denouncing Pachigam for its tolerance (Rushdie 2006a, 153). Thus, as Morton points out, "Rushdie's metaphor of the iron mullah suggests that the 'firebrand Islam' Bulbul Fakh preaches is a historical product of an increasingly militarised and divided postcolonial Kashmir rather than an essential theological principle of Islam" (346).[12] I will return to the iron mullah Bulbul Fakh in section 3.2 in conjunction with terrorism.

However, it is neither the Indian army nor the iron mullahs that are seen by the villagers of Pachigam to truly smash the tolerant paradise of Kashmir. Instead, it is the failed marriage of Shalimar and Boonyi. In Siddiqi's opinion, it is precisely this marriage that is "the most pointed way in which Rushdie represents the ideal of Kashmiriyat" (220). But if this union of a Hindu girl and a Muslim boy, both entering the world on the same faithful day as the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir, is the last hope of Pachigam to cling to the vestiges of tolerance, it also seems to be the last thing propping up the bridges of a crumbling community. Also, I would argue that the birth of the two coinciding with the birth of the Kashmir conflict,

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[12] This also points to the fact, often overlooked or forgotten in today's political rhetoric at least in the West, that most Islamic movements are context specific (Best et al. 459).

as recounted above, is not a very reassuring allegory; indeed, it is best seen as foreshadowing a divide that is slowly emerging from the shadowy world of rumour into the light of day of the "real" world. Nevertheless, although the news of the pair's initially illicit love affair shakes the village, it is in the end welcomed by the families of both parties as well as the surrounding community. In a perfect gesture of Kashmiriyat, the young lovers are married twice, observing both Hindu and Muslim customs.

Shalimar's thoughts on his relationship with Boonyi seem to contain a hint of desperation in their over-emphasis on the insignificance of difference: "The words *Hindu* and *Muslim* had no place in their story, he told himself. In the valley these words were merely descriptions, not divisions. The frontiers between words, their hard edges, had grown smudged and blurred. This was how things had to be. This was Kashmir. When he told himself these things he believed them with all his heart" (Rushdie 2006a, 70). However, the coming doom is already foreshadowed the moment the villagers learn of the affair:

> Even the livestock had divined that something was wrong; goats and cattle, dogs and geese displayed the kind of instinctive or premonitory agitation that is sometimes seen in the hours before an earthquake. Bees stung their keepers with unwonted ferocity. The very air seemed to shimmer with concern and there was a rumble in the empty sky. (Rushdie 2006a, 135)

The animals' anticipation of an earthquake is an interesting example of foreshadowing since, as mentioned in the theory section, the term Huntington uses when describing the dividing lines between civilisations is 'fault line'. In relation to geology, the encyclopaedia definition of the word 'fault' is "a fracture in the rocks of the Earth's crust, where compressional or tensional forces cause the rocks on the opposite sides of the fracture to be displaced relative to each other", causing earthquakes (*Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*). In the above quote from *Shalimar the Clown*, the animals of Pachigam are expecting an earthquake. While the geological fault lines in Kashmir do not budge, the cultural ones do. The two sides of the fault move against each other, eventually causing destruction, mayhem, and death. In this sense,

the village of Pachigam is a symbol for the entire Kashmir, and the failure to join the two sides of the village is a symbol for the failure to uphold the tolerance and peaceful coexistence of Kashmiriyat.[13] As argued in the theory section above, Huntington's thesis presupposes that fault lines between civilisations are essential, always there, like geological fault lines between plateaus. *Shalimar the Clown* does not support this interpretation, nor does it wholly and openly refute it. In my opinion, the novel seems to be saying that there are differences between people, but it is up to those people to interpret them. In Kashmiriyat, differences are secondary and commonalities rule. What appears to win over in Kashmir, as will be seen below, is the interpretation of differences (especially religious ones) as seemingly insurmountable obstacles fragmenting a once unified people. However, in suggesting that interpretation is what counts, the novel is also saying that nothing is essential except in interpretation.

As already discussed above, in the novel paradise is geographically identified with Kashmir, whereas symbolically it is represented by the marriage of Shalimar and Boonyi. It is precisely the failure of this union that seems to cause the final downfall of Pachigam and Kashmir; not the trouble between the Hindus and Muslims, not the iron mullahs, not the Indian army nor the Pakistani fighters. The villagers lose their faith in Kashmiriyat when its final symbol fails them. It is the arrival of Maximilian Ophuls, the newly-appointed US ambassador to India, that provides the final nudge: Boonyi sees an opportunity to escape what she perceives to be a dull life, taking off to Delhi to be Max's mistress. "The dreadful ending of this love [between Boonyi and Shalimar], caused by Boonyi's infidelity … turns Kashmir into a contested war-zone" (Detmers 362). As the following extract shows, it is the shared communalism of Pachigam and Kashmir that Boonyi's infidelity smashes:

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[13] Furthermore, there is also another location in the novel, that of Los Angeles, that is built on fault lines both geologically and culturally speaking. I will return to this in section 3.2.

> The women of the village would take turns to tell them family anecdotes. Every family in Pachigam had its store of such narratives, and because all the stories of all the families were told to all the children it was as though everyone belonged to everyone else. That was the magic circle which had been broken forever when Boonyi ran away to Delhi to become the American ambassador's whore. (Rushdie 2006a, 295)

Siddiqi maintains that sharing stories, making them the common property of the community, has been "a crucial signifier of Kashmiriyat" in Rushdie's writing (221), and the end of this story-sharing is precisely what Boonyi's actions precipitate. Boonyi's tale cannot become the common property of the villagers because it does not fit inside the magic circle of their shared stories. She has crossed a line and exited the community.[14] In this sense, the failure of Boonyi and Shalimar's marriage could be seen to represent both the fading of age-old traditions and attempts to break free from them, with Shalimar standing in for traditions and Boonyi for breaking them. However, as will be further discussed in subsection 4.1, Boonyi's attempts to find freedom beyond tradition do not end quite as she had hoped.

Gradually, the tolerance of Kashmir is smashed. Islamic militant groups begin to demand that "[m]en and women were not to sit together and watch television anymore. That was a licentious and obscene practice. Hindus were not to sit among Muslims. And of course all women must instantly put on the veil" (Rushdie 2006a, 347). The militants are policing the cultural space, determining who, by following their rules, belongs to the space they are constructing by those rules, a practice applied in real life Kashmir as well (Nayar 157). Little by little, to appease the militants, the people give in to the threats: women start wearing the veil and Hindus are politely asked not to attend the joint Shirmal-Pachigam television soirées (Rushdie 2006a, 355). Dividing lines begin to be formed, leading Boonyi's father, Pyarelal Kaul, all his life a devout supporter of the tenets of Kashmiriness, to succumb to doubts:

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[14] The first time Boonyi crosses a line, she does it with Shalimar. Curiously, although this causes minor outrage in the village, it does not break any traditions because it happens within the community. In other words, it is a tale that can be shared.

> Maybe *Kashmiriyat* was an illusion. Maybe all those children learning one another's stories in the panchayat room in winter, all those children becoming single family, were an illusion. Maybe the tolerant reign of good king Zain-ul-abidin should be seen – as some pandits were beginning to see it – as an aberration, not a symbol of unity. Maybe tyranny, forced conversions, temple-smashing, iconoclasm, persecution and genocide were the norms and peaceful coexistence was an illusion. (Rushdie 2006a, 299)

Kashmir is being given a different past. The previously emphasised history of tolerance and peaceful coexistence, discussed above, turns into a history of intolerance and sectarian violence. Instead of the open-minded Sultan Zain-ul-abidin, the Hindus of Kashmir begin to talk of Sikander the iconoclast and Prime Minister Saifuddin, under whose crushing rule Brahmins hanged, poisoned, and drowned themselves in scores. What was previously remembered is now forgotten and what used to be forgotten is remembered. Perhaps, as Pyarelal Kaul ponders, "[t]he crimes of the fourteenth century needed to be avenged in the twentieth" (*ibid.*).

The youth of Kashmir grow up to learn this new history better than the old one because they encounter it in their everyday life. However, ironically enough, it is these "disaffected youngsters" that also sing the swansong of the tolerant culture of Kashmir to an almost-empty theatre in Srinagar. The actors from Pachigam are on stage, giving "the performances of their young lives, as if they had suddenly understood a secret which nobody had explained to them before" (Rushdie 2006a, 352). Although they may have forgotten, or never knew, the happy days of the past, they perform as if they did know and remember: they are "telling their tale of old-time tolerance and hope" (*ibid.*). But all this takes place in a "hollow vacuum", separated from the world outside, from the demonstration on the streets of Srinagar that is turning into a riot. It seems to Abdullah Noman that their performance has become silent, has lost its voice. The voices of the performers are drowned by the voices of the demonstrators until they are, in turn, drowned by

> the noises of troop transports, Jeeps and tanks, of booted feet marching in step, of loaded weapons being readied and finally of gunshots, rifle shots as well as automatic fire. The chanting turned into screaming, the drumbeats turned into thunder, the march

> turned into a stampede, and as the auditorium began to shake the tale of King Zain-ul-
> abidin silently reached its happy ending and the actors joined hands and took their
> bow … (*ibid.*)

The Kashmiris are singing the swansong of Kashmiriyat but no one hears it. They are acting out a pantomime of tolerance and peace to the sounds of violence. Here we have another foreshadowing of the coming doom: violence drowns peace, the rhetoric of divisions and conflicts drowns any talk of tolerance and peaceful coexistence. In the end, there is only one person present in the audience, heartily cheering the performance, but even his clapping hands emit no sound. Even the last supporters of Kashmiriyat are rendered mute by the sheer force of what the world around them has turned into.

Finally, one day the foreshadowing of the disaster gives way to the disaster itself. General Kachhwaha, the commander of Elasticnagar, who for a long time has petitioned for a harsher army policy in the valley, finally has his supplications to the "political echelon" answered: he is granted permission to take his "gloves off", to carry out a "crackdown" on Kashmir in order to quell the Kashmiri insurgency against the presence of the Indian army:

> Town by town, hamlet by hamlet, every part of the valley would be visited by his wrath,
> by men who had taken their gloves off, his warriors, his storm troopers, his fists. He
> would see how much these people loved their insurgency then, when they had the
> Indian army fucking them in the crack. (Rushdie 2006a, 364)

Hell truly makes itself known in paradise. People are accused of being insurgents, and when they dare to deny these accusations, they are "assisted toward the truth" by torture (Rushdie 2006a, 364). Women are raped, people are randomly beaten and killed. "Loot, blunder, arson, mayhem, murder, exodus: these words recurred, day after day" (Rushdie 2006a, 369). Finally even Pachigam, which until then had been spared for being a village of traditional Kashmiri performing artists, comes under attack from the Indian army as a possible lair of insurgents. Rushdie's description of the events is telling:

> What happened that day in Pachigam need not be set down here in full detail, because
> brutality is brutality and excess is excess and that's all there is to it. There are things
> that must be looked at indirectly because they would blind you if you looked them in
> the face, like the fore of the sun. So, to repeat: there was no Pachigam anymore,

Pachigam was destroyed. Imagine it for yourself.
    Second attempt: The village of Pachigam still existed on maps of Kashmir, but that day it ceased to exist anywhere else, except in memory.
    Third and final attempt: The beautiful village of Pachigam still exists. (Rushdie 2006a, 385-386)

Destroyed with the village of Pachigam were the last vestiges of Kashmiriyat. It no longer existed in the real world, only in memory and writing, like the village of Pachigam existed only in maps and in the minds of people who still remembered it. However, as is implied in the third and final attempt to tell what happened to Pachigam, does not existence in memory and history mean that the village still exists? At least Kashmiriyat, embodied in Pachigam, could still exist if people only remembered it and lived by its principles. Finally, the third and final attempt is also a neat piece of metafiction: after all, the beautiful village of Pachigam still exists between the covers of *Shalimar the Clown*, arguably the only space it has ever existed in.

"The word 'paradise' comes from the Old Persian word '*paradeida*', meaning 'enclosed garden'", tells Ganapathy-Doré (31). This is precisely what Kashmir in *Shalimar the Clown* is before India and Pakistan start to fight over it. It is an enclosed garden, where the creation of a nation called Pakistan, despite its proximity, is little more than a rumour (Rushdie 2006a, 107). Kashmir, or at least the village of Pachigam, initially exists in a safe bubble, to a large extent cut off from the outside world. The Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* is initially a utopian place, an ideal, a paradise that "perhaps never was but should have been" (Fernández-Kelly 472). As several critics have argued, it is contact with the outside world that, in the end, precipitates Kashmir's fall from grace (Bradley and Tate 91, Tygstrup 208, Morton 349). Thus, it could be argued that what eventually destroys this paradise on earth is the bringing down of the walls surrounding it. It becomes an unenclosed garden. In Siddiqi's words, "[i]n depicting the rise of communal violence in Kashmir, Rushdie emphasizes that communal identities in Kashmir are not 'natural' or 'given' but are produced when resources grow scarce

and when outside forces intervene in local spaces" (221). Rushdie himself has stated that "[a]s a result of this unending quarrel [the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir], Paradise has been partitioned, impoverished and made violent. Murder and terrorism now stalk the valleys and mountains of a land once so famous for its peacefulness that outsiders made jokes about the Kashmiris' supposed lack of fighting spirit" (2003, 305). The title of this section, echoing a poem by Agha Shahid Ali that Rushdie quotes at the beginning of *Shalimar the Clown*, aptly describes what the Kashmir of the novel eventually becomes. Any of the Kashmiri characters in the novel could eventually utter the same words: "*I am being rowed through Paradise on a river of Hell*" (quoted by Rushdie 2006a, italics in the original).

Thus, I would argue that the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* is Rushdie's attempt to show how a conflict that initially has very little to do with religion or culture turns into something that resembles a clash of civilisations. Kashmiri tolerance is smashed by transforming previously quite inconsequential differences into insurmountable divisions. When enough time passes, these boundaries and borders begin to have their effects on the once borderless culture of the valley. Muslims are set against Hindus where they once lived peacefully side by side. Just as cultural and national unity is produced by remembering that which connects and forgetting that which separates, as was argued above, so theories are also produced by remembering that which supports them and forgetting that which does not. It seems to me that Rushdie is not refuting the possibility of inter-civilisational clashes but rather pointing out that civilisations as entities opposing each other are consequences of the arbitrary drawing of borders. In relating the transfer of Kashmir from tolerance to strife, *Shalimar the Clown* demonstrates how a situation resembling a clash of civilisations is created. However, this also turns out to be counterproductive in terms of resistance to such essentialising interpretations. As the novel is showing how a conflict can be seen as a clash of civilisations, it also inevitably creates a clash.

However, Kashmir's tale in *Shalimar the Clown* is not about cultural conflicts alone. In my opinion, the novel also critiques the process of decolonisation. As was shown above, many of the characters in the novel pine for the Kashmir of the past, before the rumours of Pakistan started to circulate and before Elasticnagar established its chokehold on the area. Viewed from another direction, this could be seen as nostalgia for the colonial period, when Kashmir was still ruled by tolerance and the violence of decolonisation had not yet reached it. Decolonisation turns out to be a violent affair, and it is still an ongoing process in Kashmir. In other words, I see Kashmir as a place held in a kind of limbo between the colonial period and independence, unable to go back or move forwards. It is an example of the violent aspects of decolonisation as well as nationalism, as will be discussed in the following subsection.

3.2 "Dirty Underbelly of Paradise": From Kashmir to Strasbourg and Los Angeles

Although Kashmir occupies the centre stage in *Shalimar the Clown*, the novel is not solely about Kashmir. As Maximilian Ophuls states in a speech after he is appointed the US ambassador to India, "[t]he loss of one man's dream, one family's home, one people's rights, one woman's life … is the loss of all our freedoms: of every life, every home, every hope. Each tragedy belongs to itself and at the same time to everyone else. What diminishes any of us diminishes us all" (Rushdie 2006a, 172-173). If everywhere has truly become a part of everywhere else, as the novel seems to suggest, Kashmir's blood-soaked recent past and present is unique but also bears resemblance to other conflicts in other places, at other times. Furthermore, I argue here that it is not the uniqueness of the Kashmir conflict that seems to interest Rushdie; it is its similarity to other conflicts. This is the foundation on which *Shalimar the Clown* is built. As will be explored below, there are allegories and parallels present in the novel, connecting seemingly disparate events in remote places and different times to each other. In this way Kashmir can be connected to Strasbourg in the throes of the Second World War and to the riotous Los Angeles of the early 1990s.

As was seen in the previous section, when the walls surrounding Kashmir are brought down, the outside world pours in, and the walls are brought down by the aftermath of the subcontinent's partition into India and Pakistan. Thus, the tale of Kashmir is also part of the tale of India and Pakistan, of decolonisation and nation-forming. Ganapathy-Doré summarises the situation in Kashmir in the following way: "[p]roblems which were not resolved at the time of decolonization remain hideous open wounds and have led to a state of affairs where the very possibility of a renaissance of beauty and human redemption is being erased" (32). The Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* can thus be seen to stand in for the entire subcontinent, partitioned into two nations along the lines of religion, as well as the existence of numerous, often violent, sectarian camps within the two nations (Pitkin 258).[15] The India that looms in the background in the novel is not a secular, pluralist democracy, as its leaders wanted it to appear after independence; instead, *Shalimar the Clown* questions India's democracy and pluralism by critiquing its actions on its margins while also showing its unity as a nation-state to be a construction (Stadtler 195).

In other words, India, as well as Pakistan, is a construction of imagination in the sense that its seeming unity is to a large extent based on rhetoric and on undemocratic means of holding the crumbling construct together. In *Shalimar the Clown*, the crumbling is taking place in Kashmir, which is caught in the crossfire between two emerging, decolonising nation-states. In that crossfire, nationalism rears its head in Kashmir as well. Cries for self-determination and independence are heard, making General Kachhwaha ponder what constitutes a nation:

> Kashmir for the Kashmiris, a moronic idea. This tiny landlocked valley with barely five
> million people to its name wanted to control its own fate. Where did that kind of

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[15] Pitkin also mentions that some reviewers have read the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown* as a proxy for "the multicultural Bombay of his [Rushdie's] past, the loss of which, to time and social change, he mourns" (258). I agree with her view that while this reading is entirely apt, the partitioned subcontinent is a more salient analogy.

thinking get you? If Kashmir, why not also Assam for the Assamese, Nagaland for the Nagas? And why stop there? Why shouldn't towns or villages declare independence, or city streets, or even individual houses? Why not demand freedom for one's bedroom, or call one's toilet a republic? Why not stand still and draw a circle round your feet and name that Selfistan? (Rushdie 2006a, 126-127)

Again, as noted above in relation to the line separating the two sides of Kashmir, the General's reasoning turns the matter at hand into a farce, albeit a farce with a kernel of truth. Kashmir threatens the national integrity of India, imagined though it may be. If the Kashmiris succeeded in getting their will through, it could well lead to the gradual disintegration of the Indian nation. After all, as Bhabha argues, providing counter-narratives to the nation, narratives that question established national borders and boundaries, disturbs the way in which an imagined community is constructed as an essential, natural entity (1990b, 300). Kashmir is such a counter-narrative to the Indian nation.

Thus, the portrayal, in *Shalimar the Clown*, of the smashing of Kashmir's tolerant culture, as discussed in depth in section 3.1, could be seen as a clash between the Muslim and Hindu civilisations, but I argue that it could as well be read in terms of the bloody history of nationalism and nation-building. As General Kachhwaha rationalises, the term 'integral' is the key to understanding the purpose of the Indian army's presence in the valley:

> Elasticnagar was integral to the Indian effort and the Indian effort was to preserve the integrity of the nation. Integrity was a quality to be honored and an attack on the integrity of the nation was an attack on its honor and was not to be tolerated. … Kashmir was an integral part of India. An integer was a whole and India was an integer and fractions were illegal. Fractions caused fractures in the integer and were thus not integral. (Rushdie 2006a, 119)

Based on the assumption that Kachhwaha serves as a stand-in for Indian decision-makers, one might draw the conclusion that, when the integrity of the nation is set in opposition to the wishes of some of its people for independence, it seems to be the nation's integrity that officially wins the day. The India in *Shalimar the Clown* is a nation with crumbling edges, trying to hold itself together at practically any cost, resorting to violence more and more easily as the novel progresses. However, even as the army tries to uphold the nation's

integrity at its borders, it also gives rise to stronger opposition and unwittingly urges people to join resistance movements and terrorist factions; in short, causing sharper divisions to emerge not only across its borders but also within the nation, making the nation's crumbling a greater threat than before. I thus see the novel to argue that decolonisation and nationalism are not necessarily and only positive matters, and should not automatically be associated with freedom from oppression. Sivanandan argues that nationalism is a two-faced phenomenon, and could equally easily manifest itself in anti-colonialism and colonial liberation as in neocolonialism: it can lead to tyranny as easily as to liberty (Sivanandan 46). For the Kashmir of *Shalimar the Clown*, it would seem that British colonialism was better than Indian nationalism.[16] On the other hand, one could read Indian chokehold rule over Kashmir in the novel as another kind of colonialism as well, a colonialism performed by a decolonised state over one of its more reluctant constituent parts. I would argue that Rushdie is here questioning a common presupposition that former colonies should not be seen as colonisers themselves.

In the end, after the Indian army has performed its crackdown on Kashmir, General Kachhwaha concludes that those rallying for Kashmiri independence have lost the game: "'Kashmir for the Kashmiris' was no longer an option. Only the big boys were left standing, and so it was to be Kashmir for the Indians or Kashmir for the Pakistanis whose proxies the terror organizations were. Things had clarified and the creation of clarity was after all the universal goal of military activity" (Rushdie 2006a, 387). The creation of clarity here refers to the elimination of the Kashmiris as a participant in the fight for the control of Kashmir. The Kashmiris with their traditions of peaceful coexistence, religious tolerance, and mixed customs and culture do not fit in Kachhwaha's equation of India-versus-Pakistan. For him, the

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[16] Rushdie has shown his aversion to nationalism elsewhere by stating that in his view, "[n]ationalism is that 'revolt against history' which seeks to close what cannot any longer be closed. To fence in what should be frontierless", furthermore stating that "[g]ood writing assumes a frontierless nation. Writers who serve frontiers have become border guards" (2003, 67). In *Shalimar the Clown*, he is as far as he can be from a border guard.

existence of a community with a hybrid identity is not desirable, when there are two other communities with seemingly unified and seemingly opposing identities facing each other across the border. The border is there to separate people, and thus no one should live *on* the border, as the Kashmiris have apparently done. Thus, it is the attempt to be a pure identity that seems to be causing the trouble here, just as Weber argues in relation to Huntington's thesis on civilisational clashes (156). Furthermore, by omitting the Kashmiris from the equation, Kachhwaha simultaneously (at least in his mind) denies them subjectivity, which is one of the central components of nationalism. After all, as was mentioned in the previous section in relation to the Kashmiris creating their own past by remembering and forgetting, Bhabha argues that people are both objects and subjects of the nation they inhabit: they are objects in the sense that they "giv[e] the discourse [that produces the nation] an authority that is based on the pregiven or constituted historical origin or event" and subjects because, in their daily lives, they validate that discourse by repeating and reproducing it (1990b, 297). When the Kashmiris are denied the possibility to narrate their own nation, they are also denied the position of subjects. Instead, they become the objects in the narratives of other nations, namely India and Pakistan. Thus, it makes sense to say that the conflict in Kashmir is the legacy of decolonisation and nationalism in the two countries between which it is situated.

Kashmir is not, however, the only location in *Shalimar the Clown* that has been fought over, partitioned, and made violent. The connections wrought in the novel between seemingly disparate and spatially and temporally remote places are to the most part wrought through the main characters, especially through Maximilian Ophuls and his daughter India/Kashmira. More specifically, it is Max with his roots in World War II Strasbourg as well as in the quintessential postmodern metropolis of Los Angeles that is perhaps the greatest connecting point in the novel. After all, for Max, Kashmir is one lost paradise among others. Furthermore, it is Max who draws an analogy between Alsace, the formerly contested borderland between

Germany and France, and the partitioned Kashmir. When he is appointed the US ambassador to India, he states that

> it was because he was from Alsace that he hoped he might be able to understand India a little, since the part of the world where he was raised had also been defined and redefined for many centuries by shifting frontiers, upheavals and dislocations, flights and returns, conquests and reconquests … (Rushdie 2006a, 171-172)

Max's account is historically accurate since, in the past, Germany and France fought over the possession of Alsace-Lorraine, and the area has been under the rule of both. As early as 1918, Eckhardt stated that after France had to cede Alsace-Lorraine to Germany in 1871, the area became "one of the most difficult and most permanent problems of international relations" (431). Similar to Kashmir, Alsace-Lorraine was situated on a disputed borderland between two nations. Furthermore, Eckhardt also claims that the people of the area do not regard themselves to be either German or French but Alcase-Lorrainers (441), similar to Kashmiris who have not identified themselves as Indians or Pakistanis. Both areas have been diverse in religions: Kashmir with its Hindus and Muslims and Alsace-Lorraine with Protestants, Catholics, and an important Jewish community (Boswell 568). In this sense, there is a parallel between Kashmir and Alsace-Lorraine. Margolis also makes a connection between the two locations in saying that "[t]o bitter enemies India and Pakistan, Kashmir plays the same inflammatory role as Alsace-Lorraine did between France and Germany from 1870 to 1945, a jealously disputed territory that arouses fierce irredentist hatreds and exaggerated fears in both nations" (65).[17]

Furthermore, the Strasbourg of Max's youth is, to him, a utopian place that during the Second World War suffered a fate similar to that of Kashmir:

> His beloved Strasbourg metamorphosed … from river jewel into cheap Rhinestone. It

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[17] However, as Margolis also notes, the Franco-German conflict over Alsace and Lorraine has been solved (176). Nowadays, Strasbourg is located in the heart of an integrating Europe and the European Union, both geographically and because it acts, together with Brussels, as the home of the European Parliament.

turned into tasteless black bread and too many rutabagas and the disappearance of friends. Also the sneer of conquest above the collar of the gray uniform, the living death of collaboration in the eyes of the beautiful showgirls, the stinking gutter finales of the dead. It became rapid capitulation and slow resistance. Strasbourg, like Paris, shape-shifted and was no longer itself. It was the first paradise he lost. (Rushdie 2006a, 175)

On the basis of this extract, the path that Strasbourg followed during the war seems quite similar to Kashmir's path. Kashmir too changed its shape from a garden of tolerance into a contested terrain occupied by army camps and terrorised by religious fundamentalists. Most of the Kashmiris also seemed to give in to rather than hold out against their demands, demonstrating their own version of "rapid capitulation and slow resistance". In World War II Strasbourg, like in Kashmir, one can see the uglier face of nationalism. By pointing out and making use of these similarities between Kashmir and Alsace, I would argue that *Shalimar the Clown* also connects East to West, draws a parallel across a dividing line that has frequently been viewed insurmountable.

Indeed, when Max visits Kashmir for the first time, and for the first time lays his eyes on the Line of Control running across its terrain, he almost immediately draws a parallel between the conflicted territory opening before him and the "whiplash movements of the Franco-German frontier across its people's lives" (Rushdie 2006a, 226). The view in front of him is both spatially and temporally far from the Strasbourg of his youth, but he nonetheless sees their similarities: "Could any two places have been more different, he asked himself; could any two places have been more the same? Human nature, the great constant, surely persisted in spite of all surface differences" (*ibid.*). In other words, Max's devout wish is that, no matter what divides people, they are always connected by their shared humanity.

On the other hand, Max also doubts his capabilities to grasp the scope of the Kashmiri conflict, as well as taking a suspicious stance to interpreting by drawing parallels:

For the rest of his life Max Ophuls would remember that instant during which the shape of the conflict in Kashmir had seemed too great and alien for his Western mind to understand, and the sense of urgent need with which he had drawn his own experience around him, like a shawl. Had he been trying to understand, or to blind himself to his

> failure to do so? Did the mind discover likeness in the unlike in order to clarify the world, or to obscure the impossibility of such clarification? He didn't know the answer. But it was one hell of a question. (Rushdie 2006a, 226)

In effect, what Max ponders here is whether it is prudent or even acceptable to draw analogies that are general enough to connect wartime Strasbourg with Kashmir in the claws of India and Pakistan. On the other hand, how is he to make sense of the conflict before him without drawing from his own experiences? Is there likeness in the world, or is likeness merely something that is projected onto the world to make sense of it? These same questions could be asked of Huntington's clash of civilisations thesis. Huntington states that his thesis "provides an easily grasped and intelligible framework for understanding the world, distinguishing what is important from what is unimportant among the multiplying conflicts, predicting future developments, and providing guidelines for policy makers" (2002, 36). In *Shalimar the Clown*, Rushdie refutes the possibility of formulating "an easily graspable and intelligible framework for understanding the world", but he also seems to question the relativism inherent in the belief that every situation is unique in itself and fundamentally different from other situations.

Finally, of the main locations in the novel, there is Los Angeles, a quintessentially cosmopolitan metropolis on the western edge of the United States. It is fitting that Rushdie should choose this particular city, since it is in Los Angeles that many of the consequences of globalisation and migration are played out. Firstly, it is characterised by social heterogeneity, spatial extensiveness, local autonomies, and decentred politics; it is a place where one can see localisation and fragmentation in action (Dear 14-15). As a consequence of massive migration, both global and domestic, over the past few centuries, it has become possibly the most racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse metropolis in the world. In Los Angeles, migrants from Mexico, from all over Asia, and from Central and Southern Europe come into contact with white and black Americans, who themselves have their histories in voluntary or forced migration (Soja and Scott 5-6, 10, 14-16). All this is shot through with an "undercurrent of

racism and xenophobia", occasionally breaking through in violent riots (Soja and Scott 4), explained by the fact that "Los Angeles's evolution into a multiethnic world city was built on ethnic and racial inequality" (Ong and Blumenberg 325). Thus, it is the location of several cultural fault lines, not to mention the San Andreas Fault between the Pacific and the North American tectonic plates ("Fault", *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*), a place where both geological and cultural earthquakes can take place. In an era of globalisation in which, as noted in section 2, the politics of identity has been substituted with the politics of difference, and in which the margin has made its way to the centre, Los Angeles is a model for the centrality of the margin.

In *Shalimar the* Clown, Los Angeles is a city with no clear centre, a characteristic that Max admires because "[t]he idea of the center was in his view outdated, oligarchic, an arrogant anachronism. To believe in such a thing was to consign most of life to the periphery, to marginalize and in doing so to devalue" (Rushdie 2006a, 26-27). Because of its lack of a focal point, Max sees Los Angeles as "the true democratic city of the future" (*ibid.*). However, this model of the democratic metropolis of tomorrow has its history in Spanish colonialism as well as America's own internal expansion, while its present is characterised, among more positive images, by "the changing gang culture of the barrios, the trailer-park families in the shadow of the freeways, the swarming immigrant armies that fed the housing boom, the new pleasantvilles being built in the firetrap canyons to house the middle-class arrivistes, the less-pleasantvilles in the thick of the urban sprawl filling up with the Koreans, the Indians, the illegals" (Rushdie 2006a, 414-415). India/Kashmira, who is planning on making a documentary of contemporary life in California by returning to its colonial roots and following the trail of the first European land expedition in the area, is after precisely this side of the metropolis: "she wanted the dirty underbelly of paradise, the broken harp-strings, the cracked haloes, the narcotic bliss, the human bloat, the truth" (*ibid.*). Thus, in my view,

California is another lost paradise in *Shalimar the Clown*, a place that does not manifest its potential to be a model for the future, a metropolis where, due to the lack of a centre, all the constituent parts could be equal.

Yet, as Bhabha maintains, "it is the city which provides the space in which emergent identifications and new social movements of the people are played out" (1990b, 329). Supposedly this is because it is in cities such as Los Angeles that people from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds most often come into contact with each other, and because cities with a highly varied cultural make-up have turned into in-between spaces for many migrants and their descendants. Nevertheless a multicultural city in a globalising world may only be multicultural on the surface. What seems like a melting pot of cultures may, in fact, be riven by social and economic inequalities. It may be divided into separate cultural communities that have little contact with each other. According to this interpretation, multiculturalism does not refer to hybridity in the sense of the mixing of traditions and the creation of new identities. Here cultural diversity actually means the separation and segregation of cultures (McLeod 227-228), or, to use a formulation provided by Rushdie in an interview, "little apartheids" (2009, 78).[18] This is the most fitting description of the multiculturalism in real-life Los Angeles (see Dear, Ong and Blumenberg, Soja and Scott), and also a description provided, albeit between the lines, for the Los Angeles of *Shalimar the Clown*.

In the end, the Los Angeles of the novel turns out to be as violent as Kashmir and Strasbourg. In the novel, "[e]verywhere was a mirror of everywhere else. Executions, police brutality, explosions, riots: Los Angeles was beginning to look like wartime Strasbourg; like

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[18] In the interview, Rushdie shows his support for cultural integration over multicultural appeasement, because in his opinion, multiculturalism should mean the mixing of cultures, not the strengthening of the differences separating them (2009, 78). In *Shalimar the Clown*, rather than stating his personal opinions outright, he rather demonstrates what, in his opinion, is the darker side of multiculturalism: its creation of "little apartheids".

Kashmir" (Rushdie 2006a, 443). This is the Los Angeles of the early 1990s, during the riots precipitated by the beating of Rodney King by policemen. Again, connections are drawn across the boundaries of time and space to bring distant places together. The amateur videotape of Rodney King's beating "looked, to many people, like something from Tiananmen Square or Soweto" (*ibid.*). Furthermore,

> When the King jury found the policemen not guilty, the city exploded, giving its verdict on the verdict by setting itself on fire, like a suicide bomber, like Jan Palach. … drivers were being pulled from their cars and chased and beaten by men holding rocks. The motionless body of a man called Reginald Denny was being savagely beaten. A huge piece of cinder block was thrown at his head by a man who did a war dance of celebration and made a gang sign at the sky, taunting the news helicopters and airline passengers up there, maybe even taunting God. Stores were looted, cars were torched, there were fires everywhere … What was burning? Everything. (Rushdie 2006a, 443-444)[19]

Thus, there is as much potential for violence in Los Angeles as there is in Kashmir or in Strasbourg. I would argue that what seems to be most important to note about the parallels drawn in the novel is that, above all else, the connecting point between these remote places and spaces and the different ethnic groups inhabiting them is violence.

On top of or underneath or intertwined with the other locations in the novel is the phantom world of (mostly fundamentalist Islamic) terrorism, which both Shalimar and Max inhabit. It shows the darker side of globalisation and the blurring of boundaries: terrorism as a border-crossing phenomenon. It cannot be contained within certain geographical limits, nor can it be characterised by solely local or national interests. According to Mendes, the novel "highlights the way transnational terrorist networks and fundamentalist movements have assisted in the weakening of territorial borders", thus "postulating … a new age of the post-

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[19] Reginald Denny was "a white trucker innocently passing through the heart of the riot area, [who] was brutally beaten by bricks to the head from four attackers". Denny was one of many innocent bystanders who were attacked by rioters. What made his beating famous was the fact that, like the beating of Rodney King by members of the Los Angeles Police Department, it was caught on videotape and shown on television (Siegel 140).

frontier" (97).[20] It rather seems that the terrorism in *Shalimar the Clown* occupies an in-between space. If one uses Huntington's theory as a starting point in its analysis, it is situated somewhere on the fault lines of the Islamic civilisation, on the margins that are in contact, often violently, with other civilisations. What terrorism has created, in Tygstrup's words, is "a new territory in the network of training camps, hideaways, trafficking routes, and unregistered vessels that grows and expands to become an unprecedented actor in the state of world affairs" (209). In a way, it stands for the movement from local to global acts of resistance. This is the world that Shalimar enters when he goes over the mountains to learn the crafts of terrorists.

Part and parcel weapons training and other such crafts the prospective terrorists learn in *Shalimar the Clown* is religion as taught by the iron mullah Bulbul Fakh. Curiously, when he preaches to the recruits about the primacy of ideology, his arguments seem to follow the same course of thinking as Huntington's in his clash of civilisations thesis:

> Ideology was primary. The infidel, obsessed with possessions and wealth, did not grasp this, and believed that men were primarily motivated by social and material self-interest. This was the mistake of all infidels, and also their weakness, which made it possible for them to be defeated. The true warrior was not primarily motivated by worldly desires, but by what he believed to be true. Economics was not primary. Ideology was primary. (Rushdie 2006a, 331)

This is a very close duplicate of what Huntington writes, although for some reason he does not see religion as ideology. As recounted in section 2, he argues that cultural identity takes primacy over economic and political issues. He makes a distinction between, on the one hand, conflicts during the Cold War, which were related to economy and ideology and in which people could choose and change their sides, and on the other, conflicts after the end of the Cold War, which will be fought over cultural or civilisational issues, and in which choosing

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[20] Mendes is here referring to Rushdie's own thesis of the post-frontier, as summarised in the theory section in footnote 4.

and changing sides becomes an impossibility because culture is a given (Huntington 1993, 27). In the above quote from *Shalimar the Clown*, the iron mullah hints to the fact that he has realised this distinction when the "infidels" supposedly have not. They think it is all about money and possessions, when in fact, according to the mullah, it is about the truth.

What is the truth, then? It is here that Rushdie truly shows his contempt for essentialism and religious fundamentalism. The iron mullah preaches about the truth without ever actually telling what it includes. He demands his listeners to surrender to the truth, to give up everything they have, including their families and their pasts, for the truth. All he tells of it to the recruits is that everything they thought they knew is a lie. As can be deduced from the following quote, the truth seems to be against everything the infidel believes in:

> The infidel believes in the immutability of the soul … But we believe that all living things can be transformed in the service of the truth. The infidel says that a man's character will decide his fate; we say that a man's fate will forge his character anew. The infidel holds that the picture of the world he draws is a picture we must all recognize. We say that his picture means nothing to us, for we live in a different world. The infidel speaks of universal truth. We know that the universe is an illusion and that truth lies beyond the illusion, where the infidel cannot see. The infidel believes the world is his. But we shall drive him from his redoubts and cast him into darkness and live in Paradise and rejoice as he plunges into the fire. (Rushdie 2006a, 334)

I would argue that Bulbul Fakh seems to preach an ideology of absolute opposition, in which it is not possible to agree with the "infidel" on anything. He is preaching that because the world is in disarray, God has sent them a martial religion, at the root of which is "the desire to crush the infidel" (Rushdie 2006a, 327). Thus, crudely put, the truth brings down all boundaries within its realm while opposing all that is outside it. This closely resembles Weber's construction of Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations: conflicts are caused by differences which are located at the fault lines of civilisations, automatically assuming that civilisations are difference-free within (162).

What is most important about the preachings of the iron mullah is not whether he is right or wrong, or whether it is indeed the truth he is preaching, but the fact that he gains

followers. The men are drawn to his unwavering belief in the truthfulness of what he preaches: "[t]he new recruits listening to the iron mullah felt their old lives shrivel in the flame of his certainty" (Rushdie 2006a, 333). Certainty makes the thorough explanation of the truth unnecessary. Similarly, as argued in section 2, it does not matter whether Huntington's clash of civilisations thesis is right but whether people perceive it to be right and apply it to practice as if it were. Certainty in the rightness of a cause makes people follow it, often without question. This is what happens to one of Shalimar's co-recruits, whom Rushdie has ironically named "the invisible commander". In his fervour for the truth, he strips naked and declares that he has no name, face, body, or soul except those the truth wants him to have:

> While the invisible commander was naked, Shalimar the clown had understood how young he was; probably only eighteen or nineteen years old, young enough to be prepared to erase himself in a cause, young enough to make himself a blank sheet upon which another man could write. (Rushdie 2006a, 333)

In other words, the invisible commander is like a glass bowl: transparent until it is filled with whatever one wants to fill it with. Here, as Fernández-Kelly points out, we see how "Rushdie's outrage over the depersonalizing actions of extreme Muslims is tempered by his understanding of the effects that such actions can have on young vulnerable men" (473). On the other hand, through the invisible commander one can also see Rushdie's contempt for fundamentalist Islam's empty core: he gives everything to the truth and in exchange gains true invisibility, becomes nothing.

Thus, as Fernández-Kelly points out, the novel implicitly condemns any military activities and violence, including terrorism, that is threatening to destroy local differences and create a unified Muslim world opposing the arrogance of the West (473). This is what the iron mullah is attempting to do in his sermons. Put shortly, he is preaching absolute similarity within the community of the servants of the truth and absolute difference to the infidel outside it. In other words, he is attempting to create a singular identity, to eliminate all matters that could possibly cause a conflict of interest, to bring down all boundaries within while

strengthening the surrounding border. Curiously, this is also an apt description of Kashmir before the commencement of the conflict, as noted in 3.1, although the Kashmiris did not build a boundary around their community with the purpose of keeping others out. Furthermore, as will be shown in 4.2 below, it is also more or less what Max would want to do in the world: to bring down walls separating people from each other.

In reality, however, the terrorist movement in *Shalimar the Clown* is very heterogeneous within. There are those who give themselves to the truth, like the invisible commander, but also those who want to take part in terrorist activities but cannot give themselves up to the truth because they, like Shalimar, "also had private matters to attend to" (Rushdie 2006a, 334, see 4.1). In addition, the backgrounds of the fighters are various. There is, for instance, the Filipino Janjalani who seems to be driven by social reasons in his home country and the desire to cause mayhem among the perceived enemy, as well as a homosexual Afghan, who bends the truth so that his homosexuality instead becomes manliness, allowing him to share his bed with his boy-lover. It would rather seem that no matter how hard the iron mullah attempts to unify the movement within, it remains diverse in many respects. The same could be argued about Huntington's civilisations: such enormous entities can never truly be homogeneous, no matter how hard one tries to rhetorically and discursively construct them as such. Thus, terrorism as described in *Shalimar the Clown* could be seen as a crude synonym of Huntington's thesis of civilisations, or any such attempt to collapse differences into one identity. On the other hand, it could as well be merely the political face of a movement which, if it showed its true internal fragmentation, would not obtain as much attention to its cause as by presenting a unified face. To use Fernández-Kelly's words, "Islamic fundamentalism is heterogeneous within but it is also the voice of political dissidence, couching communitarian complaints in the mantle of a universal movement" (473).

Thus, as I have argued above, *Shalimar the Clown* does not provide an easily graspable

picture of the world, but rather complicates it by presenting multiple interpretations. It presents the conflict in Kashmir not only as a religious dispute but also as a consequence of decolonisation and Indian and Pakistani nationalism. Nationalism is also what is behind the Second World War and Franco-German conflict over Alsace-Lorraine. The interpretations provided in the novel are further complicated because the novel draws parallels between places both spatially and temporally remote from each other, connecting the East to the West through similar experiences. The novel also discusses problems that globalisation has ushered in: multiculturalism with mutually hostile "little apartheids" as well as terrorism as a border-crossing phenomenon. In the end, the novel seems to arrive at the conclusion that what connects the world, what makes differently constructed spaces seem similar, is the experience of violence. The reasons for its occurrence may be context-specific, or they may be roughly parallel, but if reasons are ignored, violence is the same the world over.

4   Lives Flowing into Each Other: Configurations of Identity in *Shalimar the Clown*

As has been explored in the previous two subsections, configurations of space affect people's daily lives. In the following two subsections, on the other hand, I will discuss how configurations of space are closely linked to the construction of identity. I will show that Boonyi, Shalimar, Max, and India/Kashmira are all, in their own way, located in an in-between state. It is in this location that space and identity collapse into each other, creating a whole that cannot be viewed in full without taking into account both of its sides. This is best seen in the many allegorical readings the characters offer.

Furthermore, in section 4.1 I will discuss how both Boonyi and Shalimar, in their own ways, try to erase certain aspects of their pasts in an attempt to return to some kind of a point of origin, and how they are incapable of moving forward. In section 4.2 I concentrate on Max and India/Kashmira who succeed where Shalimar and Boonyi fail: they successfully utilise the resources provided by their pasts to move forward. Unlike Shalimar and Boonyi, they embrace their hybrid identities, Max up front and India/Kashmira more gradually and reservedly.

4.1   "The Muskadoon still scurried through her dreams": Shalimar and Boonyi

It is difficult to draw a line between people and the space they occupy in the world. This is made abundantly clear in *Shalimar the Clown*, in which places flow into people and inhabit their bodies, at least allegorically or metaphorically. In other words, the walls between space and people come down because, as discussed in section 2 above, space as a cultural, social, and political entity is always produced by people. It is a construction of imagination, providing viable grounds for equating the people who do the imagining with the imagined space itself. As I will argue below, this is what, quite literally, has happened to the four main characters of *Shalimar the Clown*. Firstly, it is in names that one can see these connections between space and identity. With Boonyi, it is her original name that provides the link.

Boonyi is merely a name she chose for herself in her youth, a "local word for the celestial Kashmiri chinar tree" (Rushdie 2006a, 56). It is a substitute for the original Bhoomi, meaning 'the earth', a name its bearer does not care to have: "My name is … mud and dirt and stone and I don't want it", she states (*ibid.*). Already here, in the desire to rename herself, one can see Boonyi's wish to break free from tradition, as already noted in section 3.1. She tries to do this by taking off with Max, but it turns out not to be as easy as it seems. As will be seen below, even celestial chinar trees have their roots.

Thus, it is Boonyi's original name, Bhoomi, which first points to the possibility of reading the character as "an allegory for the territory that nation states want to grab in order to consolidate their power" (Ganapathy-Doré 34). This is an example of a common practice in nationalism as well as colonialism to imagine the nation-state or any similar entity as a woman, a penchant that can be seen, for instance, in the figures of Britannia, Mother India, and the French Marianne (Loomba 215). In literary criticism on *Shalimar the Clown*, Boonyi is, indeed, most often seen to represent Kashmir (Ghanshyam 81, Murphy 354), which, crudely put, has been torn apart by the nationalist ambitions of India and Pakistan, as discussed in 3.2. Furthermore, the most common reading of Max and Boonyi's relationship seems to be allegorical as well, fuelled by Boonyi's own wordplay with her lover. When she becomes frustrated with her husband, Shalimar, for not rushing in to rescue her from the claws of the American diplomat, she begins to release that frustration by preaching her love for Kashmir. In this code-language, 'Kashmir' refers to Shalimar and 'the Indian armed forces' to Max and to "the American occupation of her body" (Rushdie 2006a, 248-249). However, this seems to imply that although Kashmir, in her mind, refers to Shalimar, it is more appropriate to equate it with Boonyi herself. Shalimar rather represents its people, whom Boonyi castigates for their cowardice and passivity "in the face of the horrible crimes committed against" them (*ibid.*). To Max she rants about the humiliation of 'the Indian

army's' presence in 'Kashmir', about "the shame of having your boots march all over my private fields" (*ibid.*). While covertly expressing her love for and her frustration with her cuckolded husband, overtly it seems that Boonyi is criticising the Kashmiri people for not taking a more active role in opposing the Indian army's oppressive presence in the valley.

Just as Boonyi's original name invites one to see her as metaphor for land, so Shalimar's name also strengthens his allegorical significance in the novel. At the beginning of the book, the first time he is introduced to the reader as Max's new chauffeur, [21] India/Kashmira sees Shalimar as "[a] driver from paradise. His hair was a mountain stream. There were narcissi from the banks of rushing rivers and peonies from the high meadows growing on his chest, poking out through his open collar. Around him there raucously echoed the sound of the *swarnai*" (Rushdie 2006a, 13). This brings to her mind "the other Shalimar, the Mughal garden of Kashmir, descending in verdant liquid terraces to a shining lake" (Rushdie 2006a, 17). Above all, his "name meant 'abode of joy'" (*ibid.*). Furthermore, Shalimar's tale can be read as a parallel of the tale of Kashmir, in that they both experience a "drastic transition from innocence to betrayal" (Ghanshyam 80). Because of his naming, Detmers suggests that Shalimar has, in the novel, the "double role of being both a subject and an agent of the expulsion" from paradise (2010, 362). He is a victim of Boonyi's infidelity and the breaking of their marriage, thus standing in for the paradise and its traditions of tolerance that Boonyi's deed smashes, but by turning to violence and terrorism, he also participates in smashing that paradise.

Another, slightly different reading is provided by Murphy. He argues that Boonyi stands in for a Kashmir that can at least partly be blamed for having been "polluted by greedy aspirations for Western commodities" (354). In the end, she becomes bloated from excessive

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[21] Shalimar acquires a job as Max's driver to get closer to his intended victim.

eating: "Her appetite had grown to subcontinental size. It crossed all frontiers of language and custom. She was vegetarian and nonvegetarian, fish- and meat-eating, Hindu, Christian and Muslim, a democratic, secularist omnivore" (Rushdie 2006a, 255). According to Murphy, this is a consequence of Boonyi's "placing her aspirations and trust in American hands" (354). On the other hand, still another allegorical reading has to do with the word 'subcontinental' in the above quote from the novel. Boonyi leaves secluded Kashmir because she feels trapped in her home village. She wants to see the world, but ends up spending her time sequestered in her pink apartment with the too-bright lights. The only way she can experience the world is by, literally, devouring it. Thus, she becomes a metaphor of sorts for the entire Indian subcontinent, a grotesque entity stuffing different religions and cultures into its bloated body.[22] Furthermore, she can be seen as a parallel to and critique of the way Indian novels are viewed by Western consumers: neat summarisations of a vast nation, easy to swallow and digest (see section 2 above; for a further discussion, see Huggan).

Justifications for reading Max and Boonyi's affair as an allegory are strengthened by the fact that it is based on a contract, the terms of which are negotiated by the two parties in the same manner as the terms of any international agreements. However, the negotiation also points towards an issue that many critics seem to pass over with little or no mention: Boonyi's own complicity in her fall. She ponders that "[j]ust as *mutual* self-interest was the only real guarantee of a durable accord between nations, so Boonyi's perception that this liaison was her best chance of furthering her own purposes constituted a reliable guarantee of her future

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[22] In the novel, the relationship of Boonyi and Max is interpreted in the United States as an allegory for the war in Vietnam, where Boonyi is, obviously, equated with Vietnam. This theme is further developed when, "[o]ne day he [Shalimar] proposed that the scene in the Anarkali play [which is part of Pachigam's performance repertoir] in which the dancing girl was grabbed by the soldiers who had come to take her to be bricked in her wall might be sharpened if the soldiers came on in American army uniform and Anarkali donned the flattened straw cone of a Vietnamese peasant woman. The American seizure of Anarkali-as-Vietnam would, he argued, immediately be understood by their audience as a metaphor for the Indian army's stifling presence in Kashmir, which they were forbidden to depict. One army would stand in for another and the moment would give their piece an added contemporary edge" (Rushdie 2006a, 289).

seriousness and discretion" (Rushdie 2006a, 242, my emphasis). Furthermore, as Max happily reflects after the agreement is settled, all his "significant requirements were in place: not only discretion and seriousness but also complete docility, absolute compliance, maximum attentiveness, exceptional eagerness to please and unlimited access, all fueled by the *girl's* determination to better herself, to make the leap from the village to the world, to give herself the future she believed she deserved" (*ibid.*, my emphasis). This is Western colonialism over an Oriental land and Oriental submissiveness before the West, but with a twist: the relationship is not one-way because Boonyi's rantings about Kashmir affect Max's politics in India.[23] As Bradley and Tate point out, an "allegorical reading [of the two characters' relationship] misses Boonyi's sense of agency" (92). She wants to leave her home village, her family and friends, her husband, because to her, Pachigam has become a stiflingly dull place with little chance of advancing in the world; an enclosed garden, beautiful but secluded, cut off from the outside world. When she talks to Max for the very first time, she "feels a breeze on her cheek, as if a door were opening and the air of the outside were being allowed to enter" (Rushdie 2006a, 232). She wants to step through that door, cross the threshold to another world, into fresh air after the mustiness of Kashmir.[24] As mentioned in section 3.1, she represents the desire to break free from traditions and to move forwards.

But once the threshold is crossed, there is no chance of return. And Boonyi wants to return, because, no matter how hard she tries, she cannot relinquish her hold of her past:

> Pachigam was a trap, she told herself every night, but the Muskadoon still scurried through her dreams, its cold swift mountain music singing in her ears. … When she closed her eyes she invariably saw her father, her husband, her companions, her

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[23] Morton sees this as proof that, instead of making the allegory of US foreign policy in South Asia clear, the novel questions the viability of allegory as "an appropriate literary form for a divided and militarised Kashmir" (347). On the other hand, the novel could also be saying that in colonial and imperial situations, influences do not travel in one direction alone; rather, both sides are influenced by each other.

[24] Paradoxically, when opening the door to the outside world means opportunities and freedom for Boonyi, in Kashmir it resulted in the destruction of the area's tolerant culture (see 3.1).

appointed place on earth. Not her new lover but her old, lost life. *My old life like a prison*, she told herself savagely, but her heart called her a fool. She had it all upside down and backward, her heart scolded her. What she thought of as her former imprisonment had been freedom, while this so-called liberation was no more than a gilded cage. (Rushdie 2006a, 245, italics in the original)

When she is no longer in Kashmir, she forgets why she ever wanted to leave, or alternatively remembers why she should have stayed. She had first constructed Pachigam as a cage and the outside world as free air, but after fleeing into free air, her construction is turned on its head: what she formerly thought as a cage transforms in her eyes into freedom, and her supposed freedom into another gilded cage.[25] She has entered an in-between place: she cannot leave Kashmir wholly behind her, and because of this yearning for her place of origin, she cannot wholly enter the world outside it. In the words of Ghanshyam, "[t]hough she thought that by her action she had gained release from the village existence that she so detested, yet the stirrings of her heart never let her escape the Kashmir embedded in her very being, her soul" (81).

The more she yearns for home, the farther away she drifts from her lover, Max. Their separation is described through the metaphor of speech. At the beginning of their relationship, she is so near to Max that "[a]t their closest they had sometimes forgotten which language [Kashmiri or English] they were speaking; the two tongues blurred into one. As they drifted apart so did their speech. Now she spoke her own language and he spoke his. Each understood the other well enough" (Rushdie 2006a, 258). When they are truly together, almost as one, their speech enters an in-between space, becomes a hybrid. Once they drift apart, they revert

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[25] There is a certain similarity in Boonyi's thinking with how the Kashmiris see their history, as described in section 3.1. In the beginning of their story, as told in *Shalimar the Clown*, they only concentrated on the issues that supported Kashmiriyat: tolerance, commonalities crossing religious and cultural differences. However, once the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir escalates, they start to remember all the intolerance and religious and cultural strife in their history, forgetting tolerance and commonalities. Both the Kashmiris and Boonyi choose to forget certain things about themselves and their past in order to construct an identity fitting to the situation at hand. When the situation changes, what was forgotten is remembered, and identity is reconstructed to accommodate it.

back to their original languages, while still understanding each other. What Rushdie seems to be saying here is that to achieve true unity, the component parts must be completely moulded together, but mere understanding does not necessitate such moulding. One can understand what one is opposed to without that understanding breaking one's opposition.

Finally, Max's affair with Boonyi becomes public knowledge and blows on his face. He is deposed from his position as the American ambassador to India, and is forced to leave the country. His marriage also comes to an end, and as a parting shot, his wife forces Boonyi to give up her newborn daughter in exchange for the chance to return to Kashmir. Thus, "as the small plane [on its way to Kashmir] flew north the emptiness in her arms began to feel like an intolerable burden. The weight of her missing child, the cradled void, was too much to bear. Yet it had to be borne" (Rushdie 2006a, 271).

However, returning to Kashmir is more easily said than done. Boonyi carries too many new memories, too much history, to go back to what once was. Even the mountains do not want her to pass: they are "pushing her back, telling her to take her mighty burden and begone" (Rushdie 2006a, 272). The weight of the child she abandoned to return home is too much for the airplane to carry over the mountains, and so Boonyi has to let her go. Thus, just as nations "lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind's eye" (Bhabha 1990a, 1), so also identity "mythically … constructs and invents its past" (Hall 1996, 132). Like the Kashmiris, who, as discussed in section 3.1, first chose to remember the tolerance of their history and forget the persecutions and injustices, and later did precisely the opposite, Boonyi attempts to reconstruct her identity by trying to forget the things which changed her in the eyes of the villagers of Pachigam and especially the eyes of her husband Shalimar. She tries to let go of the deeds that cast her out of Kashmir, as well as the evidence that proves she committed them. In other words, she returns to Kashmir pretending that nothing happened, and to do that she even releases the final grip she has of her

daughter: the memory of holding her. One metaphorical reading could thus be that Boonyi expresses nostalgia for the past: she is yearning to return to the time before her body was colonised by the American ambassador, trying to recover her pre-colonial past.

However, the mountains were right when they tried to push Boonyi away, for there is no going back. As Tygstrup formulates it, "[d]eterritorialization may end up in reterritorialization; or it might not. It also might happen to terminate in a lasting confinement to places where existential strategies of reterritorialization do not connect with empowering social and material opportunities" (207). In other words, as was recounted in the theory section, although migrants may pass the political borders and enter a new nation, they may not be accommodated within the imaginative borders of that nation (McLeod 212). They have been deterritorialised but not reterritorialised. They are there but do not belong. The same applies to immigrants and their relationship to home: once they have emigrated, they are incapable of returning home anymore because that home only exists in their imagination. This is what happens to Boonyi: she thinks she is going home, only to discover a place quite different from the one in her imagination, the place she had left behind. On the other hand, as Rushdie himself has said, "the past is a country from which we have all emigrated" (2010, 12). It is the past that Boonyi wants to return to, as noted above.

Boonyi's fate is the fate of the migrant who tries to gain access to a society. Although she manages to pass the mountains and finds herself in Kashmir, she is no longer socially welcome to the village of her birth. As Tygstrup points out, "after having mourned her desertion, the villagers have buried her *in absentia*" (209, italics in the original). She has become "a barely recognized phantom, constricted in a social limbo" (*ibid.*). She is exiled into the hut of the late Nazarébaddoor, the by now dead village prophetess, in the woods at the edge of the village. In other words, she is buried alive, existing somewhere between life and death. Yet she wants to re-enter the world of the living, to regain the trust and love of the

husband she jilted. "It was her destiny to live among the ghosts as a half-ghost until she learned how to cross the line" (Rushdie 2006a, 301).

The strategy Boonyi chooses to use in her attempt to re-enter the world of the living has to do with memory and forgetting. She hopes that "by adopting the abnegatory posture of the disciple before the Divine, by erasing herself, she might also erase her crime and make herself what her husband could once again love" (Rushdie 2006a, 282). She has to purge herself of her past, to set aside the identity she had as Boonyi and become Bhoomi, 'the earth', because, as her father whispers to her through the walls of her hut, "[t]he earth hurts no one. Be like that. The earth hates no one. Be like that as well" (*ibid.*). Boonyi must transform herself in stages into what she was before she left. Just as "[t]he subject … through the process of memory changes his past in an attempt to create his present to form what he is" (Dascălu 55), so Boonyi tries to erase her past, tries to forget to remember what she did to create herself anew in the present, to start from a clean slate. Or, to formulate it differently, she has to return to a point in the past in which she had not yet committed anything that needs to be forgotten.

However, Boonyi runs into the wall that separates self-perception from the perception of others. Even though she might, in her own eyes, succeed in recreating herself, her recreation might not be a success in the eyes of others. They cannot forget what she did because that deed has marked her different from the rest of them. Because Boonyi once chose to leave Kashmir, she also inadvertently chose exile. Even though she returns, she cannot do it fully, because the place she wanted to return to no longer exists and because the villagers no longer welcome her back. As was mentioned in section 3.1, Boonyi's elopement not only heralded the failure of Kashmiriyat, the symbol of which her marriage to Shalimar had been, but also brought an end to the sharing of stories, because Boonyi's was no longer a story anyone wanted to share (Rushdie 2006a, 295). Thus, they not only drive her to the margins of their society but also to the margins of their consciousness.

As Dascălu says, "[e]xile takes on a structural position of radical difference within the system of identity and nationality" because it cannot be wholly incorporated within such a system (11). Boonyi stands for this "radical difference" within the identity of the village of Pachigam and within Kashmiriyat. As Bhabha maintains, cultural difference "resists totalization" and thus disturbs power and knowledge, "producing other spaces of subaltern signification" (1990b, 312). Her position at the edge of the society, the place where difference is ushered, could be seen as such a space, a place where "*something begins its presencing*" (Bhabha 1994, 5, italics in the original).[26] The problem, however, is that Boonyi does not want to challenge the power of the society that has driven her into marginal existence. Instead, as noted above, she tries to erase her past, thus also trying to erase the difference that sets her apart. One way to interpret the situation is that Boonyi does not take advantage of her position on the margins to usher in change. However, Rushdie seems to be saying that not all people have equal chances to take advantage of their marginal positions. In the end, a young woman from a remote Kashmiri village may not have the opportunity or the will to usher in change. Instead, she adopts the villagers' viewpoint that difference does not belong within identity and should be eliminated (cf. Weber in section 2). It could be said that she is not given the opportunity to do anything else.

What she has the opportunity to do, however, is accuse Shalimar of being precisely what his real name, Noman, implied: not man enough to pursue her after her elopement. In Boonyi's mind, Shalimar "was mooning over her picture and weeping into the waters of the stupid Muskadoon like an impotent goof, accepting his fate like a true Kashmiri coward, content to be trampled over by anyone who felt like doing a bit of trampling" (Rushdie 2006a,

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[26] Boonyi's position in relation to the village of Pachigam is a parallel of the Kashmir's position in relation to India in the novel. As noted in section 3.2, the Kashmiris' wish to have Kashmir all to themselves clashes with Indian nationalism and the perceived integrity of the Indian nation-state. From its location on the margins of the society, it threatens to usher in change.

246). However, she is wrong in accusing Shalimar for being an impotent goof and thinking he patiently waits for her return, like he claims in his letters. In truth, his brothers have once had to drag him back home when he attempted to go south to murder the ambassador. As Firdaus Noman, his mother, states upon his return, "[h]e has an anger in him that would end the world if it could" (Rushdie 2006a, 288).

Boonyi's elopement breaks something inside Shalimar: "[t]he truth was that Shalimar the clown had stopped loving Boonyi the instant he learned of her infidelity, stopped dead like an unplugged automaton, and the immense crater left behind by the destruction of that love had at once been filled by a sea of bile-yellow hatred" (Rushdie 2006a, 295-296). He switches from one extreme to another, from absolute love to absolute hate, as if there was nothing in between. At the same time, he could be seen to refute Hall's formulations that identity is always fluid and driven by different things in different situations. It seems that his whole identity is concentrated around this core of hatred, making it his driving force, the flame that keeps him warm at night. That hatred, on the other hand, is fed by the perception that by eloping with the American ambassador, Boonyi has spat on his husband's honour. In Shalimar's mind, "[h]onor ranked above everything else, above the sacred vows of matrimony, above the divine injunction against cold-blooded murder, above decency, above culture, above life itself" (Rushdie 2006a, 322).[27] It appears to be like India/Kashmira later formulates it, taunting Shalimar: "You murdered two human beings because of your egotism your amazing egotism that valued your honor more highly than their lives" (Rushdie 2006a, 473). Furthermore, as Pesso-Miquel points out, and as can be deduced from Boonyi's downgrading

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[27] Rushdie himself has stated in an interview that Shalimar sees Boonyi's infidelity as an act dishonouring his manhood, and that by killing, he is trying to rebuild his sense of manliness (2006b, 7). Furthermore, Pesso-Miquel sees Shalimar to stand for Pakistan, "a sterile, lost world of masculinity and virile honour" (156), an interpretation I find rather stereotyping and Orientalist in its characterisation. However, she is right in pointing out that when thinking of his home and family, Shalimar always thinks of his father and brothers, never his mother.

remarks about her husband, it is also Boonyi's "psyche [that] is so moulded by this [same] code of honour that when she suspects him of no longer seeking to revenge himself, she starts to despise [him]" (151).

However, ultimately, the novel does not provide a straightforward causal effect for why Shalimar becomes what he becomes. His mother, Firdaus, ponders on his will to kill everyone, from his unfaithful wife to "the philandering ambassador" and the entire Indian army, coming to the conclusion that "either a djinni has taken him over or else it has been hiding inside him all this time, as if he was a bottle waiting for someone to uncork him, and either that's what Boonyi did when she came back from the American or something happened to him when he was far from home" near the Line of Control (Rushdie 2006a, 311). What Firdaus is asking is whether the potential for such murdering rage is present within a person and merely waiting to be released, or whether it is induced by something outside a person, by some external stimulus. However, Shalimar's father, Abdullah, seems to downplay his wife's concerns, stating that instead of a devil talking through their son, "it's his manhood … He's still young enough to have the idea that he can change history, whereas I am getting accustomed to the idea of being useless, and a man who feels useless stops feeling like a man. So if he is fired up by the possibility of being useful, don't put out that flame. Maybe killing bastards is what the times require" (Rushdie 2006a, 311-312). [28] Thus, Shalimar's transformation could be attributed to anger caused by Boonyi's infidelity as well as anger caused by the Indian army's treatment of the local population, or it could be a sign of the times, something many young people turn to in order to be useful. Circumstances dictate what people can and will do with their lives. For Shalimar, joining the anti-Indian resistance and later the terrorist movement is

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[28] Max Ophuls ponders on the same issue but on a larger scale after one of his acquaintances is killed by an IRA bomb: "There was no end to treachery. Survive one plot and the next one would get you. The cycle of violence had not been broken. Perhaps it was endemic to the human race, a manifestation of the life cycle. Perhaps violence showed us what we meant, or, at least, perhaps it was simply what we did" (Rushdie 2006a, 218).

made possible by circumstances. He joins in because he finds it an easy and viable way to vent his anger.

Fernández-Kelly is arguing that Boonyi's leaving Shalimar is not an extraordinary event in any way, but under the right circumstances, the feelings awakened by that event evolve into something much more sinister; in other words, "the disappointed soul is easy prey to violent seductions" (473). This seems to be supported in the novel as well, as can be deduced from the following extract: [t]The murderous rage of Shalimar the clown, his possession by the devil, burned fiercely in him and carried him forward, but in the murmurous night it was just one of many stories, one small particular untold tale in a crowd of such tales, one minuscule portion of the unwritten history of Kashmir" (Rushdie 2006a, 323). It seems that if Shalimar's tale is one tale among many, there must be others who have found an outlet for their emotions in the resistance movements in Kashmir or the terrorist movements across the mountains (see the discussion of terrorism in 3.2). Perhaps Rushdie's purpose is to remind the reader that "Shalimar has a sense of self that clashes with the accepted wisdom on the motivations of modern jihadis and terrorists, according to which they are stripped of volition by means of indoctrination and promises of rewards in heaven" (Bastos Martins 58). The portrayal of Shalimar is accomplished in such a way as to suggest that "a terrorist does not have to be the irrational, brainwashed fanatic portrayed by the western media"; instead, the actions of terrorists have their causes, have specific histories that can be unearthed (Bastos Martins 57). Shalimar is not like the invisible commander discussed in 3.2, an empty vessel for the masterminds of terrorist organisations to deploy as they will. He is involved in their causes, but he has not given himself to them. He is "a reminder that the militant is, before anything, an individual, a subject, a subjectivity" (Bastos Martins 59).

Furthermore, strengthened by his association with anti-US Islamist terrorists, Shalimar could be seen as an initially good man destroyed and corrupted by the effects of US

neoimperialism, exemplified by Max's affair with his wife, Boonyi (Murphy 354). However, Morton is of the opposite opinion, stating that because Shalimar's motives for assassinating Max are private, and ostensibly have nothing to do with "ideological opposition to Ophuls' position as an agent of US imperial power", it is also difficult to read the situation "as an allegory of US foreign policy in South Asia" (346). Through these two opinions one can ponder whether it is possible to separate political motives from personal ones.

Thus, as is summarised in *Shalimar the Clown*: "The crime, which had at first looked political, turned out to be a personal matter, insofar as anything was personal anymore. The assassin was a professional, but the consequences of U.S. policy choices in South Asia, and their echoes in the labyrinthine chambers of the paranoiac jihadi mind, these and other related geopolitical variables receded from the analysis, could with a high percentage of probability be eliminated from the equation" (Rushdie 2006a, 420-421). However, as the prosecutor at Shalimar's trial comes to see, the true motives behind acts of violence do not really matter. This begins to become clear when his attorney explains how the mind of a malleable person, such as Shalimar, could be manipulated to make him do terrible things, craftily tapping to the current atmosphere: "[t]he Twin Towers bombers,[29] the suicidists of Palestine, and now the terrifying possibility that mind-controlled human automata were walking among us, ready to commit murder whenever a voice on the phone said *banana* or *solitaire* … it all made the new, senseless kind of sense" (Rushdie 2006a, 477- 479, italics in the original). It is only when the prosecution present their theory of what led to the assassination that they realise how pervasive this "senseless kind of sense" is:

> When [the prosecutor] Janet Mientkiewicz proposed … the vengeful husband theory, she actually saw the jury's eyes glazing over, and understood that the plainness of the truth was suffering by comparison with [Shalimar's attorney's] Tillerman's paranoid

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[29] This refers to the first, unsuccessful bombing, attempted in 1993, not 9/11.

> scenario, which was so perfectly attuned to the mood of the moment that the jury wanted it to be true, wanted it while not wanting it, believing that the world was now as Tillerman said it was while wishing it were not. (Rushdie 2006a, 479-480)

People see what they want to see, even if they are presented with evidence that points to some other explanation. I see a parallel here between Shalimar's trial and Huntington's thesis on the clash of civilisations. As argued at the end of section 2, the important thing is not whether Huntington is right but whether the thesis is applied to real-life politics as if it were right. When Shalimar assassinates Max, it would be easy to see it as a manifestation of a clash of civilisations. After all, Shalimar is an Islamic terrorist, while Max is a well-known political figure in the USA as well as in India, due to his stint as the US ambassador there. Coupled with the Twin Towers bombers and the Palestinian suicidists, who seem to be loosely connected to each other by the fact that the people involved come from, roughly, the same part of the globe, it seems to make sense. Using such twisted logic, Shalimar's identification as an associate of terrorists "collapses the distinction between an act of political violence and private revenge, and constructs Shalimar as a terrorist because of his Muslim identity" (Morton 352).

In short, I would argue that both Boonyi and Shalimar, in their own ways, try to reconstruct their identities by erasing unwanted traces. Boonyi tries to return to a point in the past, to a community which had not yet been broken by inassimilable difference. Paradoxically, she herself stands for that difference, which is why she seeks to return by attempting to erase any difference within herself. As an allegory for Kashmir, she could be seen yearning for colonial times when Kashmir had not yet been torn apart by conflict. Shalimar, on the other hand, could be seen trying to erase all traces of that which broke his honour. He is trying to get rid of the offenders who spat on him by killing them. Then again, he could also simply be revenging the breaking of the idyll he inhabited with Boonyi. Nevertheless, whatever the two characters' deeds and their motivations, both are ultimately

unable to assimilate themselves into new situations and move forward. In this, they are unlike

Max and India/Kashmira, the subject matter of the following section.

4.2   "Not Dead, Not Gone, Not Forgotten": Max and India/Kashmira

Literary critics writing on the characters of Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* seem to have a

great penchant for allegories, as can be deduced from the various geographical roles offered

for Boonyi and, to a lesser extent, for Shalimar, discussed in the previous section. As has

already been hinted above, Maximilian Ophuls also gets his fair share of allegorical readings.

He is seen, variously, as a representative of "US imperialism, Western theft and destruction,

racial dominance, and … an extension of the neocolonial pattern" (Murphy 354). The fact that

Boonyi's rantings about Kashmir (which Max never suspects to be a veiled declaration of

love for her cuckolded husband) begin to affect his work as a US ambassador to India

provides encouragement to read the relationship "as an allegory of American foreign policy

in South Asia" (Morton 341). Morton continues that

> By placing the scandal of Ophuls' relationship with [Boonyi] in the context of the Indo-Pakistani war in Kashmir and the American war in Vietnam, the narrator highlights the way in which American foreign policy in South Asia was viewed with suspicion by both India and Pakistan. (*Ibid.*)

However, concentration on the allegorical aspects of the novel's main characters

disregards their nuances as individuals. In *Shalimar the Clown*, Maximilian Ophuls is the

epitome of the self-made man. He seems to be the only character in the novel that is not

troubled by the multiplicity of his identity. Apart from being an Ashkenazi Jew, he is "a

Frenchman with a German name",[30] born to "wealthy, cultured, conservative, cosmopolitan"

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[30] As many critics have noted, Rushdie christened Max Ophuls after a 20th century German-born film director of the same name. The similarities between the fictional characters and his namesake, however, appear to go further than this: the director Max Ophuls was born in Saarbrücken, located by the Rein in Germany, not far from Alsace-Lorraine and Strasbourg, where Rushdie's fictional Max began his life. Other shared characteristics include, among other things, well-to-do Jewish families, living between two languages (namely, French and German), moving to America, falling in love with a young actress after seeing her on stage, and taking part in the

parents in Strasbourg, France. He "was raised speaking High German as easily as French, and believing that the great writers and thinkers of Germany belonged to him as naturally as the poets and philosophers of France" (Rushdie 2006a, 171, 176). After the Second World War, he also becomes "one of the architects of the postwar world, of its international structures, its agreed economic and diplomatic conventions" (Rushdie 2006a, 8). He is a man with many different selves: "the brilliant young economist, lawyer and student of international relations, the master forger of the Resistance, the ace pilot, the Jewish survivor, the genius of Bretton Woods, the bestselling author, and the American ambassador cocooned in the house of power" (Rushdie 2006a, 225).

In crucial ways, however, Max is an epitome of the Jew as defined by Huntington. The question of whether there is a Jewish civilisation seems to puzzle Huntington exceedingly; after all, Judaism is an ancient religion with a stable following. According to him, most scholars dismiss the idea, and in any case there are too few Jews to form a major civilisation. The reason he dwells on the issue is the fact that he is unable to classify them in a satisfactory manner. As he points out, they are "historically affiliated with both Christianity and Islam, and for several centuries Jews maintained their cultural identity within Western, Orthodox, and Islamic civilizations" (2002, 48). The creation of Israel has given them "all the objective accoutrements of a civilization: religion, language, customs, literature, institutions, and a territorial and political home" (*ibid.*). Yet, there is a problem with their "subjective identification". In Huntington's words:

> Jews living in other cultures have distributed themselves along a continuum stretching from total identification with Judaism and Israel to nominal Judaism and full identification with the civilization within which they reside, the latter, however, occurring primarily among Jews living in the West. (*Ibid.*)

Second World War against Germany (Beylie 7-23). Unfortunately, any further exploration of these similarities and their deeper meanings is not within the scope or subject matter of this thesis.

In other words, the Jews cannot be classified using religious terms alone. In fact, it seems difficult to identify them using any one characteristic that would encompass them all. The problem is that the Jews' primary target of identification seems to be the culture and society – or civilisation in Huntington's terms – they happen to live in. Their identity does not rest with their religion alone, but also with the surrounding culture, thus resisting any characterisation with strict boundaries. This description fits Max precisely. He often refers to himself, in his thoughts, as a Jew, but he never seems to see himself singularly or primarily as a Jew.[31]

It is, however, fairly accurate to say that being a Jew during the Second World War was an experience that greatly shaped Max's identity. He was, after all, one of those who survived, while his parents were captured and killed by the Nazis. Thus, "[h]ungry for revenge [for the death of his parents], he joined the Action Section of Combat Étudiant under the workname 'Niccolò' and learned about blowing things up" (Rushdie 2006a, 202-203).[32] There is a clear parallel here between Max and Shalimar the clown: both are driven by feelings of anger and hatred to turn to violence, while that turn is facilitated by an ongoing conflict around them. However, there also seems to be a crucial difference between the two. Shalimar does not seem to flinch from bloodshed, whereas Max learns "that terrorism was thrilling, and that, no matter how profoundly justified the cause, he personally could not get over the moral hurdles required to perform such acts on a regular basis" (Rushdie 2006a, 203). Instead, Max turns his mind to another act of resistance in which he is already adept at: he becomes a forger. It is this line of work that proves to be of greatest importance to the moulding of his self: "[a]s he

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[31] This description echoes the traditional figure of the Wandering Jew, which, unfortunately, is not within the scope of this thesis to discuss.

[32] During World War II, antisemitism was part of the ideology of the German-occupied Vichy France. Some 75 700 Jews, two thirds of whom were foreigners seeking refuge in France, were deported to the East. Only three percent of them survived. Antisemitism led many Jews to the resistance movements, where they mostly helped place Jewish children in non-Jewish homes, supplied false identity papers (like Max in *Shalimar the Clown*), and transported people across the border to Spain and Switzerland. Thus, most Jews were involved in defensive resistance instead of actually taking arms (Gordon 10-11, 202-203).

forged and printed the documents … he felt he was also forging a new self, one that resisted, that pushed back against fate, rejecting inevitability, choosing to remake the world" (Rushdie 2006a, 185). He is an epitome of the fluidity and multiplicity of identities a person can have, as well as being an extreme example of the reconstruction of identity. Thus, Max eventually makes a lifelong career in the business of reinventing himself, over and over again, as circumstances dictate. As he later writes in his memoirs, "[t]hat the self can so readily be remade is a dangerous, narcotic discovery. Once you've started using that drug, it isn't easy to stop" (Rushdie 2006a, 203).

Thus, Max's fate is unlike Boonyi's, who deterritorialises herself by leaving Kashmir with Max, but fails to be reterritorialised after her return. Instead, she is forced to live on the margins of the society, more dead than alive. Contrary to this, Max, who is a product of deterritorialisation as well, is in a sense successfully reterritorialised: as Tygstrup writes, "the belonging of which he is deprived is replaced by a becoming" (206). Max becomes an international being, able to belong everywhere and nowhere; "[h]e is reterritorialized on the global circuits of post-war politics, economy, and warfare", becoming an example of the possibilities facilitated by globalisation (Tygstrup 206-207). In this sense, he is much like Shalimar. They are both affected by geopolitical upheavals taking place in their original homes, they both choose to leave those homes behind - that is, to deterritorialise themselves - to pursue their own agendas, and they both emerge from all this "as agents in a new spatial arrangement that allows them to claim agency in a new territory", namely that of the invisible world of terrorism (Tygstrup 210).

Max is taught by his father that "[i]n civilization there are no borderlines", but, as he came to notice during the Second World War, barbarism "erased borderlines as well" (Rushdie 2006a, 176). Perhaps this is why, after all his experiences, after all the hot and cold wars that he has seen, he hopes for the world of the future to be a better place. He hopes that

after the end of the Cold War, "Europe, free of the Soviet threat, and America, free of the need to remain permanently at battle stations, would build that new world in friendship, a world without walls, a frontierless newfound land of infinite possibility" (Rushdie 2006a, 24-25).[33] He hopes it will be civilisation that brings down the borderlines, not barbarism. In this sense, he is also implicitly against Huntington's thesis on civilisations as well as any other theoretical construction that presupposes, at some level, that civilisation is always pitted against barbarism. After all, as was noted in section 2, Huntington makes a distinction between the two terms but also implicitly assumes that one civilisation will see the others as at least partly synonymous with barbarism (2002, 40-42). In his thesis, the two terms collapse into each other, whereas what Max hopes for is the elimination of barbarism altogether.

Curiously, by his actions Max also seems to challenge the dichotomy between East and West. For instance, he wishes that "[t]he emerging economies of India, Brazil and a newly opened-up China would [in the future] be the world's new powerhouses, the counterweights to the American hegemony of which he had always, as an internationalist, disapproved" (Rushdie 2006a, 25). Furthermore, he speaks on television about the seemingly never-ending conflict in Kashmir, trying to make America see that even when they think they, for a brief moment, inhabit a world of relative civilisation and peace, there is war going on somewhere else:

> Max ranted about fanaticism and bombs at a time when the world was briefly full of hope and had little interest in his killjoy news. He lamented the drowning of blue-eyed women and the murder of their golden children. He railed against the coming of cruel flames to a distant city made of wood. He spoke too of the tragedy of the *pandits*, the Brahmins of Kashmir, who were being driven from their homeland by the assassins of Islam. The rapes of young girls, the fathers set alight, burning like beacons prophesying doom. (Rushdie 2006a, 35)

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[33] As noted in section 3.2, there is a parallel between Max and the iron mullah Bulbul Fakh in that both want to bring down walls. The difference, as will be noted, seems to be that while the iron mullah wishes for identity within the terrorist movement and opposition to what is outside it, Max advocates the pulling down of all walls. In other words, he wants to create one global identity, one civilisation.

What makes all this curious is the fact that while Max seems to be all for peace and a more equal distribution of power across the globe, at the same time, and seemingly without encountering any moral hurdles, he "was supporting terror activities while calling himself an ambassador for counterterrorism" (Rushdie 2006a, 341). In this capacity, he has provided weapons to Islamic terrorists fighting against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and some of these weapons have instead ended up in the hands of terrorists in Kashmir. Thus, he is indirectly and covertly also supporting the rapings and burnings that he so directly and openly denounces.

Max's double standards become public knowledge only after his assassination at the hands of Shalimar the clown:

> As with the invisible man in the movie, death restored Max to something like full visibility, declassifying many details of his life; the lengthy obituaries and effusive encomia revealed his long service to his country at the heart of the invisible world during his last, hidden career as a senior spook, in the Mideast, the Gulf, Central America, Africa and Afghanistan. (Rushdie 2006a, 416)

Max's position is never spoken of in public and the results of his work can never be traced directly to him; in other words, "his presence [is] detectable only by its influence on the actions of others" (Rushdie 2006a, 417). As was mentioned above, Max entered the world of terrorism for the first time during the Second World War. His second entrance took place after his affair with Boonyi had ended his career as the US ambassador to India. He enters the same world that Shalimar inhabits, the world of terrorism that, as I argued in section 3.2, cannot be precisely located because it occupies an in-between place. It is an invisible world that exists in the cracks of the visible one. In this invisible world, Max becomes "Invisible Max, on whose invisible hands there might very well be, there almost certainly was, there had to be, didn't there, a quantity of the world's visible and invisible blood" (*ibid.*). This is what Max's daughter India/Kashmira has to contend with:

> this other Max, this stranger, this clone-Max moving through the world's burning desert places, part arms dealer, part kingmaker, part terrorist himself, dealing in the future,

which was the only currency that mattered more than the dollar. He had been a puissant speculator in that mightiest and least controllable of all currencies, had been both a manipulator and a benefactor, both a philanthropist and a dictator, both creator and destroyer, buying and stealing the future from those who no longer deserved to possess it, selling the future to those who would be most useful in it, smiling the false lethal smile of power at all the planet's future-greedy hordes, its murderous doctors, its paranoid holy warriors, its embattled high priests, its billionaire financiers, its insane dictators, its generals, its venal politicians, its thugs. He had been a dealer in the dangerous, hallucinogenic narcotic of the future, offering it at a high price to his chosen addicts, the reptilian cohorts of the future which his country had chosen for itself and for others; Max, her unknown father, the invisible robotic servant of his adopted country's overweening amoral might. (Rushdie 2006a, 418)

In one fell swoop, by cutting his throat, Shalimar unveils Max's double life. This makes Max's daughter, India, wonder whether the assassin was actually working as "the hand of justice", whether Max had been judged guilty of "unknown unlisted crimes of power" and Shalimar had merely been the executioner (Rushdie 2006a, 417). Like the United States, which Max could be seen to allegorically represent, he seemingly and overtly acts for good while covertly and possibly unwittingly contributes to the escalation of violence in some parts of the world (Murphy 354-5). On the other hand, Max could also be seen to represent America as a neoimperialist power, an idea which has gained further visibility in the US after 9/11: an American Empire that should police the world and transform it by using its military, economic, and cultural might, all in the service of what is perceived to be "good" (Kaplan 446).

The duplicity of his father's character seems to be beyond the understanding of India/Kashmira, who at first tries to eliminate any duplicity or multiplicity in her own identity. She, like her mother Boonyi before her, dislikes what she thinks is her true name:

India felt wrong to her, it felt exoticist, colonial, suggesting the appropriation of a reality that was not her own, and she insisted to herself that it didn't fit her anyway, she didn't feel like an India, even if her color was rich and high and her long hair lustrous and black. She didn't want to be vast or subcontinental or excessive or vulgar or explosive or crowded or ancient or noisy or mystical or in any way Third World. Quite the reverse. She presented herself as disciplined, groomed, nuanced, inward, irreligious, understated, calm. She spoke with an English accent. In her behavior she was not heated, but cool. This was the persona she wanted, that she had constructed with great determination. (Rushdie 2006a, 6)

She is angry about her name because it presupposes that she is a certain kind of person, that she is like India, whereas the persona she has constructed for herself is the exact opposite of everything she associates with India. However, what points to there being something of India in her after all is the fact that she is bothered by her name. The identity she has built for herself tries to keep all the Indian characteristics under control. She does not want to be Third World but rather First World, and thus she colonises her own Third World characteristics. She refuses to acknowledge what she views as the Third World side of her inheritance, her mother's side. Thus, "[w]hen she spoke she failed to hear her other inheritance, the other, unknown cadences, and heard only her father's voice, its rise and fall, its mannerisms and pitch. When she looked in the mirror she blinded herself to the shadow of the unknown and saw only Max's face, his body type, his languid elegance of manner and form" (Rushdie 2006a, 18). In other words, she constructs her identity through the same kind of partial identification that the Kashmiris use to interpret their history (see section 3.1) and Boonyi tries to use to erase her past (see section 4.1). She takes that which she sees as identical to herself, ignoring the rest. It seems she does not want to be in-between.

Thus, just as it is difficult for India to understand her father's duplicitous nature, it also seems difficult for her to acknowledge, let alone come to terms with, the contradictory characteristics of her own identity. For instance, she is contemptuous of religion, but at the same time is moved by its stories, which confuses her. As a child, when she gets into trouble at school because of her wild manners and is threatened with expulsion, "she immediately and somewhat alarmingly changed her ways completely, adopting, for the first time, the cool, restrained, disciplined persona that would become her preferred disguise throughout her life" (Rushdie 2006a, 430). She chooses to keep the world at an arm's length, but, as Tygstrup

points out, hers is "a privileged isolation when compared to her mother's - she is not kept at distance from the world by a border, but herself maintains a distance from it" (212).[34]

The only part in the novel where British colonialism and imperialism in India is discussed overtly is in relation to India/Kashmira and her foster-mother Peggy. She is an Englishwoman, a Resistance hero like her former husband, Max, and known in India as a philanthropist because of her work among orphans. She and Max have no children, which is why she is so keen to get her hands on the fruit of her husband's illicit affair with Boonyi. As mentioned in the previous subsection, Boonyi is forced to give up her child in exchange for a permission to return to Kashmir. What is most interesting in this arrangement, however, is that it is Peggy who gives the child the name India Ophuls, discarding Boonyi's choice of Kashmira Noman: "*Noman*, indeed! - That's not her name. And what did you say? *Kashmira?* No, no, darling. That can't be her future", Peggy tells Boonyi, continuing with "*Ophuls*, … That's her father's name. And *India*'s a nice name, a name containing, as it is, the truth. The question of origins is one of the two great questions. *India Ophuls* is an answer" (Rushdie 2006a, 265-267, italics in the original). By choosing a name, Peggy is also creating a history for the child, discarding another history provided by Boonyi. By forcing Boonyi to relinquish her child, and by renaming that child according to her own preferences, Peggy represents the past rule of the British Empire in India. Changing the name Kashmira into India could also imply that the British acknowledged the accession of Kashmir to India, thus indirectly giving the Indian army a green light to integrate the state into the Indian nation. Peggy denied India/Kashmira access to the truth about her origin by lying to her for most of her life that her mother had died shortly after giving birth, and even keeping any knowledge of her father from

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[34] The easiest way to interpret this privileged distance is to conclude that people in developed Western countries have greater freedom to do what they will without fear of social persecution. The same kind of privilege is not extended to a young, frivolous woman from Kashmir. Regrettably, the scope and subject-matter of this thesis do not warrant further discussion of this subject.

her for years. In other words, India/Kashmira "was trapped inside a lie, far away from the truth, held captive in a fiction; and within her the turbulence grew, an unquiet spirit moved" (Rushdie 2006a, 431). The identity her name offers feels wrong because it is a lie. It offers her a place in the world that she does not see as her own.

After Max's death, Peggy finally comes to India/Kashmira to tell the truth about her origin, perhaps so as to apologise for the lies and the damage she has done by not being a good and able mother to her adopted child. It is not until India/Kashmira learns her true name, the name given to her by her mother Boonyi, that she is able to embrace the so-far foreign side of her identity. Thus, she did not try to eliminate the Indian side of her identity because she did not want to be in-between, but rather because the space offered to her was the wrong in-between. However, her discovery does not make her cast aside her old identity; rather, she conjoins the two sides, creating a hybrid. This process is summarised succinctly in her naming: when she learns that her mother named her Kashmira Noman, she forthwith relinquishes her hold on the hated India, opting for Kashmira instead. Her old surname, however, she keeps, casting aside Noman in favour of Ophuls. She becomes Kashmira Ophuls, "the hybrid child conceived by Western power and a gorgeous but wasted land" (Fernández-Kelly 473). However, with her new name also comes a new weight: the weight of the hitherto unknown side of her history. She resented the weight of the name India because she felt it was not her duty to carry an entire nation on her shoulders. On the other hand, she seems to find no cause for complaint when she is literally crushed under the burden of the name Kashmira and the knowledge that she has a mother waiting for her in Kashmir. Thus, India/Kashmira embodies Hall's view about origins: for her, where she comes from turns out to be as important as where she is going to (1996, 131).

In a parallel to her mother Boonyi, "who left home and family for the sake of a false and borrowed identity, [India/Kashmira] leaves for Kashmir in quest of her true identity"

(Ghanshyam 84). What she finds, however, is a tomb containing a woman whose throat was cut by the same knife that ended the life of her father. Furthermore, after her return to the US, when she sees in the news that Shalimar has been captured, she also learns that "Kashmir lingered in her … and his arrest in America, his disappearance beneath the alien cadences of American speech, created a turbulence in her that she did not at first identify as culture shock. She no longer saw this as an American story. It was a Kashmiri story. It was hers" (Rushdie 2006a, 463-464). She has finally embraced the Third World side of her identity and moulded it together with the First World in her, uniting the East and the West. This moulding is demonstrated when she later taunts Shalimar by pointing out that he has failed in his murderous quest because "[t]hey are not dead not gone not forgotten. They live on in me" (Rushdie 2006a, 473).

Finally, there is the relationship between India/Kashmira and Yuvraj, the Kashmiri "businessman who in spite of the worsening political situation was successfully exporting Kashmiri papier-mâché boxes, carved wooden tables, numdah rugs and embroidered shawls to the rest of India and to Western buyers as well" (Rushdie 2006a, 351). Several critics have seen this relationship as a parallel to the marriage of Shalimar and Boonyi, discussed in section 3.1. As I argued there, their marriage was viewed by the people of Pachigam as the ultimate symbol of Kashmiriyat, of the overcoming of religious dividing lines in the name of tolerance and the mixing of traditions. Its failure, on the other hand, symbolically heralded the failure of Kashmiriyat. In comparison, the relationship of India/Kashmira and Yuvraj is seen by most critics as a sign of hope, representing of a modern, global, deterritorialised Kashmiriyat (Siddiqi 224, Morton 339, Pesso-Miquel 156), coupling the old world and the new, tradition-selling modern businessman Yuvraj and India/Kashmira, a hybrid child of both the East and the West (Fernández-Kelly 473). In Siddiqi's opinion, through this relationship that is upheld across space, the novel offers "diasporic sensibilities and locations" as a

solution to "narrow or ethnic chauvinism" (224).

Furthermore, India/Kashmira and Yuvraj's relationship could also be seen representing the breaking of traditions. India/Kashmira declines Yuvraj's proposals of marriage, and also seems unperturbed when he is away on business trips, although he constantly pines for her. Yuvraj's complaints about this disparity lead India/Kashmira to state that "in this relationship I'm the guy … and you, my dear, are the girl" (Rushdie 2006a, 489), reversing the traditional roles set for men and women. However, the unconventionality of the relationship has also led Keulks to conclude that it is a failure, "having commenced in Kashmir but succumbed to the toxicities of America, to which Yuvraj relocates in false hopes of winning her love" (158). What Keulks interprets as signs of failure could as easily be interpreted as signs of change. The importance of this relationship, the symbol of a new Kashmiriyat, can be found in the ways it blurs and breaks traditional boundaries separating the East from the West and men from women by reversing their roles, by turning them on their head. I would argue that the purpose is not to eliminate conflicts (they still occur) but rather to question the basis of supposedly essential divisions and prove that a relationship can work despite, across, and beyond such divisions.

In short, almost all the hope for a better future in the novel is summed up in the character of India/Kashmira. She is the only major character who is not blamed for something in the pages of the novel. Shalimar is the victim of Boonyi's infidelity, while Boonyi becomes the victim of Shalimar's knife. Max falls victim to that same knife, but, as India/Kashmira ponders, might it be possible that he got what he deserved? He was, after all, indirectly involved in a lot of bloodshed around the world, even though he never shed the blood himself. India/Kashmira is the only person in the novel who does not seem to be guilty of anything. She does not let herself be driven by one single feeling or deed above all others, like Shalimar has, nor does she try to go back and deny her past, like Boonyi. Neither is she like Max, who,

despite referring to insurmountable moral hurdles in relation to actually bombing people, seems to encounter none when handing the bombs to other people. Kashmira seems to see the moral hurdles in both situations, thus giving the reader hope that she will not follow in her father's footsteps either. I would argue that she is the true example of hybridity because she is painfully aware of her contradictory nature. She has to consciously negotiate between the different aspects of her self to keep her identity intact.

Thus, compared to Boonyi and Shalimar, the characters of Max and India/Kashmira are much more hybrid. Max is depicted as a skin changer of sorts: he possesses multiple and often contradictory identities, none of which assumes dominant position in all situations. On the other hand, in allegorical terms Max can, in a fairly straightforward manner, be identified with the United States. In contrast, finding a single suitable allegorical counterpart for India/Kashmira proves, in spite her name, much more difficult. She rather represents something beyond narrow national and civilisational boundaries, something overcoming those boundaries, a union of the East and the West. Perhaps she does, in this sense, embody Rushdie's hope for a better future in which borders are there solely for the purpose of crossing.

5   Conclusion

"After the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York - eight years later this would be remembered as the first bombing - he [Shalimar the clown] sat across a table from his lawyer in a stinking meeting room [in a prison] and expressed his fears for his safety" (Rushdie 2006a, 470). This is the only direct reference (if one can call it direct) in Salman Rushdie's novel *Shalimar the Clown* to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Nevertheless, as the discussion above has shown, the book is to a great degree concerned with the causes as well as the consequences of the attacks. It deals with the increasing importance accorded to difference, as well as to the assumption that difference necessarily causes conflicts. In the novel, 9/11 is not tackled head on but rather in a circuitous way, drawing attention to the fact that such events have their roots deep in history and that their consequences have branched out wide, casting their shadow on people and places not directly involved.

As I have argued here, the theme most central to *Shalimar the Clown* seems to be the discussion of boundaries and borders of all kind, manifested within space as well as within identity. In the cases of Kashmir and Alsace, the boundaries are arbitrarily drawn and moved across the lives of people who do not acknowledge their existence. For Kashmiris, who value what unifies more than what divides, the de-facto border between India and Pakistan running through their homeland does not exist. The movements of the Franco-German border across Alsace before and during the Second World War, on the other hand, were destructive on the cosmopolitan culture of the region, represented by the figure of Max, equal parts French and German as well as being a Jew. In the case of Los Angeles, the boundaries are a consequence of migration: the metropolis is constructed of separate cultural, ethnic, and racial groups with occasional violence sparking between them. However, also present in the novel is the desire to bring down walls, to cross boundaries and borders. This is exemplified, for instance, in the terrorist movement that Shalimar joins. Its leader, the iron mullah, preaches about the primacy

of truth that unites its followers by denying them all other affiliations. However, such attempts to bring down walls cause as much problems as attempts to uphold them. There are always boundaries and borders, if not within a space, then surrounding it. This is the case with Kashmir, which at first is an enclosed garden, free of any walls within but neatly surrounded by one. When the surrounding wall is brought down, other walls spring up in its stead, dividing what used to be one.

As well as showing the ambiguous nature of borders and boundaries, *Shalimar the Clown* also demonstrates the ambiguity inherent in the theoretical constructions discussed in section 2. In the case of Kashmir, I have argued that the novel presents a situation in which decolonisation creates worse conditions than actual colonialism before it. Furthermore, in Kashmir and in Strasbourg and Alsace, the novel demonstrates the ugly face of nationalism, its penchant for tyranny and autocracy in addition to liberation and communitarianism. In Los Angeles, on the other hand, we see a multicultural metropolis, but it is a multiculturalism of little apartheids, of secluded and separated groups, with an undercurrent of violence that could burst out at any moment. Also, by drawing a parallel between Shalimar the terrorist and Max the resistance fighter (or, alternatively, sponsor for Islamist fighters), and between the French Resistance during World War Two and Islamic terrorist movements in the late twentieth century, it also questions the distinction between terrorists and resistance fighters. To sum up, by bringing forth this all-pervading ambiguity, the novel does all it can to avoid essentialism.

The same rejection of essentialism is also present in the novel's discussion of identity. In the characters of Boonyi and Shalimar, we saw the power tradition has over identity. It shows how not all people are as free as Max and India/Kashmira to construct themselves as they want without social stigma. In Shalimar and Boonyi, as well as in connection to Kashmir, we saw the drive to erase any debilitating difference within identity. Both characters desire to retreat to some point in the past when divisions had not yet occurred. Boonyi, the symbol of

this difference within identity, attempts to return by negating herself, by trying to purge herself of any signs of the difference she ushered in. Shalimar, in contrast, tries to erase that which has degraded his honour by killing all that reminds him of its degradation, thus reconstructing his sense of honour again.

Max and India/Kashmira, on the other hand, embody the possibility of fluid, hybrid identities. Their characters are constantly changing, always in the process of becoming but never ready. Nevertheless, Max can also be read as a warning example of what unchecked crossing of boundaries can lead to: a situation in which there is no boundary between what is moral and what is immoral. By presenting Max as an allegory of the United States, the novel is, in my opinion, pointing an accusing finger towards the only superpower left in the world, accusing it of amoral deeds done for short term gains without taking into consideration long term effects. A case in point is Max handing guns to fundamentalist Islamic fighters during the Afghan War in the 1980s without thinking what would become of them after the conflict ended. Thus, *Shalimar the Clown* is not advocating the destruction of all boundaries; it rather speaks for their permeability and fluidity. This is exemplified in India/Kashmira, who is painfully aware of the contradictory nature of her own identity but, in the end, embraces those contradictions instead of trying to erase them. In short, she crosses borders and boundaries but is, at the same time, aware of their existence and significance.

However, although *Shalimar the Clown* poses many questions, it provides few, if any, answers. It depicts problems but does not offer solutions. This reluctance to draw conclusions is duplicated in the final scene of the novel as well. In the end, the story is down to two characters, Shalimar and Kashmira, stalking each other in Kashmira's darkened apartment. It is made clear that only one will emerge from this encounter alive. In the very final scene, Kashmira has just let the arrow fly from her bow, making absolutely certain that it will not miss its mark. This has led some critics to rejoice in the victory of love over hate, the future

over the past, and a hybrid and cosmopolitan Kashmir over a monstrous one (Ghanshyam 84, Siddiqi 224). In Siddiqi's opinion, through Kashmira's victory over Shalimar, the novel "posits diasporic location and cosmopolitan identity as a point of departure for a 'solution' to ethnic and state violence" (219). Others, however, have been more perceptive. For instance Morton maintains that Rushdie never resolves the dichotomy between the two visions of Kashmir: the diasporic and liberal one and its monstrous counterpart, represented by India/Kashmira and Shalimar in the novel's final scene (Morton 339). It would rather seem that the novel does not posit any clear-cut solutions to the problems it describes. This is supported by the fact, seemingly unnoticed by Ghanshyam and Siddiqi, that apart from India/Kashmira's thoughts, there is no certainty provided about the outcome of her meeting with Shalimar. When the novel ends, the arrow is still hanging in the air, somewhere between the two people occupying the room. Perhaps it hangs there because even Rushdie himself does not know who will win.

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