

“People set apart”: Representations of Jewishness in the Fiction of Salman Rushdie

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Just as Salman Rushdie returns repeatedly to Kashmir in his fictions, he also has an ongoing fascination with Jewish characters. In *Shame* (1983), anti-Semitism serves as an index of Pakistan’s commitment to purity, and thus underlines its difference from India. In *The Moor’s Last Sigh* (1995), the Jewish Moor functions as a locus for the exploration of the fates of both Indian and Spanish multiculturalism. In *The Satanic Verses* (1989), Saladin’s Jewish friend and co-star on “The Alien Show,” Mimi Mamoulian, is a foil for the main character’s exploration of his own location between Britain and India; Gibreel, a Bollywood star and Saladin’s companion, departs India for Britain for the love of Allie, a Jewish woman. *Shalimar the Clown* (2005) centres around the Jewish war hero turned diplomat, Max Ophuls. This article considers Jewishness as an ongoing interest and thematic device in Salman Rushdie’s fictional oeuvre. Though the religious identity of the eponymous main character of *The Moor’s Last Sigh* has been the subject of some critical attention, Rushdie’s ongoing interest in Jewishness, not just in that novel, but in *The Satanic Verses* and *Shalimar the Clown* has gone largely unnoticed. Rushdie’s comment about the innate similarity between Israel and Pakistan towards the end of *Shame* (251)—both founded via partition in an attempt to recode a religious minority as a nation—hints at a comparative exploration of Jewish and South Asian Muslim experience that is further developed in his later novels. While the Moor’s placement at the centre of the narrative in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* confirms Rushdie’s well-established interest in hybrid identities and in representing the Indian nation from non-dominant subject positions, I argue that the Jewish characters in *The Satanic Verses* and *Shalimar the Clown* function rather differently. Both these novels pair Muslim and Jewish characters, and a full understanding of Rushdie’s evolving postcolonial identity politics requires an analysis of

the relationship of these varied diasporic subjects. All three novels, however, struggle with the specificity of Jewishness, even as they invoke it, a problem which is often repeated in the criticism.

In *The Moor's Last Sigh*, which imagines India's "apocalypse in corruption and fanaticism under global capitalism" (Neumann 473), Jewishness is viewed via the history of Moorish Spain which "offers an historical alternative to this sad spectacle of religious violence," its eventual downfall serving as a cautionary tale about where religious fundamentalism in present day India might lead (Cantor 325). The criticism of this novel that has attended to its specifically Jewish content has predominantly focused on whether or not Rushdie's understanding of Medieval Spanish culture stands up to historical scrutiny and has largely read the novel as "an attempt to map out the limits of postcolonial hybridity as an empowering subject position" (Laouyene 145). Regardless of the novel's historical accuracy or the degree to which the narrative falls prey to a potentially problematic nostalgia, the relative positioning of identities—Jew, Muslim, Indian—provides an index to the text's exploration of hybridity and points towards the cultural politics of diaspora that are central to both *Satanic Verses* and *Shalimar the Clown*. The famous declaration in *The Moor's Last Sigh* that the Emergency turns the Moor and his family from Indians into "Christian Jews" (235) situates Jews not only as marginal to the nation but as an index to the nation's hospitality to others more generally. As Dohra Ahmad puts it "Indian Jews represent the ultimate test of the category of 'Indianness' to absorb diverse subjects. . . . Jews are important both in their own right, and also as symbolic of a more generalized minority existence in India" (4). Rushdie's lament for the near disappearance of the Jewish community of Cochin, the Moor's father's community of origin, confirms the novel's interest in Jewishness per se (*Moor's Last Sigh* 119).

Jewishness is both more central and, paradoxically, more peripheral to this text than either the relatively brief treatment of Cochin (the majority of the novel is set in Bombay and in Spain) or the more generalized exploration of the category of minority might allow. Very little is actually said in *The Moor's Last Sigh* about Moraes' connection to Judaism. So little in fact, that Samir Dayal's essay "Subaltern Envy"

consistently codes him as Muslim and makes class the Moor's primary identity marker. Dayal critiques the Moor's "presumptive hybridity: his colonization-and-displacement of the structural place of the minority figure" (267) which he argues is "an instance of the appropriation of subalternity" (268) in which hybridity becomes an excuse for the otherwise inexcusable: Moraes' involvement in communal violence. Dayal asks: "is it an ethico-political right, or a transgression for Moraes to identify himself as a minority subject?" (292). The Moor is certainly not a subaltern, but class is not the only index to minority status. Jewishness exists in a particularly complex relationship to both minority and subalternity since, as Laura Levitt points out, "*religion, race, class, and even ethnicity* have never been able to fully or accurately describe what it means to be a Jew" (809).

The construction of Jewishness in *The Moor's Last Sigh* is illustrative. When asked by his father to participate in an illegal bomb project, the Moor suddenly realizes that he is a Jew (337); he had been a "no-community man—and proud of it" so the revelation is an "astonishment" (336). His father, Abraham, who has been raised in the Cochin Jewish community, responds to the Moor's announcement with derision: "You'll be wanting a yarmulke now' . . . [he] sneered. 'And phylacteries. Lessons in Hebrew, a one-way trip to Jerusalem'" (*Moor's Last Sigh* 341). What does Moraes' late discovery of his own Jewishness mean? Moraes declares himself to be Jewish as a coded refusal to participate in Abraham's covert nuclear weapons program. The Moor is hardly, at this point, the moral centre of the text, after all he "administers beatings, breaks unions, and enforces sati and caste discipline" (Ball 44). Jill Didur describes this identification as neither "volunteeristic nor a *fully* rational identification with Jewish identity but in terms of a 'surprising' discovery of a previously unconsidered minority identity that he has come to see as hybrid and indeterminate" (554–555; emphasis in original). It is also an identity that brings with it an inexplicable moral recentering. Is Moraes' objection to this bomb due to its very status as "Islamic"? That Aadam Sinai, the son born to Salim at the end of *Midnight's Children*, reappears in *The Moor's Last Sigh* to usurp the main character's place as the son and heir of the Moor's Jewish father, Abraham Zogoiby, may

facilitate a reading in which Jewish and Muslim identities are seen as substitutable. Yet the question of what Jewishness can consist of, when its only bearer mocks both its cultural and religious manifestations and it can be claimed only as the name of a vague and dubious moral project, remains both troubled and troubling.

Indeed, the significance of Jewishness to *The Moor's Last Sigh* may have more to do with that novel's condition of composition and literary influences than its actual content. *The Moor's Last Sigh* was published directly after *The Satanic Verses* and was written while the fatwa was still in effect, and Rushdie's interest in Jewishness needs to be understood in that context. J.M. Coetzee, in his review of *The Moor's Last Sigh*, interprets Rushdie's declaration of Jewishness in that novel as an assertion of solidarity "with persecuted minorities everywhere." But Coetzee also wonders what it means to "take a stand on symbolic Jewishness." Though I certainly would not wish to suggest that there exists a single, essential version of Jewishness, it seems readily apparent that Jewishness, as Rushdie thus imagines it, does not reside in any of its more conventionally recognizable aspects—from religious ritual, to language, to Zionism.

If, as has been suggested, it was Salman Rushdie's sense of isolation and persecution in the wake of the fatwa that lead to this identification, then the version of Jewishness that Rushdie espouses seems to be primarily a negative one—an empty signifier that connotes a vague sense of existential discomfort, divorced from any sense of community or cultural context.

As Ahmad relates,

Rushdie retells the story of [Philip] Roth's experience following the publication of *Goodbye, Columbus*. Vilified by Jewish readers, whom he had previously identified as a constituency, Roth responded, in Rushdie's summary, "I'll never write about Jews again!" On that score, Rushdie declares portentously, "he seems to speak directly, profoundly, not only to, *but for*, me." (2; emphasis in original)

Here Rushdie seems not only to take Philip Roth as a sympathetic role model but to view Roth as his representative and equivalent. If we un-

derstand Rushdie's claiming of Roth here to mean that Rushdie intends to avoid Muslims as a fictional subject in the wake of the fatwa, his substitution of Jews for Muslims is thus tinged with irony. This is all the more so since Ayatollah Khomeini, who issued the fatwa against Rushdie, also, bewilderingly, equated the novel with "Zionism" (Fischer and Abedi 117); rumours began to circulate that Rushdie was part of a "Jewish conspiracy" (Fischer and Abedi 115).

What has often been overlooked, however, is that Jewishness was very much on Rushdie's mind *before* the fatwa, too. Rushdie argues in *Imaginary Homelands*

that Indian writers in England have access to a second tradition, quite apart from their own racial history. It is the culture and political history of the phenomenon of migration, displacement, life in a minority group. We can quite legitimately claim as our ancestors the Huguenots, the Irish, the Jews . . . (20)

I disagree with Shailja Sharma's critique that "the troublesome issue of race in immigration has been elided entirely by Rushdie in this ode to the pleasures of migrancy" (604). The Irish and the Jews have certainly been racialized within the British imaginary, despite their current lack of inclusion in the category "Black." Sharma's claim that Mimi Mammouljian speaks "in and for the west" (598) not only fails to account for her status as Armenian, Jewish, and "alien" as I will elucidate below, but reflects a critical belief that Rushdie's work is "about the Indian diaspora" (599) and that it is "disturbing when Rushdie claims similar displacement and minority status" to other, non-South Asian writers (604), a conclusion with which I disagree. As I will demonstrate, claiming a similarity with another diasporic community in such away as to disrupt Sharma's claim as to what the novel is "about" is precisely what Rushdie does. *The Satanic Verses*, whose reception, according to both Coetzee and Ahmad inaugurates Rushdie's identification with Jewishness, actually makes this very relationship between diasporic Indians and diasporic Jews one of its important themes.

That Gibreel and Saladin, the two protagonists of *Satanic Verses*, offer contrasting representations of diasporic experience in Britain has become

something of a truism in Rushdie criticism. Gibreel, the novel tells us wishes “*to remain . . . an untranslated man*” whereas Saladin is “*a willing re-invention*” (427; emphasis in original). In light of the controversy that overtook *Satanic Verses* even before its publication and its intensification after the issuing of the now famous fatwa, it is no surprise that the novel’s representation of Islam has attracted the bulk of scholarly attention. What is rarely remarked is that both Gibreel and Saladin are paired with Jewish women, whose own experiences function as a foil. If one accepts the argument that Gibreel and Saladin each represent a different response to the challenge of diasporic existence, then I contend that examining their relationships to other diasporic characters is key to elucidating the nature of each’s subject position. Since the Jewish diaspora is both the theoretical and historical antecedent to the South Asian diaspora (a fact acknowledged in the novel via the remnants of Jewish community in London’s East End, where the mosque “used to be the Machzikel HaDath synagogue” (*Satanic Verses* 285)), Gibreel’s and Saladin’s respective negotiations and relationships with Jewish women are indicative of the larger dynamics of contemporary diasporic existence.

Saladin is, in fact, paired with a number of women in the course of the novel. He has been married to Pamela, an English woman whose attraction for Saladin lies precisely in her stereotypically posh British accent and family background. Given that, to Pamela, Saladin’s Indianness represents the antipathy of her own Englishness and is the source of her attraction to him, the marriage is inevitably an unhappy one which breaks down early in the text. Mimi Mamoulian, Saladin’s co-star on the highly successful television program “The Alien Show” is his “female equivalent” (*Satanic Verses* 60). The co-stars are selected to share the limelight on this aptly named show because they are both masters of mimicry and because their racialized bodies mark them as unfit to appear on television as themselves (“The Alien Show” being peopled by elaborate non-human puppets).

Both Saladin and Mimi are notable for their ventriloquism and mastery of voice and accent. In the professional realm, voice is all they are: hidden under heavy make-up and silicon body parts, their own racialized bodies are unrepresentable. The title of their vehicle, “The Alien

Show," is clearly no accident. These television extraterrestrials "are, in turn, mirrored by the strange 'aliens' at the Detention Centre hospital: the literal monstrous products of the discursive (post-)colonial clash between cultures" (Parashkevova 11). The novel thus connects Mimi not only to her Oxbridge-educated, upper class co-star, but to the entire raft of non-White characters described, dehumanized, and marginalized by dominant British culture.

"Mimi Mamoulian, as her name suggests, is deceptively ordinary (mamooli)" (Sharma 605–606). The physical description of Mimi in the novel—short, dark and round-bodied—not only places her outside the norms of Western beauty but is strongly reminiscent of stereotypes about Jewish women. What Mimi offers is an example of hybridity and assimilation that simultaneously accepts and rejects its own otherness. She "didn't give a damn about the way she looked; she had become her voice" (*Satanic Verses* 61). Her obsession with buying property, one she attributes to an "[e]xcessive need for rooting owing to upheavals of Armenian-Jewish history" not only acknowledges trauma as a condition of diasporic existence but demonstrates, through the choice of properties she acquires, both a desire to claim the stereotyped terrain of European and White authenticity and to subversively undermine those implicit claims to purity: "She owned a Norfolk vicarage, a farmhouse in Normandy, a Tuscan bell-tower, a sea-coast in Bohemia. 'All haunted. . . . Nobody gives up land without a fight'" (*Satanic Verses* 61). Each property is haunted not only because every myth of purity represses minority histories but also because Mimi, the novel's agent of "postmodernist critiques" (Dayal 261), herself haunts the space of European Whiteness with a cultural history and physical appearance that is both of and outside of Europe.

Mimi takes pleasure in deception and dissimulation. After Saladin's rejection and the cancellation of their television show, she aligns herself with Billy Battuta, a notorious hustler and member of Bombay's criminal underground. While Saladin is eventually reclaimed for India (and thereby, it seems, for authentic selfhood) by Zeeny Vakil, who is the voice of Indian syncretism in both this novel and *The Moor's Last Sigh*, Mimi slips into the criminal underworld. Mimi, like Saladin, seems to

be negotiating the challenge of living in a world where hybrid identities are sources of social unease. But some kind of reconciliation and good faith is possible for Saladin, while for Mimi, there is only the possibility of ever greater deception and ever higher risks.

Mimi proposes a romantic partnership to Saladin, based on their shared professional pursuits and chameleon tendencies to which Saladin replies that he “was brought up to have views on Jews” (*Satanic Verses* 60). Of all the elements of his past that Saladin has so decisively rejected—his nation, his family—only his schooling in religious prejudice remains. Yet, I would argue, that even anti-Jewish views when expressed by characters in this text are complex and not simply indicative of anti-Semitism. When Hind explodes after learning of her daughter Mishal’s affair with Hanif Johnson, she complains, among other things, of the humiliation of being “stuck in this country full of jews and strangers who lumped her in with the negroes” (*Satanic Verses* 289). Her distinction between ‘jews’ and ‘strangers’ indicates the simultaneously particular and indeterminate position of Jews; neither like her nor an undifferentiated other, they are implicitly coded as white in contrast to the “negroes.” Hind’s dislike of being “lumped” with those of African descent indicates her own racializing tendencies as well as a sense of racial ambiguity. The uncomfortable proximity of Jew and South Asian Muslim is also coded into the dominant perspective of the White British storekeeper who defines a “Paki” as a “brown Jew” (300). In this context, the term “Jew” does not denote membership in either a specific religious or a cultural group. Instead, Jews are simply “people set apart—rendered objectionable”; this is an existential state, rather than an identity per se (*Satanic Verses* 300).

Gibreel’s relationship with Allie further illustrates the novel’s Jewish problematics. A Bollywood star of enormous popularity, Gibreel is motivated to change his life after a chance encounter with Alleluia Cone, a British mountaineer, in a Bombay hotel and, without invitation, follows her back to England. She too is Jewish and, as the child of Holocaust survivors, is the heir of familial and racial trauma. Physically, Alleluia or Allie, could not be more different than Mimi. Tall, thin and blonde, her pallor and whiteness are continuously emphasized. Her profession,

that of mountain climber, requires her to display athleticism, a quality which she uses to market an array of material goods (corporate sponsorship and advertising being her primary source of income and support for the expeditions). If Mimi's body must be hidden, Allie's must be continuously displayed. And if Mimi is content to be a voice, and through her voice proliferates into multiple selves, Allie struggles to find a voice for herself and connect with others. Her status as the "ice queen" (*Satanic Verses* 30) represents not just her mountain-climbing career and her fair complexion but also her social isolation. Her identification with the realm of the air, outlined by Gillian Gane, renders her not only nomadic, but insubstantial. Indeed, she is the ghost that haunts Saladin on his return to India (*Satanic Verses* 540).

If Allie is racially labelled as White, her Jewishness is still significant to the plot in other, non-racial ways; indeed, Gibreel identifies her as Jewish from the first (*Satanic Verses* 31). This, perhaps, is part of "the challenge of her, the newness" that attracts Gibreel (*Satanic Verses* 32). Daughter of Holocaust survivors, she is intimately aware of the damage wrought by xenophobia and its lasting legacy. This, Gibreel, is entirely unable to understand. Reading Allie as belonging to a dominant White race he complains that she is a "bloody Angrez" whose understanding of wartime is akin to a children's cartoon (*Satanic Verses* 316). Allie's success in passing is repeatedly emphasized. When, as a child, she goes to buy a newspaper, she hears the newspaper man using the unfamiliar racist epithet 'Paki' (300). The comment, made to Allie in a conspiratorial mode, suggests that the shopkeeper reads her as White. Indeed her racial ambiguity arguably troubles her relationship with Gibreel, too. In the midst of an uncomfortably intimate speech, delivered to Saladin, about his sex life with Allie, Gibreel interrupts himself to note that when he looks "at these pink people . . . instead of skin" he sees "rotting meat" and can "smell the putrefaction" (*Satanic Verses* 437).

Unaware of Allie's family history, and perhaps of the Holocaust more generally, Gibreel fails to understand the complexities of oppression and domination. If Mimi's attachment to property bespeaks both acquiescence and defiance, the accommodation of the Cone family to life in England is even more fraught. Her father changes the family name,

abandoning the stereotypically Jewish moniker ‘Cohen’ for the more ambiguous ‘Cone,’ and insists that the family celebrate Christmas. Yet he also undermines that very celebration by entering the party dressed as Mao in order to declare its fundamental corruption (*Satanic Verses* 296). Unable to either fully embrace or resist the dominant culture, he engages in a grotesque pantomime which, while it deftly uncovers the materialism of normative Christmas celebrations and pulls back the veil of secularism such celebrations have acquired in recent years, leaves no room for Jewish identity. It is only after his death that Allie’s mother re-connects with the Jewish community.

Gibreel himself, though non-White, is largely accommodated with ease in England based on his class status and his acceptance of his own outsider status. Unlike Saladin, he is not harassed by immigration officials; unlike the Sufiyan family and the other inhabitants of Brickhall, he does not suffer economic or cultural marginalisation born of a hybrid identity. He does not seek to be recognized as British and therefore does not trouble the norms of the nation-state. Indeed, Chamcha himself “learns that he is Indian in England. His Indianness is not only a condition of his national origin, his race, or his cultural affiliation, but of the class dynamics of London” (Kalliney 68). It is Mimi who instructs him in the history of exploitation that positions them both (*Satanic Verses* 261).

It is not just in the relationships between the characters or in the physical spaces of East London that the history of Jews and Muslims proves inseparable in *The Satanic Verses*. When Salman wishes to test the prophet Mahound, he substitutes the word “Jew” for “Christian” (*Satanic Verses* 368); one of Mahound’s wives is “Rehana the Jew” (*Satanic Verses* 382). The demonic form of Saladin takes its precedence from the mythology of Isaac Bashevis Singer (*Satanic Verses* 408). When several characters attend a meeting in support of the activist Dr. Uhura Simba, who has been wrongly arrested by police, the film *Mephisto*, about “an actor seduced into a collaboration with Nazism” is playing in the cinema next door (*Satanic Verses* 416). Black history and Jewish history are quite literally playing out side by side.

This proximity and the relationship between diasporic Jewish and South Asian Muslim identities become even more central in *Shalimar*

the Clown. In this novel, a Jewish man is paired with an Indian woman. Max Ophuls has escaped from Nazi persecution in Europe so he too has a strong sense of the perils of racism. Like the Jewish characters in earlier novels, his Jewishness seems to be defined not so much by any sense of religious or cultural practice but in paradoxically both racialized and utterly ineffable terms. In the first third of the novel, Rushdie presents us with two competing models of hybridity. The first is embodied in the individual Max Ophuls, who, as Jason Cowley observes, is "somebody from everywhere. Born in Strasbourg to a Jewish family and educated in Paris, Max is a polyglot cosmopolitan, a raconteur, scholar, traveller and adventurer." Seemingly at home in the world, Max exemplifies the global citizen and is presented, at least initially, as almost impossibly romantic in his many roles as forger, freedom fighter, and ladies man. Though brought to the fore by many reviewers, Max's Jewishness is not actually mentioned until well into the novel and arises only in the section of the narrative which dwells on his experiences in France during World War Two, where the category "Jewish" is not so much recognized by Max as, I argue, imposed upon him.

The second model of hybridity is contained in the idea of Kashmiriyat, or Kashmiriness, which in *Shalimar the Clown* is epitomized by the fictional village of Pachigam, and, in particular, the village's supportive response to the inter-religious love affair of two of its young people, Boonyi, a Hindu, and the eponymous Shalimar, a Muslim. When the two teenagers are found to be engaged in an extra-marital affair, the community resolves to support the legitimization of their relationship through marriage and successfully negotiates the intricacies of an inter-religious wedding. The ultimate dissolution of this marriage and of the hybrid, accommodating community that nurtured it that is at the heart of *Shalimar the Clown*.

Max's world and the world of Pachigam collide when Max is appointed ambassador to India. Though he comes bearing a seemingly equitable solution for the problem of Kashmir, his adulterous affair with Boonyi not only makes its implementation impossible but acts as a catalyst for the descent of the valley into violent extremism. According to Gavin Keulks, "contamination by the west is rendered by Max's seduc-

tion of Boonyi and by the corresponding actions of Max's wife, who banishes Boonyi to her homeland while confiscating Boonyi's child, India/Kashmira" (158). For Tom Barbash, too, Max is "a placeholder for all that is Western, a peacock, a meddler in the business of others, in essence everything loathed by the terrorists." The equation of Jewishness with Westernness ignores, of course, the complex and troubled relationship which makes it impossible for the Jew to be the truly representative subject of Western modernity—a point to which I return later. Equally problematic is the novel's suggestion that the explanation for terrorism is marital infidelity and uncontrolled female sexuality. What is central to my argument is the way this affair functions to bring Max and Shalimar, cuckolded husband of Boonyi, Kashmiri separatist, Muslim terrorist, into a direct relationship. Indeed as Shalimar gets drawn deeper into a global network of anti-state violence, he and Max resemble each other more and more.

Shalimar is repeatedly referred to as Max's shadow. Shalimar dogs Max's footsteps in his dreams, plotting the murder of both his ex-wife and her ex-lover. Through his involvement in Islamic terrorist organizations, Shalimar, like Max, becomes polyglot. He becomes worldly and well-traveled as he imbricates himself in conflicts from Morocco to the Philippines. Shalimar takes on multiple identities, learns how to sneak across international borders, and forge documents, just as Max did during his involvement in the French resistance during World War Two. Indeed, the resistance activities of the two characters are repeatedly compared throughout the novel. This pairing of Euro-American Jew and Kashmiri Muslim, one a symbol of official or what Arjun Appadurai terms in *Fear of Small Numbers* (2006) vertebrate political organization, the other imbricated in cellular formations, represents the two, inexorably linked faces of globalization (21–31).

In *Shalimar the Clown*, Max's hybridity, in contrast, seems to sit more easily with authenticity. His status as an ambassador makes him on the surface an obvious and literal representative of America, and his unique brand of Franco-American hybridity is compared to liberty (*Shalimar the Clown* 4). Indeed, in defining his own identity, Max does not mention Jewishness at all. Yet the novel insists on Max's Jewishness at key

moments. When Boonyi comes to understand that Max has lost interest in their liaison, she declares "I should have known better than to lie with a Jew. The Jews are our enemy" (*Shalimar the Clown* 205). "Jew" is thus primarily a pejorative term in this text, insofar as it marks Max for annihilation in France and is the term of abuse that Boonyi uses when she understands that her relationship with Max is to end. That the word "Jew" seems to function as a term only for insult or denoting victimization in the text is extremely problematic. What is the point of Max's Jewishness in the text? Does it simply function to produce a crude allegory in which, to quote Natasha Walter, "the resentful Muslim, in revenge for what he sees as the corruption wreaked by the west, is being used by greater political forces to try to cut down the American Jew"?

One incident demonstrates the extreme degree to which Max's Jewishness is transformed in the novel into an empty symbol. In his role as American ambassador to India, Max has a strategy meeting with Indira Gandhi in which the prime minister laments that they have both been outmaneuvered by the machinations of Krishna Menon and G. Nanda, cabinet members. When Indira declares them both schmucks (*Shalimar the Clown* 189), Max is mystified and assumes this is some kind of obscure political acronym, which Indira must then explain. The humour here stems, of course, from the fact that Max needs an Indian to interpret Yiddish for him and thus appears ignorant of "his own" language. While knowledge of Yiddish was by no means universal among European Jews and while *Shalimar the Clown* makes it clear that Max's class and cultural background makes fluency in Yiddish very unlikely, it is nevertheless odd that he is so bewildered by this particular term since "schmuck" long ago entered into the American vocabulary. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the use of the word in English to the late 19th century, and by the late 1960s, the era in which this incident is imagined to take place, the term was sufficiently understood by this time that Lenny Bruce was actually arrested and charged with profanity for using it in his shows. As such, Max's ignorance of the term indicates that upper-class Indians are somehow more intimate with Jewish culture than he is.

Pachigam itself includes a family of dancing Jews, who are forced to flee when the conflict in Kashmir becomes more widespread. They die,

like many of their townsfolk, before they can reach safety further south. The contrast between these Jews and Max is significant. While they are minor characters in the novel, Rushdie makes clear that their difference as Jews is recognized within Pachigam even as they are embraced, at least initially, as fellow Kashmiris. When they are forced to flee, they do so as a family. For them, “Jewish” is a group identity. Max, in contrast, is an isolated Jew. With the exception of his parents, who die early in the text, the text never depicts Max in association with any other Jew. Revathi Krishnaswamy’s critique of *The Moor’s Last Sigh* applies here, too:

[B]y decontaminating the migrant of all territorial affiliations and social affinities, the mythology of migrancy ironically reinvents, in the very process of destabilizing subjectivity, a post-modernist avatar of the free-floating bourgeois subject. Once this autonomous and unattached individual, this migrant, exiled or nomadic consciousness, is legitimized as the only true site of postcolonial resistance, all other forms of collective commitment get devalued as coercive and corrupt. (143)

Jewish community is not Krishnaswamy’s subject, but it is perhaps devalued even more than South Asian communities in Rushdie’s fiction.

Again, the parallel with *The Satanic Verses* is instructive. For Saladin, catharsis arrives via the affirmation of familial and community bonds, but Mimi, like Moraes in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, does not seem to have any such bonds. Though Max, of course, has his daughter, India, she does not seem to engage with Jewishness in any way. Indeed, both the name given to her by her adoptive mother and that given her by her birth mother—Kashmira—which she adopts at the end of the text, make it clear where her culture loyalties lie, despite her upbringing by her Jewish father and lack of contact with her Indian mother. Boonyi’s own cosmopolitanism takes the form of an inclusive palate, which comes to appreciate and crave food from all over the subcontinent and the world. As her body expands due to this passion for consumption, Boonyi’s relationship with Max and the syncretic culture of Kashmir both fall apart. Mrs. Sufiyan in *The Satanic Verses* is similarly committed to performing India’s unity-in-diversity through cooking and likewise takes on expan-

sive proportions. Yet, as Paul Cantor points out, this enactment of “cultural hybridity works only by ignoring the serious dietary commitments religions often demand of their followers and thus trivializing the whole issue of food” (335).

An emphasis on dietary restrictions is, of course, something both Judaism and Islam share. This is only one of many points of contact, however, between Judaism and Islam more generally, and European Jews and South Asian Muslims in particular. In *Enlightenment in the Colony* (2007), Aamir Mufti details the ways in which the culture of the Muslim upper classes, the ashraf, engaged with a discourse of minority-ness that had developed in the 18th and 19th centuries with reference to the “problem” of the Jews of Europe. According to Mufti, just as the history of the Jew reveals the limits of secularist thinking in Western discourse, so too do Muslim histories reveal the limits of secularism on the Indian subcontinent. I agree with Mufti that in “contemporary Anglophone narratives with links to India” there has emerged a “metaphorics of Jewishness,” and this paper is much indebted to his work (245). While Mufti considers contemporary literature only in his epilogue, mentioning *The Moor's Last Sigh* only in passing and Rushdie's other work not at all, such metaphorics, as I have demonstrated, are a pervasive feature of Rushdie's oeuvre.

Indeed, the pairing of Max and Shalimar with its class dynamic—at the moment of Max's death, one is quite literally master and the other one a servant—seems to strain any shared minorityness. Instead, by conducting an affair with a Hindu woman, the Jew becomes an agent for Hindu minoritization of Muslims. In *Shalimar the Clown*, it is the Jew himself rather than the mechanics of the liberal state that produces minority status. This, I want to suggest, is extremely troubling. Max is initially portrayed as an American who is critical of the quality and quantity of American involvement overseas yet through some process that is never explained becomes the agent for some of America's worst excesses and, arguably, most terrible misjudgements.

Max's seemingly contradictory Jewishness, Americanness, and globality has as its antecedent eighteenth-century European conventions of “Jews deployed as *mediators* between high and lowly. . . . For those

on high they were servants—a prism through which the lower classes were sighted; for those at the bottom they were powerful oppressors—a prism through which the ruling and exploiting classes were understood” (Bauman 151; emphasis in original). In this context, Max’s role as a mastermind of counterterrorism becomes crystallized: he is the agent through which ideological opponents, such as the United States and the Taliban, can become reluctant but mutually beneficial allies. Max represents a recasting of the Jewish caste, globalizing it for a new era.

It is in these earlier stereotypes that one can also find the explanation for Max’s seemingly contradictory identity; “[t]he Jew is ambivalence incarnate” (Bauman 150). Since “[t]he great fear of modern life is that of undetermination, unclarity, uncertainty—in other words, ambivalence” (Bauman 149), Jews are invariably sites of unease that necessitate what Zygmunt Bauman terms, “allosemitism”: special discourse, whether hateful or celebratory, to address the “problem” that Jews create, since their essential ambivalence cannot be neatly conquered. In this context, the ease of Max’s unexplained transformation into an agent of counterterrorism, isomorphic with terrorism in *Shalimar the Clown*, becomes clear. As Appadurai points out “terrorism works through uncertainty. And this uncertainty comes in many forms” (92). Max’s multiple global identities, it seems, beget terror. The suspicion that Rushdie begins to express about hybridity in *The Moor’s Last Sigh* is thus heightened in this novel. While the fictional pairing of Max and Shalimar complicates the notion of Jews and South Asian Muslims as either analogous or simplistically opposed, the novel is also fraught with dangerous moral equivalences such as that between Boonyi as Holocaust victim and Max, in his role of sugar daddy, as Nazi.

The novel finishes with Shalimar and India / Kashmira poised to strike each other in a darkened room in Max’s former home. One must surely kill the other. With Max gone and India-turned-Kashmira now pursuing a romantic relationship with a man from her namesake region, it seems as though Kashmiriyat must be the only model of hybridity left standing. Shalimar, we are made to understand, cannot last much longer. The relationship between Kashmira and Yuvraj may indeed “represents a transformed Kashmiriyat that is deterritorialized” thereby positioning

“diasporic sensibilities and location as an answer to a narrow ethnic or national chauvinism” just as Yumna Siddiqi argues (see Morton), and Stephen Morton reiterates (339). Yet I question whether the choice of Kashmiriyat as a model of hybridity is really a wholly liberating one. Boonyi's invocation of the Jew as enemy in her moment of anger suggests that her upbringing in Pachigam has not nurtured in her tolerance for religious difference. The “our” in her declaration “the Jews are our enemy” is notably ambiguous. Are Jews the enemy of Hindus? Kashmir? India? The world? By the end of the novel, Kashmir itself seems to have been divested of its Jewish population. Max's earlier visit to Kashmir had also threatened to strip him of his many identities. As he stands on “the ceasefire line....His whole life suddenly seemed absurd....Max slipped loose of all his different selves” (*Shalimar the Clown* 179). Whatever the outcome of this last confrontation between Kashmira and Shalimar, it is one in which the Jew has no place.

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