CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

I

Thought-provoking statements are embedded in all the novels which on analysis with or without their allegorical connotations may give a conclusive insight on Rushdie’s preoccupation with the topic of fury in his novels.

In *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Umeed Merchant a.k.a. Rai, photographer, childhood buddy and lover of the great singer Vina Apsara, who was always on the look-out for her, found her emerging confused and half naked from her suite of rooms in Guadalajara, Mexico where she had ended up drunk after her performance the night before with a young man half her age. She was forty-four and was making a solo career without her “sun” (GBF 5) Ormus Cama, that left her lonely and disoriented. Two hours later, the two of them flew in a helicopter, with her entourage following her by road, to a banquet in her honour that awaited them in Tequila. Even before the landing, there had been tremors but they landed anyway because the tremors had stopped. Then just as they were about to settle down and make merry, the ground began to shake and all hell broke loose. Buildings collapsed, trees were uprooted and sewages and giant vats burst, most of which Rai captured with his camera while everything round him went wild. He had to keep himself immune to the stink or the slime and shut off his senses if he had to capture reality. He says:

“Long ago I developed a knack for invisibility. It allowed me to go right up to the actors in the world’s drama, the sick, the dying, the crazed, the mourning, the rich, the greedy, the ecstatic, the bereft, the angry, the murderous, the secretive, the bad, the children, the good, the newsworthy, to shimmy into their charmed place, into the midst of their rage or grief or transcendent arousal, to penetrate the defining instant of their being-in-the-world and get
my fucking picture.” (GBF 14)

So if one wants to really see truth and stark reality, one should adopt the invisible stance of a photographer and see things for what they are. Personal feelings of horror, fear, sympathy or even self-pity are things that stand in the way of perception of truth. Rai during the course of his duty could not stop to comfort a child who was crying for his mother as his duty was to capture the dilemma faced by the child. Hence, to see Rushdie’s fury for what it really is, one has to strip oneself of all human emotions, prejudices and pre-conceived notions to arrive at a clear and conclusive understanding of the subject. And to be able to do that, one has, like Rai to make oneself psychically small – insignificant. Rai convinced the sniper and the warlord that he was not worth their trouble and so got places where others simply wouldn’t even dream of venturing. It is hoped that this chapter will render some insights into the elements of the rage exhibited by the characters by adopting Rai’s stance of neutrality.

II

In *Grimus*, we find Flapping Eagle actually taking “refuge in anger” (G 159). It was a façade for the “many emotions” he was feeling as he entered the brothel of Jocasta, looking for Virgil Jones. Right from the beginning, Flapping Eagle’s mission had been to find his elder sister Bird Dog who had been lured away from their home in Amerindia by a man called Sispy. On his twenty-first birthday his thirty-four year old sister had been elated at having been given four phials containing yellow potions for eternal life and blue ones for release from it by Sispy. She herself drank from the yellow one, breaking the blue one to pieces, but her brother refused to drink his share, choosing instead to bury it inside their tent. It was the day when he fought an eagle and was given the name “Flapping Eagle” by his sister and also the day when he lost his virginity to her. A few more years passed and when it became clear to Bird Dog that her brother was not to be urged into partaking of the elixir of life, she announced to him that she had met Sispy again and would be leaving with him. Then
she left him and on the day he reached his sister’s petrified age – thirty-four years, three months and four days received a visit from the Sham-Man of the Axona tribe who warned him that he would be attacked if he remained there. The reason for it was because he was considered an abomination by the rest of the tribe for being a hermaphrodite, his birth also having caused the death of his mother so that he was ‘born-from-dead’, and whereas the Axona were short and dark, he was tall and fair. And now that he no longer had the protection of his sister, the Axona tribe were moving in for the kill. Margareta Peterson and Joel Kuortti have attempted to interpret the novel as Rushdie’s debut at postcoloniality with Flapping Eagle as the native and Grimus as the colonizer, the Gorfs as French colonizers etc. But it is to be borne in mind that the author never intended it to be a postcolonial work and had written it for a science fiction competition (even though it does not read too much like one!). He himself is said to have stated that he does not like the tone of the novel, saying that he hadn’t as yet found his voice when he wrote the book. This would account for the “evasive and confusing” nature of the novel as mentioned by Kuortti. So, though reading interpretations in it is a viability, it is best to take it at face value and enjoy it for its magic realist elements along with its psychological implications. After the visit of the sham-man then, Flapping Eagle unearthed his bottles, drank from the yellow one which was bitter-sweet and pocketing the blue one left his home under cover of darkness that very night. He reached the town called Phoenix where he was immediately taken under the wings of a rich widow named Livia Cramm who also had another protégé - Nicholas Deggle, a conjuror. After twenty five years with her, he along with Deggle remained young whereas she grew old and became fiercely possessive about him. Then one night she died a mysterious death and Flapping Eagle found his blue bottle missing. She had left all her money to him and her yatch to Deggle, but as it was never his attention to settle down anywhere till he had found his sister, he exchanged his new-found wealth with the yatch and sailed the seas for centuries, looking for her. It was during this period that the novelty of immortality wore off and he found that all his experiences had left him “empty; a grin without a face” (G 33) with eyes
that had “seen everything and know nothing” (G 34). He had become even more desperate in finding Sispy because he was the only man who would know how to transform him to normality, and also because Sispy had called him an eagle before he even acquired the Brave’s name. He remembered what Sispy had told his sister:

“Tell your brother Born-From-Dead that all eagles come at last to eyrie and all sailors come at last to shore” (G 33)

thereby implying that there was a place where he could go. He also recalled Sispy saying that there was a place for those who refused to use the blue bottle of release. So having despaired of finding either his sister or Sispy, he went back to Deggle, demanding to know what he had to do to find them as he was sure that he knew the man called Sispy, being immortal himself. Deggle had changed his name to ‘Lokki’ in order to avoid detection of his immortality and told him that he had to make “a gate” (G 36) to the island called Calf Island which would be dangerous. He himself had for centuries tried to do so without success because no one could enter the island of the immortals without the assent of its engineer Grimus. Without really understanding what he meant, Flapping Eagle set sail once more. While he was dozing in his yatch, something feeling like a gale blew against his face, a cloud rushed over him and the air above him became electrically charged. He stood up, trying to hold his yatch from breaking but fell off it in a dizzy spell into the angry waters below, “through the hole in the Mediterranean into the other sea, that not-quite-Mediterranean” (G 37). That was the manner in which he reached Calf Island, on the crest of a big wave, landing near the rocking chair where Virgil Jones sat with Dolores O’Toole. He was seven hundred seventy seven years, seven months and seven days old in a thirty four year old body. As stated earlier, he was taken up the mountain to the town of Kaf or K by Jones where they went their separate ways – Jones to Jocasta and Flapping Eagle to the Gribbs. Outside the brothel called ‘The House of the Rising Son’ was a veiled woman on a donkey who called herself Mrs Virgil Jones and told him to tell Jones that she had called. He found Jones sitting half naked and drunk on a bed with two women Kamala Sutra and Madame Jocasta which he found disgusting. Then
Kamala Sutra entwined herself about him, making cooing noises which he didn’t like. Madame Jocasta then slapped him on both cheeks before summoning a male worker called Gilles Priape who entered naked “languidly stroking the preternatural generous tool of his trade” (G 157), trying to administer to him. Shaking him off, he apologized to Jones from whom he received hiccups and giggles as the only response. The emotions that filled him were a mingling of disgust at the sight before him accompanied by shame for his belated apology and guilt caused by the biting accusations of Madame Jocasta. But what overpowered him most was his disappointment with Virgil Jones who had been so dignified and whom he had looked up to, and who was now sinking to such pathetic depths of degradation. So he blazed away at Jones, voicing his frustration at his ruined condition which was rendering him unfit as a guide in his search for his sister and Sispy. And when he wanted to know what the Stone Rose was and where Grimus was to be found, Jones resignedly said that it did not matter anymore as they had both made their decision and told him that it was the end of the road for both of them. It was the final and greatest blow for Flapping Eagle after having waited for this moment for over seven hundred frustrating years and the disappointment he felt was so great that he shouted at Jones saying that he was glad that he had done better than him who had only succeeded in getting himself “surrounded by whores and madness”. And the anger he felt here is described as a “refuge” from all the different emotions he felt.

Anger as a “refuge” is also to be found in Tai the illiterate Kashmiri boatman of *Midnight's Children* who abhorred the changes brought about by the British Raj. He derided the ‘Isa’ (Christ) they had brought with them to the sub-continent, boasting to the boy Aadam Aziz that he had carried him in his boat, and said that he was gluttonous though very polite. He said that he used to know where in Kashmir he was buried and talked about the annual bleeding of the pierced feet carved in his tombstone. He seemed unable to remember the location of the grave as his memory had dimmed with age, saying that he was older than the mountains on the horizon. All this was mostly in response to the boy’s persistent questions
about his age, to which most illiterate people have no answers. He stated that the information about ‘Isa’ was recorded in “old lost books” and that he knew about it all, though he himself admitted that he couldn’t read. He could invent tall tales on any topic for the young boy’s eager ears, scoffing at his education and saying that he, illiterate though he was, knew what was not taught at schools, such as the the Emperor Jehangir’s exact weight as he had carried his litter, his dying words etc. He was intent on making up for what he lacked in learning, and: “literature crumbled beneath the rage of his sweeping hand” (MC 11). Here was a case of the colonised fighting a losing battle against the colonizer, and Tai was fighting back in whatever way he knew how. But though he was successful in driving Aadam Aziz away, there was nothing he could do about the colonizing effects he saw around him accompanied with the dispute over Kashmir and paid for it with his life without achieving anything – a true case of all sound and fury.

In psychology, when the ego is unable to live up to the demands of its super-ego, the person suffers from lack of confidence or sense of unworthiness which attitude Alfred Adler termed “inferiority complex”. He said that such a person in his desperate attempts to overcome it could take resort to fabricating its polarity - a superiority complex in order to maintain a sense of worth, resulting mostly in exaggerated arrogance which is in reality overcompensating or counteracting what they really lack and feel. Such an attitude of over-assertiveness was also taken up by Tai, which also is a form of unstable mental attitude leading later to personal difficulties as when he ended up becoming a human cess-pit. Adler also says that since superiority complexes are perceived as obnoxious by others due to its overbearing attitude, such people are usually treated with reserve or even distaste, and:

“This rejection in turn might increase inner feelings of worthlessness, leading to even more aggressive compensation – and a maddening spiral has begun.” (APM 127)

Tai’s life provides an ample illustration of this psychological observation.

To move on to other types of observations then, in Shame, after Sufiya Zinobia broke free of her forced confinement and escaped into the wild, there were rumours about the
sighting of the wild beast that was terrorizing the countryside. The first came from a village boy Ghaffar who said that it had black hair on its head but was bald all over its body and walked with an awkward gait. Although the report was published in the papers, no one really believed it as the boy was a compulsive liar and the account was so improbable. Her father Raza Hyder and her husband Omar Khayyam Shakil were the only ones to know that the boy had indeed seen her. Then Shakil dreamt about her and saw her naked and on all fours in the wilderness, hunting prey. He then started trying to get information about further sightings, and started frequenting bus depots, slaughter houses, market places and cafes, asking questions. In this way he discovered that she had covered the whole country as reports similar to Ghaffar’s showered in from all corners of the west wing. Animals, men, children were murdered in the same grissly pattern, their heads torn off and their intestines dragged out through the necks. There was also heard “blood-curdling howls” (S 253) but no amount of vigilance undertaken by all-night sentries could lead in the capture or killing of the ‘white panther’. She became a myth and was said to be a demon immune to bullets, to have the capacity to dematerialize, to fly or to increase its size at will. Shakil also started finding himself imagining her as growing crafty, becoming acquainted with threats to her survival and learning how to keep herself safe. He imagined her with callussed palms and feet, long matted hair encasing her face like fur, her skin toughened, sun burned and lacerated, her eyes fiery and wild and her foul breath reeking of death. It was then that he was shocked in finding himself sympathising with her and happy in the sudden discovery that she was finally free to be what she was meant to be. He imagined her being proud of her feats along with the strength that resided in her. Pride for having given herself the freedom of obeying as it were, every whim of the forbidden id, and freedom from any obligation to live up to any kind of social expectations. Freedom from the restraints of the superego, and hence from any kind of guilt. She need no longer be subject to either the scorn and accusations heaped upon her by
her sister and mother, for she had become a free spirit. All this made him wonder if it was possible that:

“...human beings are capable of discovering their nobility in their savagery?”

(S 254)

This has been a much controversial statement, and Indira Bhatt as stated in the first chapter questioned Rushdie’s “suggestion” that violence could free Pakistan from its shameful past. Another critic Syed Mujeebuddin who also found the concept of violence being the child of the dialectics of Shame /shamelessness problematic quoted Aijaz Ahmad who stated: “...violence is not in itself capable of regeneration, and it is doubtful, Fanon notwithstanding, that violence is intrinsically even a cleansing virtue.” The nature of Rushdie’s statement is indeed cryptic if taken literally and viewed in the light of an authorial remedial recipe for political ills. Let it be stated that Rushdie here is dealing rather with psychical matters than with the women in purdah of Pakistan, (though he deeply sympathised with them and would doubtless love for them to fight back) and is voicing his thoughts through a neuro-surgeon who is also a sympathiser of Sufiya. Psychology states that the id can never be outgrown, and is simply kept under control in most cases. In some people, however, the pleasure-seeking principle dominates inappropriately or too often, and when this happens, a core aspect of their adult personality becomes gratification of their innermost desires. Shakil knew only too well that as long as Sufiya’s super-ego was able to successfully negotiate with her ego, she was a blushing idiot, despised and abused verbally as well as physically by her sister and mother. When however, her id broke through all the other inhibiting mechanisms, she became a legend – a white panther, demanding deference from all men. This astounding alchemical-

1 Rushdie truthfully presents through his characters instances of the follies and foibles of human nature, though exaggerated to a certain degree in some for comical effect.
like transition was what Shakil perceived in his wife and he was happy that though Sufiya, freed of the constraints of the inhibiting superego had turned into what civilisation would call ‘a wild beast’, she was for the first time in her life permanently being true to her self, living for each moment with no thought of the next. This, however, is the picture in schizophrenia and an excerpt made by a schizophrenic during the early phases of his breakdown runs thus:

“My mind seems to have a will and direction of its own. It seems to take over my thoughts…without telling me what it’s up to. Like, you know, this one idea…well it keeps going around in my mind…and I don’t want to think about it….but I can’t seem to stop. It’s …well…as if…my mind were running me.”

(APM 294)

It is the mind running the person instead of the other way round – the id running the superego – and complete freedom as the outcome. So ‘normal’ people are those who lead inhibited lives and the ‘abnormal’ those who choose to throw caution to the winds and opt for the uninhibited one. And the transformation can be permanent as in the case of Sufiyia Zinobia, because:

“…once a carnivore has tasted blood you can’t fool it with vegetables anymore.” (S 243)

Shakil reported his findings to the crestfallen Raza Hyder who had taken comfort in the belief that all the killings had been committed by Haroun Harappa who had returned from self-exile with a band of followers. It was then that he heard the dead Iskander whisper to him that she was to be likened to a flooded river at its height of turbulence when everything before it had to give way to its great force. He also compared her with Fortune, holding sway over unresisting spots and directing:

“...her fury where she knows no dykes or barriers have been made to hold her.” (S 256)

And an important factor in causing such a transformation has been ascribed to humiliating
treatment over an extended period of time:

“Humiliate people for long enough and a wildness bursts out of them. Afterwards, surveying the wreckage of their rage, they look bewildered, uncomprehending, young. Did we do such things? … we didn’t know we could … then, slowly, pride dawns on them, pride in their power, in having learned to hit back ... It’s a seductive, silky thing, this violence, yes it is.”

(S 117)

The ‘wildness’ is made manifest in group fury when things are set alight and shops raided in broad daylight.

In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, whereas the Cultmaster, Khattam-Shud, of the Cult of Muteness used to preach “hatred only towards stories and fancies and dreams” (HSS 101). He had expounded his theory that the way to ruin a happy story was to make it sad, to ruin an action drama was to drag it out, to ruin a mystery was to make obvious the criminal’s identity and to ruin a love story was to transform it into a tale of hate. However, he had gone a step further and had forbidden speech altogether and so silence reigned in the encampment of the Chupwala Army. Some of its fanatical devotees had even sewn up their lips to die of hunger and thirst to show their devotion to the cult. The fact that Rushdie professes to have written this book before the *fatwa* is strange given the fact that his Khattam-Shud stepped out of his book after the publication of his *Satanic Verses* in a bid to silence him forever. Much has been written by critics about the Khattam-Shuds of the world who resort to aggression in order to gain their tyrannical ends.

In *East West*, the auction of the ruby slippers was given such a wide publicity that its would-be-bidders ranged from notable personages to junkies. Among the crowd were copulating couples who were separated by a janitor for fear that they would give offence to the crowd. With this regard the author who was also trying to get hold of the slippers in order to win back the love of his erstwhile lover and cousin Gale says: “We have come to think of taking offence as a fundamental right” (EW 89). Being offended has become second nature to
us and it has become a prized possession, especially if we consider ourselves morally superior which gives us the courage to inflict our rage on the morally inferior, and for which we seem to take pride in “our short fuses” (EW 90). Anger is thereby elevated, placed on a pedestal as it were and worshipped. It is made to surpass everything else and has become a god.

In *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, Abraham Zogoiby offered the reigning Miss World Nadia Wadia a modelling job, telling her that he needed a fresh and beautiful face for his Siodicorp Banking enterprise. He gave her and her mother a Colaba Causeway apartment and when he decided that it was time for his son the Moor to get married, he told him to go to the Wadias to propose. Since the Moor at thirty-five already looked seventy, Nadia’s mother wailed when she saw him. So he proposed a sham engagement which would continue on platonic lines even if it were to end in a marriage in order to please his father and Nadia agreed to it. The much publicised engagement had however far reaching consequences for Nadia had many admirers, namely Fielding the big dada and his ex-employee Tin-man Hazare both of whom she had spurned. The break between Fielding and Hazare had been caused by Nadia herself because Fielding had wanted his “Cadre Number One” (MLS 356) Hazare to roughen up Nadia a bit for having the guts to reject his advances and Hazare who was himself intoxicated with Nadia refused, for which he was sacked a few days later. Hazare’s obsession continued and exasperated his chum Dhirendra who started hating Nadia for having ruined their lives. He suggested to Hazare that they should make ‘RDX’ to which the latter heartily agreed, being already adept at making bombs and bent on hitting back Fielding. In the Bombay blasts that ensued, three hundred kilograms of RDX destroyed school buses, the Air India building, trains, residences, chawls, docks, movie studios, mills, restaurants, commodity exchanges, office buildings, hospitals, shopping streets but as the Moor says:

> “After each monstrosity came a greater; like true addicts, we seemed to need each increased dose.” (MLS 374)
As if the damage was not enough, two and a half thousand kilos more of RDX, timers and detonators were captured in Bombay and near Bhopal. And on the morning after the blasts, heroin heavy Sammy Hazare accompanied by his dwarf Dhrendra visited Nadia and slashed her beautiful face twice from top to bottom between her eyes which would leave her scarred and ugly throughout her life. Then he went on to Cashondeliveri Tower, Abraham Zogoiby’s residence, explosives tied to their bodies and went straight to the thirty-first floor where sixty seconds later the building exploded and the sky was filled with smoke, glass, imported soil, grass, flowers and the da Gama spice. Addiction to violence worked the same way as addiction to drugs and the dose had to be increased till it brought about total annihilation.

In *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, after the burning of the spice plantation by the in-laws of the da Gamas – the Lobos and the Menezeses, the da Gama brothers were arrested and sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment. Though they themselves were not involved in the family squabble, they were held responsible for their clans’ acts of “arson, riot, murder and bloody affray” (MLS40). Charred bodies of the Lobo overseer and his wife and daughters had been found tied to trees with barbed wire in a burnt down cashew orchard. In another ruins of a cardamom grove was found the charred remains of three Menezes brothers who had also been tied to trees. And the Moor asks:

“Is this normal? Is this what we are all like? We are like this; not always, but potentially. This, too, is what we are.” (MLS 40)

This statement can be applied to the aggression of tyrannical dictators in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, the ready-to-take-offence attitude in *East, West*, the addiction to violence in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, which is backed up by psychology. The study of human behaviour from a biological perspective states that hatred is inborn because aggression was adaptive in the evolution of the human species. These ethological theories also state that as aggressiveness is restrained by society, the aggressive instinct develops a propensity to build up and is eventually forced to find expression or outlet in a distorted or
inappropriate manner. Friedman and Schustack states:

“Several personality perspectives see aggression and its internal manifestation in hatred, as a natural, biologically based aspect of humanity. That is, we are biologically predisposed to hate by our genetic heritage.” (PCM 481)

Suffice then, to conclude that man is aggressive by nature or that aggression is inherently an instinctual part of nature. Freud also depicts the human race as essentially predatory by nature:

“...men are not gentle, friendly creatures, wishing for love, who simply defend themselves if they are attacked, but a powerful measure for aggressiveness has to be reckoned with as part of their instinctual endowment. The result is that their neighbor is to them not only a possible helper or sexual object, but also a temptation to them to gratify their aggressiveness...to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him...Anyone who calls to mind the atrocities of the early migrations, of the invasions of the Huns or by the so-called Mongols under Genghis Khan and Tamurlane, of the sack of Jerusalem by the pious crusaders, even indeed the horrors of the last world war, will have to bow his head humbly before the truth of this view of man.” (1930, APM 85-86)

In The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Umeed Merchant expresses surprise that such an immoral woman like Vina Apsara could have such a huge circle of fans who absolutely worshipped her. And he says that the reason for the adoration was because she was as faulty as the rest of them, and forgiving her while seeing themselves in her was an act of forgiving their own selves. So, loving her turned out to be not so much for her own sake as for theirs, for it was rather like an act of redemption on her part. He admits that he was no different and talks about the macabre means of earning his livelihood, how he in the name of art stole “...the images of the stricken and the dead” (GBF 21). As a photographer, he was always on the move for capturing gruesome scenes and the more repulsive, the better publicity it fetched.
While his name meant “(to) hope” and “(to be) well”, his job was to exhibit such photographs and his “hellish gift” (GBF 22) to elicit some kind of response from the indifferent public. And in this condition, he along with Vina’s fans needed her to give them some sanity, which she herself lacked. He states that human beings are such that we:

“…prefer our iconic figures injured, stuck full of arrows or crucified upside down; we need them flayed and naked, we want to watch their beauty crumble slowly and to observe their narcissistic grief. Not in spite of their faults but for their faults we adore them, worshipping their weaknesses, their pettiness, their bad marriages, their substance abuse, their spite.” (GBF 20)

And we take delight in reading about or watching what we consider taboo in ourselves, like:

“...the tramp, the assassin, the rebel, the thief, the mutant, the outcast, the delinquent, the devil, the sinner, the traveler, the gangster, the runner, the mask.” (GBF 73)

Rai says that people all over the world love watching them because we see in them our unfulfilled needs. He talks of them in the context of “rootlessness” (GBF 73) as those who are born into the world without being permanently rooted in family or location. Some have been forced to live such a life due to “lack of opportunity” but the main reason why they have been termed differently from the rest of the human race is because of the invisible but strong demarcation between them and those who try to conform to rules that give them a sense of belonging. He says that the latter half of humanity are all the poorer for their pretensions to be:

“...motivated by loyalties and solidarities we do not really feel, we hide our secret identities beneath the false skins of those identities which bear the belongers’ seal of approval. But the truth leaks out in our dreams…and in the waking dreams our societies permit, in our myths, our arts, our songs, we celebrate the non-belongers, the different ones.” (GBF 73)

It has been stated that psychologically, the “different ones” (in a generally accepted sense –
migrants) are also those who dare to follow the instincts of their id and live out their unconscious dreams, and though we would never admit it, we unconsciously envy them for their supposedly foolhardiness. Which brings us again to where we started, that man’s innate nature is aggressive, and no amount of cake-icing can really hide the gruesome fact. Rushdie states:

“There is no such thing as normal life. Yet the everyday is what we need, it’s the house we build to defend us against the bad wolf of change. If, finally the wolf is reality, the house is our best defense against the storm: call it civilization. We build our walls of straw or brick not only against the vulpine instability of the times but against our own predatory natures too; against the wolf within” (GBF 500).

In *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*, Rashid Khalifa was watching the preparation for battle between the Chupwala Army and the Guppees and he was seized with a sudden fear that the Guppees would be either “torn up” or “burned” and was himself shocked at his choice of words. It worried him because he found himself filled with a “...sudden capacity for bloodthirsty thoughts” (HSS 184) that was not in him before, and blamed it on the war that was about to be fought. However, the feelings in themselves had to be innate in order to be brought to the surface by circumstances. Toynbee (1970) emphasized the thin dividing line between a civilized person and a savage:

“There is a persistent vein of violence and cruelty in human nature. Man has often striven to rid himself of what he recognizes as being a hideous moral blemish, unworthy of human nature’s better side. Sometimes man has fancied that he has succeeded in civilizing himself. The Romans fancied this when, in the fourth century B.C., they substituted constitutional government for class war. After that, Roman political life was unstained by bloodshed for nearly a quarter of a millennium. But the spell was broken when, in the fateful year 133 B.C., Tiberius Gracchus was lynched- by senators, of all people. The Romans
were horrified at what they had done. They had violated a taboo against violence that had come to seem to be quite securely established, but their horror did not bring them to their senses.” (APM 626)

And violence in the Roman world is said to have accelerated after that incident. The ethologist Lorenz (1966) stated that aggression will always remain an inherent part of our nature, and while it can be kept under control, will never be eliminated entirely. He bases this on the fact of historical perspective, extending from the stone age to the modern day. He gives an example of how a defeated wolf tends to bare his throat to the stronger one, whereupon the latter will automatically discontinue the attack. So, even though animals are aggressive among their own species, they show respect to the withdrawal and submission of the defeated one. This is the instinctual control that protects animals from members of their own species which instinctive mechanism humans seemed to have somehow lost in the course of evolution from infrahuman forms. Without this, human beings have no option but to remain creation’s most aggressive armed predator.

In Fury, Prof. Solanka sat in his posh New York sublet, thinking of how he had run away from his wife and child and his unnatural exit from normal life. He longed for the life that he had left behind of his very own volition, yet knew that it was impossible to do so. Even though he did not see himself as a “quitter” he was already separated from not only the country of his birth but also from two wives and a child. This made him wonder whether:

“The harsh reality was perhaps that he was acting not against nature but according to its dictates” (F 29).

He regarded himself as a “good person” and as he could commit himself deeply to women, they were also drawn to him and his “kind, understanding, generous, clever, funny, and grown-up” ways. But just as they were ready to settle into a magical ending with him, the beast within him would rear its forked head “baring multiple rows of teeth” and bite them when they were most vulnerable. And once the quarrels began, it would become as unstoppable as forest fires inevitably leading to divorce and his first wife Sara Lear in their
last quarrel accused him of being a pervert who because he could not handle reality was capable of loving only his dolls whose every move he could manoeuvre. Then she asked him if he had a hidden shed where he kept life-sized dolls that he could make love to and bitterly continued that his obsession for dolls would lead him to rape under-aged girls for which he would be arrested and she would have to bear the shame of it all. She asked if he went to reunions of men like him who showed each other their dolls and so on. On observing her rage, he thought how full of fury life was, which was of so many kinds:

“...sexual, Oedipal, political, magical, brutal – drives us to our finest heights and coarsest depths. Out of *furia* comes creation, inspiration, originality, passion, but also violence, pain, pure unafraid destruction, the giving and receiving of blows from which we never recover.” (F 30-1)

He admired the anger of his wife and said that it:

“...represented the human spirit in its purest, least socialized form. This is what we are, what we civilize ourselves to disguise – the terrifying human animal in us, the exalted, transcendent, self-destructive, untrammeled lord of creation. We raise each other to the heights of joy. We tear each other limb from fucking limb.” (F 31)

After his break with Mila Milo, she invited him to her flat to discuss business with him, proudly implying that she was not the kind of person to wallow in misery over a broken relationship. She wanted to use his new creation, a science fiction of a mad cyberneticist and the war between cyborgs and aliens to build a site. She said that her friends loved the concept of his creation and that they wanted to work inside the framework with his approval. Mila was well aware that what she was suggesting was exactly what had so upset him about the development of his creation Little Brain, so she started defending her proposal very strongly and effectively. She assured him that his creation would never run out of his control this time and told him that it was his chance to rectify the mistakes that he hadn’t been able to before. She added that she opposed his views about Little Brain, bringing forth forceful arguments
which stated that the doll’s present status was in keeping with the times and advised him to be more tolerant and allow others to step within the magic circle of his creativeness etc. She was so persuasive in her arguments that she completely bowled him over and he felt that he was seeing her “naked” for the first time in his life. He was more than impressed at the furia, the zeal within her that had given her the courage to oppose the very views that had driven him away from his wife and child. He felt that she had just been incarnated into the kind of woman that he revered with the very qualities that he had looked for in every woman who entered his life. What he wanted in a woman was a “riverine abundance” (F178) that was “simultaneously terrifying and wonderful”, a woman with a “Gangetic, Mississipian inexorability” who could overpower his will and outwit his wits. He realised that the women in his lives had failed to hold his interest due to the “dwindling” of this element in them which had attracted him to them in the beginning of their relationships. He realised all too late that Mila had it in her what he had been searching for all his life because she made it clear to him that there was no going back. Prof Solanka hated passivity and abject submission in a woman and what still irritated him about Eleanor was her lack of anger at what he had done to her. His thoughts were often filled with the little boy he had left behind so callously – his only child, the three year old Asmaan. He thought of the things he loved to do and of the words he tended to mispronounce with nostalgia. Then he received a call from him that was filled with a child’s usual questions accompanied with childish bewilderment at his long absence. Eleanor took over the call and she too was not without her own bewilderment over why he had suddenly left them and tried to reason with him. Prof Solanka had hoped that her grief would have turned to rage though he was well aware of the fact that she was neither spiteful nor vindictive, and he found the absence of wrath: “inhuman, even a little frightening” (F 128). So, raging Sara and Mila was what being ‘human’ was all about, whereas Eleanor was not! So, Prof. Solanka while being enslaved by the fury within him which he so feared that he dared not trust himself to be near his own son was also a devotee at its altar, as were others around him:
“The whole world was burning on a shorter fuse. There was a knife twisting in every gut, a scourge for every back. We were all greviously provoked. Explosions were heard on every side…People snarled and cowered in the rubble of their own misdeeds.” (F 129)

In *The Enchantress of Florence*, the Emperor Akbar also created an imaginary woman whom he named Jodhabai, who was strong and “full of blood and rage” (TEF 49) because in spite of having so many wives, their subservience failed to satisfy him.

Abraham Zogoiby used his lucrative Baby Softo Talcum company as a cover for dispatching drugs overseas but when the narcotics squad detected the trafficking, they could not pin it on him. The drug overlord named ‘Scar’ had also vanished in thin air and only the Company’s workers were jailed whose families Abraham cared for. Another money-making scheme was his ‘Siodicorp’ Bank in link with the KBI beneath which activity also lurked terrorism and nuclear weapons. On the day that Rajiv Gandhi was bombed in May 1991 in Tamil Nadu, Abraham briefed his son about the H-bomb project they were dealing in and turned a deaf ear to his son’s protests at the project’s savage implications. After this he made a clean break with Fielding and went to live with his father who in his ninetieth year found out that he could never have a grandson as the Moor was incapable of producing heirs. And as the Moor was not only uninterested but also strongly disapproved of the covert family business, he adopted a competent young man called Adam Braganza as a son and handed over the reins of his business to him. However, Adam eventually got into trouble on charges of being the ‘bagman’ in the “super-financier ‘Crocodile’ Nandy’s” (MLS 359) bribing central government ministers. This resulted in the total exposure of all Abraham’s covert dealings in gangsterism, drug-trafficking, cash-for-armaments dealings and his invisible house came crashing down like a pack of cards. While Fielding was exulting in his biggest rival’s downfall, Abraham Zogoiby made two phonecalls that night. The first one was to Scar the ganglord who controlled the Falkland Road whorehouses and the second was to his son The Moor. He told his son to get out of the country for good as his adopted brother Adam was
bound to rot in jail and he himself was also “finished” (MLS 370). He advised him to go to Vasco in Spain which would be a good excuse to recover the lost paintings, as he was sure that he was behind the burglary of the Zogoiby Bequest. The RDX explosives that blistered Bombay began after father and son parted ways, and the Moor never saw his father again. There was no telling who was responsible for the blasts, and the da Gama dynasty was also shred to pieces in the mass destruction. The Moor chooses to believe that no one in particular was to blame because everyone was responsible for what had occurred. He states:

“Maybe Abraham Zogoiby lit the fuse, or Scar: these fanatics or those: but the explosions burst out of our very own bodies. We were both the bombers and the bombs. The explosions were our own evil – no need to look for foreign explanations.” (MLS 372)

In *Shalimar the Clown* Maximilian Ophuls during the resistance against the Germans made his escape and became famous as the “flying Jew” (SC 158). M.Finkenburger, a former employee of his late flying associate Jean Bugatti, had become an important figure of the resistance and had a stowed away plane built by Jean’s father, the famous Ettore Bugatti. The plane which had been designed to break the world speed record with a speed of over five hundred miles an hour was hidden in a barn which had been brought out of Paris in a truck and which also needed to be flown out before the Nazis found it. The feat of taking off the Bugatti Racer from a country road and flying across enemy lines from Molsheim to Clermont-Ferrand without radar detection was the beginning of Ophuls’ fame as a Resistance hero. He found himself among his old Strasbourg University associates who after evacuating Strasbourg had shifted there while it was still outside German occupation and refused to return even at the risk of being declared desertors by the Germans. He took on another false identity, joining the Action Section of Combat Erudiant where he bombed a Nazi home and vomited, thus rendering himself unfit for further such acts of terrorism. So he was transferred to the job of creating false identities at which he excelled and which was the urgent need of the day as the hunt for the Resistance began. Jean-Paul Cauchi was the leader of the
Resistance Group based at the university and as the Resistance started growing in strength and closer alliances were being built with intelligence networks, Cauchi had to be away for long stretches of time and a man called George Mathieu became his deputy who eventually became the head of the Resistance group Mithridate. In November 1942, the Germans established themselves in Clermont-Ferrand and Resistance groups like the Mithridate and ORA were detected by the Assistant Director of the Gestapo ‘antenna’ Ursula Brandt, better known as the Panther through her connections with her inside man, Mathieu. The University was also attacked on November 25, 1943 and over 1200 arrests were made. Max was spared because Mathieu did not know that in his present identity as Sebastian Brant the faculty member, he was also Niccolo the master forger. As a precautionary measure however, he shifted his lodgings, took on another identity as Jacques Wimpfeling and took leave from the University. He was advised by the University’s Vice-Chancellor Andre Danjon to go to the Free French headquarters in London as de Gaulle had been impressed with his papers on a stable world order in the aftermath of Germany’s downfall. However, Max said that he had something else to do before that and emerged as a German officer by the name of Sturmbahnfuhter Pabst, transferred from Strasbourg to assist the investigation, his necessary documents all in order. Within one week, he and the Panther became lovers and he gleaned invaluable information from her which he transmitted to the unified resistance known as MUR. This was behind his daring infiltration on the Gestapo operation that made him so famous for the second time during the resistance. However, the day came when he received a coded symbol on his door informing him that he was beginning to be suspected and so he made his exit to London. His escape route here was through the “Pat Line”, the system based in Marseille set up to rescue British airmen and intelligence personnel. In London he met his future wife who had been given the name the Grey Rat because she so successfully eluded the Germans. They worked together in Barcelona, Madrid and London but the Pat Line was betrayed and its leaders arrested. He himself was becoming unpopular with General de Gaulle because the proposals in his theses had become ‘unteneble’ (SC 170) and was bound to
antagonise America and endanger his position as Roosevelt and Churchill were in favour of Geraud. The Americans despised the Free French because of its penetration by traitors, and thinking about all the treason around him, he became depressed, wondering about the absence of trust in human life. When it became clear that the Germans were going to lose the war, Max Ophuls met a British intelligence officer by the name of Neave who told him that they wanted him “on board” to help shape the postwar recovery of Europe. He accepted the offer though he knew that France would never forgive him for jumping ships. Neave became a member of Parliament and while driving out of the House of Commons was blown to pieces by an IRA bomb, which was yet another act of treachery. It was then that he finally accepted the fact that there would be no end to treason and betrayal, which set him thinking:

“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.” (SC 173)

This observation is confirmed by C.P Alexander in *Hidden fragments of Psychoanalysis*, when he states that:

“Man by birth, is an instinctual being – of which aggression and eros are major ones...The history of human civilization shows that our ancestors too, like other animals were living in constant fear of his counter-parts as well as nature. He was as arrogant and aggressive as any other animals around him. Therefore, the urgent need of the day was courage and strategy to defeat his enemies. There existed suspicion, and fear of being attacked by other beings like him as well as wild animals. To protect himself and his dependents the instinct-aggression – was brought forth, into fore front ...“ (HFP 72)
In *Grimus*, Flapping Eagle while suffering his dimension fever thought of the only achievement in all his more than seven hundred years of existence, which was survival and his futile attempts to find his sister and Sispy. And he also discovered that anyone who came into contact with him became endangered like Virgil Jones who had entered his inner dimensions to help him out. He then made up his mind that if he got out of the tunnel alive, he would stop his search for his sister and settle down in the town of K to live a normal life of befriending other people. He had heard that the town of K was not perfect but professed not to care saying that after all:

“Perfection was a curse, a stultifying finality.” (G 85)

He would rather:

“...seek out and grow rich in the glorious fallibility of human beings, dirty, wartish, magnificent creatures that they were.” (G 85)

Flapping Eagle decided to accept humanity for what it was, and stopped looking for the ideal – for perfection, which was a sure recipe for contentment. Prof. Solanka also found a way out of his fury which he called the “defeat of fury” (F 228), though he found it in a different way. After shedding tears of grief at his murdered friend Jack Rhinehart’s grave, Neela comforted him in her arms and he couldn’t help comparing her to Mila. Whereas with Mila he had felt guilty about the whole thing, with Neela he felt completely at ease and comfortable. And ever since his relationship with her, he was experiencing a change which was the abating of the fury within him. Whereas his spells of rage had been unpredictable before, he could predict the love he felt for Neela which started consuming him in place of rage. He sighs with relief at the very thought that he would no longer be in fury’s thrall:

“Pack up your bags, Furies, he thought, you no longer reside at this address. If he was right, and the origin of fury lay in life’s accumulating disappointments,
then he had found the antidote that transformed the poison into its opposite. For *furia* could be ecstasy, too, and Neela’s love was the philosopher’s stone that made possible the transmuting alchemy. Rage grew out of despair: but Neela was hope fulfilled.” (F 206)

But shortly after this, the ugly monster inside him reared its head once more. There was a coup in Lilliput-Blefuscu by the natives Elbees who resented the prosperous Indo-Lilly traders and took fifty Indo-Lilly parliamentarians and political staff members hostage. Neela had an Indo-Lilly politician friend by the name of Babur who had made himself scarce during the coup and Solanka saw very little of her during the post-coup days as she was busy trying to get a documentary film into Lilliput-Blefuscu. During her absence he had worked himself up completely thinking that her attempts in trying to get into Lilliput-Blefuscu was just a ruse to try to find Babur whom she might have fallen for. So when she finally turned up at his apartment, they remained in silence for a long time after which a fierce quarrel broke out. He was gripped in a “revenant fury” because it had appeared to have left him and it could have risen to frightful proportions if the unthinkable hadn’t happened. As their rage was reaching its peak, he suddenly saw a big black bird sitting on the roof of the house, its wings casting a huge shadow over the street below. Thinking that it was one of the Furies who had finally come for him, he was not only silenced but a look of sheer terror spread across his face which made his mouth quiver. The sight of his fear moved Neela so much that she who in her high heels stood taller than him suddenly reached out and ruffled his hair, which had always been taboo for the women in his life. It had incredible repercussions because instead of infuriating him, he felt nothing and was so relieved by it that he broke out laughing. He:

“…understood that his own cure, his recovery from his rare condition, was complete. The goddesses of wrath had departed; their hold over him was broken at last. Much poison had been drained from his veins, and much that
had been locked away for far too long was being set free.” (F 219)

He was seized with a sudden desire to open himself up to her and told her that he wanted to
tell her a story. Then slowly, deliberately, in the most circumambulatory way conceivable, he
revealed to her the hurting events of his childhood, not at all unlike Freud’s “free
association”. And after getting it all off his chest, he felt free, as if:

“A huge burden had fallen from him. “I don’t have to carry them around
anymore,” he added, full of wonder.” (F 223)

Solanka for the first time in his life, by talking about his childhood without anger, was
accepting the fact that he had been severely abused, and so could start living with the
knowledge. It was something like self-therapy, and Horney would agree with it because for
her:

“…the goal of psychoanalysis was not to help someone achieve his
or her Ideal Self, but rather to enable the person to accept his or her Real Self.
Someone who is alienated from his or her Real Self becomes neurotic and
devels an interpersonal coping strategy to ‘solve’ the conflict.” (APM 135)

In The Moor’s Last Sigh however, the Moor says that Vasco Miranda would not rest
satisfied till he had killed him and the unfortunate Aoi Ue, and he imagined that after killing
them both he would finally attain peace of mind and be “cleansed of hatred by violence”
(MLS 429). So in this case the defeat of fury comes in the form of the total annihilation of the
people who caused the hurt and were also closest to the person.

Yet another form of defeating fury is to be found in the form of confrontation. In The
Ground Beneath Her Feet, Rai spent the first year after her death ringing her and listening to
her recorded voice until it was erased. He stopped going out and ordered his food in his room,
which was mostly liquor. His cleaner no longer wanted to clean his room because she
couldn’t handle the mess, and his three friends Johnny Chow, Mack Schnabel, and Basquiat
finally decided to step in and pull him out of mourning. They cleaned his room, took him
out for a haircut and a shave, read to him, talked to him about girls, threw a party for him, and Johnny Chow even brought a look-alike of Vina (a Chinese man) to him. Schnabel suggested that he should exhibit Vina’s pictures which caused him to ponder over it for a long time because he was afraid that he might appear to be cashing in on her death, the way that so many others around the globe were doing at the moment. There were announcements of public mourning, important programs were suspended, places of entertainment shut down, men and women everywhere gave speeches about Vina in stadiums and on television, literary and drama critics as well as paranoiacs and mystics were having their share of the fare, and tv biopic-film producers advertised for look-alikes. He spent the second year living by the sea in America, because when they first met at Cuffe Parade in Bombay, she told him that she loved the sea. Finally he mustered up the courage to take up Schnabel’s advice and organized the show of her photographs which turned out to be a huge success. It was at the show that he met her father Shetty, who had been burdened with guilt that he had not been there for her neither during her childhood nor adolescence, and thanked him for “sharing” his daughter with him. He told him that what he was doing was a “positive and healing experience” (GBF 492). They met again the next day, and over coffee, Shetty told Rai that Vina found him some time ago where they:

“…dealt with some issues. We confronted the anger that needed to be faced and we did some good healing work. We hugged. We became comfortable with each other. We had some quality time.” (GBF 493)

Guilt on his side and anger on her part for not having been there for her were healed through confrontation.

In The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Rai asks:

‘Suppose that it’s only when you dare to let go that your real life begins? When you’re whirling free of the mother ship, when you cut your ropes….that you’re actually free to act? …in which nobody orders you to go forth and die for them, or for god, or comes to get you because you broke one of the rules.”
Rushdie thought he had cut his ropes and had whirled free of the mother ship India but found that his sensibilities did not allow him to cut himself off completely and caused him to write fables about the country he left behind. And though no one chased after him to die for god or country, they went after him because he broke one of its rules. And to surrender oneself entirely to the dictates of the id by whirling free of the mother ship super-ego would be to end up like Sufiya Zinobia Hyder.

This study has clearly illustrated Rushdie’s preoccupation with the fury within man in his novels. He himself (as already mentioned) is filled with political antagonism, which combined with his migrant status along with the *fatwa* are significant factors for his outrage and so it is only natural that the fury engulfing him should be reflected in his characters. He, like Sufiya Zinobia has learned to hit back, and has found it ‘silky’ and ‘seductive’. From the excerpts gathered from his Novels, it can be surmised that he is on a psychological quest to examine the nature of the fury within humankind. He agrees with psychology on the question of man’s predatory nature which is to be seen in authorial comments in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Shalimar the Clown* and writes about how we have begun to regard taking offence as a fundamental right in *East, West*. He has come to the conclusion that the fury exhibited by ‘nature’s most dangerous armed predator’ is innate when Haroun’s father in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* suddenly discovered that he was capable of having ‘bloodthirsty thoughts’. He writes of man’s potentially destructive nature in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*, and of how the exhibition of fury is in accordance ‘to the dictates of nature’ in *Fury*. He shows how violence is endemic to the human race in *Shalimar the Clown*. An unleashing of this fury could be used as a refuge from ‘other emotions’ as Flapping Eagle (*Grimus*) and Tai (*Midnight’s Children*) did, and could even become a kind of addiction as stated in *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. But when all’s said and done, at the end of the day, it is women filled with this *furia* who fascinated and captivated the hearts of Prof. Solanka (*Shame*) as well as the
great Moghul Emperor Akbar (The Enchantress of Florence). Rushdie also advocates ways of defeating this fury, which are through the confrontation of one’s worst fears, and through accepting humanity for what it is – all very psychical issues.


