How does one define a ‘normal’ person? To Freud, a normal’ person is one who “possesses a strong ego capable of resolving internal conflicts and of coping with the external world. However, in even a well adjusted person the Ego has difficulty in carrying out its assignments and must resort to mechanisms of defence – such as repression’ (PUH 35).

In Shame, the very word ‘repression’ is referred to as “a seamless garment” and compared to an authoritarian and patriarchal society where its women are heavily suppressed. However, this repressing “breeds repressions of other kinds as well” and it is to be found that many women though oppressed, are not ‘crushed’ by the system. The chains of oppression of the Pakistani women, however, are “getting heavier” but for Rushdie, the act of suppressing seems to be nothing but an invitation for trouble, because he states:

“If you hold down one thing you hold down the adjoining. In the end, though, it all blows up in your face.” (S 173)

In The Moor’s Last Sigh, the Moor’s great-grandmother Epifania da Gama unleashed her rage as a result of repressed rage:

“...the years of her suppressed discontents had bred in her a vindictive rage – rage, my true inheritance! – that was often indistinguishable from true, murderous hatred….”

(MLS 22)

Epifania of the Menezes clan of Mangalore, who came from an impoverished trader family married the rich spice trader Francisco da Gama of Cochin. The losing battles that she had to fight with her husband began when after the birth of their two sons he commissioned a young Frenchman to build two houses in their garden, one after the occidental and the other in the oriental fashion. She called them the ‘mad houses’ but had perforce to move into either of
them whenever her husband had the whim of moving either ‘east’ or ‘west’ at regular intervals. To add to her misery, he invited foreign artists to stay for long periods at a stretch in the two new houses who revolted her with their indecent ways of life. To top it all, she had to decorate the walls of her home with the horrific paintings they left behind. Francisco was also obsessed with funding charities and spent huge amounts of the family fortune in this manner which left her wailing in despair. Then he became a disciple of ‘the Theosophical Society of Mrs. Annie Besant’ and was for Independence whereas Epifania wanted British rule. On Mrs. Besant’s request, he founded the Home Rule League in Cochin where he invited people from the lowest strata of society along with the bourgeoisie which disgusted her so much that she started sulking. The League was however banned and Francisco was imprisoned. However, the paper that he wrote during his confinement undid him and his resignation from the League was requested. It was at this point when he was at the lowest ebb of his life that Epifania demanded that he start listening to her. The first thing she did was to lock up the two houses in the garden and the mention of politics in the house was banned. These were the ‘vindictive’ steps she took for having had to repress her rage over a long period of time. “If you hold down one thing you hold down the adjoining. In the end, though, it all blows up in your face” - how true!

Repression (of rage) is to be found in the protagonists as well as antagonists with varying repercussions. This chapter will constitute an analysis of this aspect of repression exhibited by the Characters as well as some of the Characters’ resort to unleashing the fury within them which is one of the three forms of defending the self, called Ego Defence Mechanisms.

Freud, an expert observer of human personality, divided the human psyche into three parts – the Id, Ego and Superego. According to him, these are the three interacting processes that determine a person’s personality. The interplay between them is of crucial significance in
determining behavior and if each sub-system were to strive for different goals, the result would be inner conflicts and neurosis.

As already stated, the Id is the ‘Unconscious’ which is located in the deepest layer of the mind, the existence of which a person is not even aware of. The governing purpose in the unconscious mental process is the ‘pleasure principle’ which:

‘strive towards gaining pleasure: psychical activity draws back from any event which might arouse unpleasure.” (FOM 36)

So the Id is composed of the uncoordinated instinctual trends, consisting of a person’s basic inherited instincts, needs and feelings. Being thus composed of pleasure-seeking instincts, it is bound to be illogical in its nature of being completely out of touch with reality and infantile in its manner of seeking immediate satisfaction. Babies and small children are perfect case-examples where inner motivating forces have not yet been shaped by either the Superego or the Ego, and hence their selfish determination and concern with attaining immediate gratification of their instinctual needs without any moral consideration or thoughts of feasibility. This in turn, is a reflection of any human being’s natural choice which is:

“...always that which gives him pleasure, that which gratify his desires.” (HFP 74)

The Id can generate mental images and wish-fulfilling fantasies referred to as the ‘primary process’ but cannot undertake the action needed to meet instinctual demands. Ideas or memories unpleasant or threatening to the Ego are repressed into the Unconscious and as dreams make a person aware of these repressed materials, Freud believed that by interpreting dreams he could find out the important unconscious motives of an individual. The Id is the source of two types of instinctual drives - ‘Eros’ (Life/Sex Instinct) which is a constructive drive, primarily of a sexual nature and in a broad sense constitutes of anything pleasurable. The other type is ‘Thanatos’ (Death/Aggressive Instinct) which is a destructive drive tending towards aggression, destruction and eventual death. Since this type of behavior is not a socially accepted form of behavior, the instinct needs to be released in a more acceptable manner. However, the presence of these two primary drives remains unconsciously repressed
in most people, the motive being:

“…an attempt to keep the impulses at as great a distance as possible from the ego.”

(PMPH 210)

Repression helps the individual to control dangerous and unacceptable desires in either or both of the two types of instinctual drives and so it is useful for alleviating the anxiety associated with such desires. It also serves the purpose of protecting the individual from the shock of sudden, traumatic experiences like rape or the horrifying circumstances enveloping the death of a loved one. It may then be allowed to come to the surface after being desensitized to a certain degree by time. It is never possible for anyone to outgrow the id, but most people manage to keep it repressed. The reason why some people are debauched, gluttonous, and murderous is because the Id either dominates inappropriately or too often. For such people, seeking gratification of the demands of the id becomes a core aspect of their adult personality.

Above the id is the second layer called the Ego or ‘Preconscious’ which is just below the surface of one’s mind. This layer is readily available to consciousness and is where memories can be recalled. It serves as the Manager of personality, operating in accordance with the ‘reality principle’ (coping with reality) through logic and reason. It enables the individual to cope with the conflicting demands of Id, Superego & society, while repressing the Id. Repressed Id material is opposed by both Ego and Superego in the form of the Censor which is also called the ‘resistance’ as it attempts to reach consciousness. The ego thus mediates between the demands of the id and the realities of the external world, meeting the id’s demands in such a way as to ensure the well being and survival of the individual. So its duty is to satisfy essential strivings through socially accepted channels. Such adaptive measures are referred to as the ‘secondary process’ and so the ego can be regarded as the organized realistic part of the psyche as it is the part of the mind that is responsible for the interpretation of reality and the sense of self. Freud postulates that when our defenses are down through exhaustion or distraction, and the ego and the superego cannot function
properly, elements of the id or unconscious impulses may slip out and be glimpsed in the form of ‘slips of tongue’. The conflict between the primary demands of the Id and the moral demands of the superego are usually kept at a manageable level by the ego, but sometimes the balance is upset and either of them can emerge stronger than the ego, resulting in unacceptable feelings or behavior. It is here that the ego experiences ‘anxiety’, which is the warning signal to the ego that things have gone hay-wire.

In *Hidden Fragments of Psychoanalysis*, C.P. Alexander talks about our forefathers’ ‘preponderant motivation’ to be aggressive, which they were compelled to abandon, at least in external appearances through the formation of society. Though they were thus bound to the norms thus established, their aggressive instincts remained latent, causing them to feel ‘victimized’ at times. Their natural instincts were suppressed and this was how they eventually developed:

“He, being like other creatures, wants to be himself and carry on his impulses and intentions unhindered by anyone, and, here, moral precepts stand as an externally imposed burden on him. He gets into a conflict, either to be himself or to be distorted. He represses a few of himself. But then, when the pressure is far more to be himself than what he is forced to be, he breaks down.” (HFP 73)

To be oneself than what one is forced to be – is the battle that is raging within each one of us. It is precisely here that ‘anxiety’ signals are emitted and the ego then has to deal with it either by handling it directly or through ‘anxiety defence mechanisms’ which are:

“…unconscious reactions that automatically reduce the level of anxiety.” (PGB 37)

According to the view of psychoanalysts there are three types of anxiety. The first type is known as ‘Reality anxiety’, arising from threats in the external world. The next is ‘Neurotic anxiety’ which is caused by the Id’s impulses to break through ego controls, resulting in behavior that will be punished in some way. The last one is ‘Moral anxiety’, arising from action in conflict with the super ego and arousing feelings of guilt. As mentioned earlier, here the person feels guilty about something he or she has done, whether real or imagined.
If the ego cannot cope with anxiety by rational measures, it resorts to irrational protective measures like ‘repression’ or ‘rationalization’ referred to as ‘ego defence mechanisms’ which serve the purpose of alleviating anxiety by distorting reality instead of dealing directly with the problem. Where the anxiety is intense, the use of the defence mechanism can also become exaggerated, leading to “maladaptive behavior” (APM 257). Abnormal Psychology and Modern Life states how repression is in itself a defence mechanism employed to combat anxiety provoked from both internal and external sources:

“...by means of which threatening or painful thoughts and desires are excluded from consciousness.” (APM 123)

Psychology Understanding Human Behavior adds:

“In ordinary forgetting, memory traces fade with the passage of time, whereas in repression, experiences are put out of mind because of certain feelings about them, but the effects of the experiences live on.” (PUH 76-77)

The existence of repression is confirmed thus by Personality Classic Theories and Modern Research:

“…people who have faced early traumas overcome the initial shock and seem to go on with their lives, but the hidden memories pursue and plague them. Such cases seem to validate the existence of repression.” (PCM 84)

And its importance:

“Repression has remained a key concept in many areas of psychology. In addition to its importance to understanding mental health, it seems relevant to our relations with others and to our general physical health.” (PCM 85)

Let us examine the use of some forms of repression in the novels. In Fury, Mila tells Professor Solanka about her boy-friend Eddie’s Uncle Ray Ford, a Vietnam veteran who lived in isolation up on a mountain as he did not trust himself to live with other people on account of his “damaged soul”. Professor Solanka realized that they were sailing on the same boat with only slight differences:
“A truer sanyasi than I, his withdrawal from society made in proper ascetic fashion. But like me in that he wanted to lose himself because of his fear of what lay beneath, what might bubble up at any moment and lay waste to the undeserving world.”

(F 121)

Wartime experiences had left their scars, and he was repressing them through isolation. The sad part was that when he finally came down to town, he did so in the hope of being ‘healed’ by a woman who had visited him up on the mountain, a certain Carole Hatty. However, his hope was shattered when his brother Tobe heartlessly told him that Carole was a whore whom they had been ‘banging’ ever since she turned fifteen. This revelation so crushed him that Carole Hatty ended up with her neck broken in an alley, he himself was found in a junkyard with a bullet shot through his heart, and Tobe disappeared forever. The whole incident had such a deep impact on Eddie Ford that like his uncle Ray, he sent himself in exile:

“Eddie Ford just clammed up, hardly spoke twenty words a day. Like his uncle, but without leaving town, he had sequestered himself from the world, had locked himself away inside his own body…” (F 123)

Jack Rhinehart was a colored man with a secret desire to be accepted by the whites. He married a white woman, moved in white circles and dated white women. It was a:

“…dark secret he could not confess to anyone, perhaps not even to himself. And these are the secrets from which the anger comes.” (F 58)

He never spoke about it but Professor Solanka could see that he loathed himself for it and that this anger at himself was suppressed deep within him⁴.

In Shame, more fuel was added to Raza Hyder’s rage by Iskander Harappa to whom

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⁴Jack Rhinehart eventually committed suicide.
he lost the woman of his dreams, a Pinkie Aurangzeb, the wife of a senile Marshal. At a party when he greeted her politely and Iskander laughed at his formality:

“The rage buried beneath Hyder’s good manners was bubbling higher, but it was impotent…” (p.106).

II

*Psychology Understanding Human Behavior* states that there are three general ways of defending the self. The first way is defense by attack known as aggressive behavior which has been discussed at length. The purpose of aggression is an attempt to:

“…eliminate the block or get over or around it...If we do not succeed in dislodging it, at least we may get satisfaction from trying.” (PUH 69)

The second way is by withdrawing or retreating from the threatening situation thereby alleviating anxiety by distorting reality instead of dealing directly with the problem. There is to be found in the novels, the psychoanalytic theory of ‘reaction-formation’, the love-hate relationship which as a form of ego-defence mechanism adopts:

“… behavior consistent with tendencies or feelings toward another person or object that are exactly the opposite of what we unconsciously feel.” (PUH 76)

The Brass Monkey’s repressed envy of her brother Saleem had an adverse effect on her psyche and she grew up trying to attract attention by setting fire to shoes. And later as a beautiful and accomplished young woman, she took resort to hating anyone who dared love her, even turning down much coveted proposals. Psychology tells us that this is an exaggerated use of defence mechanism and states why it is so:

“…threats stemming from internal or external sources elicit intense anxiety; this anxiety, in turn, leads to the exaggerated use of various ego-defense mechanisms and to maladaptive behaviour.” (APM 257)
Among the various ways of defending the self, she had adopted the withdrawing method which is – retreating from the threatening situation. This particular form of defence mechanism is known as ‘Rationalization’ and one form of it is “unconsciously false self-justification” (PUH 72), which can be done in two ways. The first is convincing not others but oneself that the grapes are sour and not worth it, and the other is by resorting to the sweet lemon mechanism where one tries to convince oneself that what is achieved is sweet. A good example of the ‘sour grapes’ mechanism is the attitude of Mila towards Prof Solanka when she realized that it was over between them. At their farewell meal in a Chelsea restaurant, she revealed how an old associate Perry Pincus had at an interview used him as an example of “textbook cases of pathetically arrested development” (F 174) before a large audience. He was referred to as a fellow of King’s College Cambridge, who had given up philosophy to enter television due to his obsession with dolls. Perry said that once she had fled his room which was filled with dolls because the sight had revolted her. She said that she didn’t have anything against gay people, but this obsession with dolls was beyond being gay. In her words, it was ‘goo-goo’ and ‘icky’, and she had merrily summed up her tale by saying that from then on she sent stuffed animals to Prof Solanka at Christmas which he never once declined. Mila concluded the revelation by saying that she had decided to tell him about it as it was over between them. In other words, she had decided that as she couldn’t have him anymore, it would do him good to know what other people thought about him. He had become sour grapes anyway! Another example of the sour grapes mechanism is when Prof. Solanka’s wife Eleanor felt compelled to find out for herself what he was doing in New York although she had finally given up all hopes of their reunion and had turned to his old friend Morgen Franz for love and comfort. But she refused to rest satisfied until she knew for certain that he was no longer worthy of her love and so took the trouble of flying all the way from London to New York with Morgen merely to see him. This is strange given the fact that she wasn’t under any obligation to him after the way he had deserted his family for so long. But the fact was that she couldn’t bring herself to be angry at him because it wasn’t as if he
had deserted her for another woman, so she was plain curious. The feeling was so strong that
even though they checked into a hotel, intending to see him the next day, she found it
difficult to sleep and they went to his apartment that very night. The upshot was that they
 barged into his room at the precise moment when Mila was raging at him, having her revenge
for having dumped her for Neela. So it was when she saw him in bed with a woman with yet
another jealous woman raging at him that she finally shook with the rage that had evaded her
for so long. Having thus seen for her own self that here was a case of sour grapes, she
scathingly said:

“I see, however, that you are already entertaining; which makes it a good deal easier
to say what I came to say.” (F 233)

An illustration of the sweet lemon mechanism is to be seen in the Shakil sisters who were
compelled to lead reclusive lives on the crazed whim of their hate-filled father in their
fortress-like home ‘Nishapur’. Not having received any education during their confinement,
they spent their days inventing secret languages of their own and fantasizing about men and
conception. There were even rumors of their lesbianism and of their use of occult spells to
hasten the death of their father. When the old man finally died, they threw a party where they
not only invited the subjects of their father’s life-long abhorrence – the British ‘sahibs’, but
also allowed themselves to go wild where one of them conceived Omar Khayyam. They
convinced themselves that what they had thereby achieved was sweet as it was a form of
revenge on their father, saying that the scandal thus provoked and their subsequent ruin
would prove “…his failure in another sphere” (S 15). They also conjectured that the oaths he
had uttered on his death-bed might have been caused due to his ability to envision what his
daughters would do after his death, which further filled them with glee: “…then he will have
died as miserably as he made us live” (S 15). One would have thought that now the sisters
would lead a life completely different from that which they had been forced to live so far but
the irony was that they chose to shut themselves in once more, convinced that what they had
was sweet! And what they had consisted of a few servants who refused to leave – Hashmat
Bibi, an old woman, and three homosexuals.

As Reaction-formation is:

“…the process of pushing away threatening impulses by overemphasizing the opposite in one’s thoughts and actions.” (PCM 87)

it is also an indication that:

“… many apparently ‘moral’ people are really struggling desperately with their own Immorality.” (PCM 87)

So, this is a demystification of deceptive appearances where supposedly pious people turn out to be sometimes perverts and crooks in reality. It is best illustrated when someone overemphasizes the opposite of what he or she truly feels and wants, so that people who take great pains to exhibit their moral values are in reality those who are desperately fighting their desire for immorality. In short, they are at war with the threatening impulses of the id. In the same way, overwhelming passion can be overtly translated into venomous hate. Vasco Miranda the painter was obsessed with the Moor’s beautiful mother the unattainable Aurora da Gama, for love of whom men ended up hating her and craved and schemed their own forms of revenge. Not finding himself in a position where he could openly declare his love for her, it (his love) “…filled him up and boiled over, turning to rage” (MLS 165) and eventually caused him to end up stark mad. Prior to this, he had sat at the Zogoiby’s dining table, glaring angrily at the guests and drinking heavily, seeped in a black mood. Then he rose unsteadily to his feet at midnight and showered abuses on them all before making his way to his room. Reverend Oliver D’Aeth’s fixation for her also “darkened slowly into hate.” (MLS 93) and when his lover the Widow Elphinstone discovered that he was still drooling over Aurora and so broke up with him, he vowed to have his revenge. In The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Ormus Cama, filled with anger, sings of chaos and destruction, berating his fans for their wanton ways and licentious debauched lives. In return, they seem to love him for his nihilistic message, growing wilder by the minute as they listen to him:
“The objects of his fury love him for his wrath.” (GBF 391)

Psychology states this phenomena thus:

“…love and hate are closely related. Intimate relations are most often tied to deep love, but they are also linked to much hatred and aggression.” (PCM 504)

In *Shalimar the Clown*, Shalimar and Boonyi were filled with thoughts of each other even though Shalimar’s love for her had soured to the point of wanting to kill her and the only feelings that Boonyi could feel for him was fear. He was becoming an avenging angel, a Taliban, while she awaited death in her hut. At this distance, they seemed to be able to commune as of old, when they had basked in the warmth of each other’s love:

“And even if his thoughts were murderous this prolonged communion often felt to her, like love. All that remained between them was death, but the deferment of death was life. All that remained between them, perhaps, was hatred, but this yearning-at-a-distance was surely also one of love’s many faces, yes, it’s ugliest face.” (SC 263)

Shalimar was so filled with rage at his wife’s infidelity, yet could not get her out of his mind, that he was often caught murmuring her name in the darkness up on the mountains:

“It turned out that hatred and love were not so very far apart. The levels of intimacy were the same.” (SC 259)

His love for his wife Boonyi had been replaced by “a sea of bile-yellow hatred” (SC 236) after her act of betrayal. When Boonyi left him for the American Ambassador, a great change befell him, and it was as if he had stopped being human. This radical change in him is described as:

“…a man newly awakened to rage and ready for extreme measures, prepared himself to threaten, slash and burn.” (SC 254)

Because:

“All that was left of Shalimar the clown was a murderous desire.” (SC 273)

His hatred for Max Ophuls was so intense that even the sound of his name filled his thoughts
with murder. And when Himal Sharga the dancer reproved him for his attempt at depicting
his hatred for Americans in their play, he confronted her in a way that made the other players
fear that he was going to attack her. When his wife Boonyi returned sans child and her former
beauty, it was all that their two fathers could do to restrain him from flying at her throat. He
then made an oath not to touch her as long as either of the two patriarchs were alive and
joined guerilla warfare up in the mountains, killing people and speaking to her in his
thoughts, telling her that everything he was doing was a preparation for the time when he
would kill both the Ambassador and herself. In every blow he stuck, he imagined striking
either of them, and whereas the other Talibans were fighting for religious or patriotic ones, he
was killing because he had become “death” (SC 298). If Shalimar had been able to let his
love for Boonyi go and resume his life with another woman, he would have had no reason for
so much animosity and no reason to kill her. But such being not the case, he was obsessed
with her and would not, or, rather could not stop till he had thoroughly punished her for being
a traitor to their love. That was why he could not be satisfied with a simple strangulating
method, but had to behead and mutilate her. And that was not even the end of the story. He
felt the need to search out the man who had lured her away from him and behead him in his
own doorstep like a ‘halal chicken’ and still would not rest satisfied till he had killed (or at
least attempted to do so) her beautiful daughter by this abhorred foreigner. Colonel
Kachhwaha had also set his sights on the village beauty Boonyi and was contemplating a
proposal. Coupled with his infatuation was his egoistic belief that in this way he was
conferring on her a great honour, something that was far beyond what she in her lowly
position merited, so that he was aghast when she spurned him. He retaliated by making plans
to attack her village Pachigam, determined to make them all suffer for Boonyi Kaul’s
supposedly foolish ingratitude. In Shame, The fact that “love engenders hate” (S 183) was
something that Arjumand Harappa also discovered at her adored father’s feet while weeping
at the barbs she felt of the hatred of the masses. The philosophy that shook her successfully out of her self-induced misery was that building a country was like building a marriage, the materials used in the construction were love and strength, the strength to enforce unlovely things out of love – the strength that inevitably would engender hate from the loved one. In *Grimus*, the inextricable link between love and hate is also clearly reflected in Liv’s hatred which was born of her love for Grimus. She took recourse to leading a solitary hate-filled life on a hillside, and the hatred she harboured for him was so intense that she couldn’t speak about him without the venom of hate being revealed in her voice. Albeit, she clung to the emotion, unwilling to let herself free of it by letting it go, saying that it was the nearest thing one could feel to power, and hence precious. So, that was how she chose to live, secluded, and “embalmed in the bitter formaldehyde of old hatreds and betrayals” (G 219). Such venomous hatred that stemmed from love bordering obsession then did become a form of power, because when Grimus planned his own death, he turned to none else but her for help in executing his plans, for the simple reason that he knew she hated him to the extent of wanting him stone dead. Then there is filial hatred also bred from love, like India Ophuls’ anger at her father who lived content with paying her visits, making her live with his estranged wife, whom she disliked. The arrangement: “…screwed her up even more than her dislike of the woman she lived with, because he was the lovable one” (SC 349).

A similar mechanism is that of ‘displacement’ which is directing one’s anger at someone else other than the objects of one’s anger. It is explained as a:

“…shifting of the target of one’s unconscious fears or desires.” (PCM 90)

In modern terminology, it is “taking it out on someone”. If an individual happened to hate an unsuitable object which could turn out to be dangerous for him, the hostile feelings would be displaced to a more appropriate and less dangerous one. So, according to Freud, ‘scape-goating’ was achieved in this way and dictators placed the blame of their own deficiency on disadvantaged groups of people by employing this defence mechanism. Violent people such
as psychopaths diagnosed of having antisocial personality disorders, have been on examination of their defence mechanisms, found to have used displacement as a defence mechanism. For instance, a man having been ill treated by his mother in childhood would develop a hatred for all women, torturing his victims even to the point of death. The manner in which violent and nonviolent individuals were differentiated lay in the study of their use of displacement mechanisms. Aire’s wife Carmen was angry at her husband due to his homosexuality, which left her barren and despised. She resisted the temptation to push his head underwater as he fell asleep in his bath, not daring to vent her rage on him and comforting herself with the hope that “…there would be another outlet for her rage” (MLS 28), meaning that she would be on the look-out for a scapegoat. In Shame, Farida Balloch for twelve years had bottled up her rage inside her as she blamed the Shakil sisters for the death of her husband who had died soon after he constructed their dumbwaiter. So when she heard that their son Omar Khayyam was going to leave their house for the first time in his life to attend school in town, she made a shoe garland for him with which to greet him on his first landing from the dumb-waiter of their house into the street (S 41). The hostile feelings that she had been harboring towards the sisters were as on ‘unsuitable objects’ as access to them was impossible, and with the kind of reputation they had, any attempt to do so would be regarded insane and suicidal. Accordingly, her feelings were ‘displaced to a more appropriate and less dangerous one’ in the form of the innocent and hapless twelve year old boy. Cyrus Cama’s desire was to get his father’s attention and he tried to do it by topping his class but his report cards failed to win his admiration. He then began starring in junior races but couldn’t get his father to attend the matches. Even when he went home with trophies, his father cruelly made light of his competitors. So:

“…unable to blame his father for these cruelties, directed all his anger towards his brother Ormus instead.” (GBF 46)

He also blamed Ormus for his twin’s handicap, reasoning that if he hadn’t been born on that particular day when the accident took place, his father would not have been in such a groggy
state so as to aim the cricket ball at his twin. Eventually turning into a psychopath, he placed even the blame of this turn of events on Ormus. In Grimus, Liv had begged Grimus to take her with him to live on the summit of the mountain in order to preserve the Stone Rose. But he had refused and had taken Bird-Dog instead which so infuriated her that she took it out on Virgil Jones with whom she had “co-habited”, having “married” him only because through him she could have access to Grimus, her real heart-throb. Liv who loved power had only married him as by doing so she could be near the monkish Grimus who had no other love beyond knowledge and power. She had given up her work to keep house for the three men who had played god and conceptualized the island as well as bestowed immortality to its inhabitants – Grimus, Deggle and Jones. It turned out to be a hollow marriage and Liv spent all her time talking to Grimus. And when Grimus moved up the mountain, she directed her rage at Jones: “Liv’s fury, in the absence of Grimus, vented itself on me” (G 217). This, then makes a perfect case of displacement, marrying a man because it gave her access to another, and venting her anger on him because she was angry on the other.

The defence mechanism of ‘Compensation’ is a falling back to a second best. However, this is accompanied by the danger of over-compensation which is condemning the thing which could not be achieved. We hear of the growth of the “impotent fury” (F 100) of Professor Solanka the doll-maker whose creation “Little Brain” had run out of control. He is propelled by his love of dolls both as a child and as an adult. He quit his post at Cambridge in order to produce a TV show where the meetings of his animated doll, Little Brain, with the great thinkers of history became an instant hit. However, he was eventually compelled to relinquish control of the doll when it metamorphosed into an industry and became a by-word for fashion, which filled him with the rage that consumed him all his life. He felt that she was no longer the smart and philosophical doll that he had created, but a “tawdry celebrity” which he thoroughly despised. However, there was nothing he could do about it as she earned his
royalties, and so he had to settle for the second best – which was the revised version of the
doll. However, he felt prey to an ‘over-compensation’ and started condemning the thing that
had not been able to be achieved so much so that as her fame grew, so did his rage – the rage
that finally compelled him to flee family and home lest he end up hurting them.

‘Fantasy’, another form of defence mechanism, a “retreat into the realm of
imagination” (PUH 77) is resorted to by some of Rushdie’s protagonists. As stated earlier,
Professor Solanka tried to escape and renounce his rage by immersing himself in dolls as a
child, and as an adult by creating a world of dolls – ‘an imagined world’, seeking “his
redemption in creation” (F 246). Saleem as a child hid in washing chests, lost in the world of
imagination, as the result of his father’s resentment at his ugly face: “the rage of fathers is
muffled by used sheets and discarded brassieres” (MC 184).

Another mechanism is ‘regression’ which means reverting back to a happier stage in
life. A clear example is seen in Boonyi’s state of regression during her exile in the pine-
forested hill after she went back home from Delhi and Max Ophuls. She fainted from
exhaustion and shock while making her way up the hill to the dead prophetess
Nazarebaddoor’s hut, and woke up inside the freshly swept hut with food on the fireplace.
Although she must have known that it was her father and her old friend Zoon who had done
everything they could to make her as comfortable as possible, she chose to feel that it was her
mother who had come back from the grave to take care of her and called out for her. Right
from the beginning of her exile, she had a strong conviction that her dead mother could take
care of her now that for all practical purposes she was also ‘dead’. This illusion of her mother
being by her side continued during the rest of her life and so she was never lonely. When her
father told her never to leave the hillside for the sake of her personal safety, she assured him
that she didn’t feel the need to do so as she was fine with her mother. She also told him that
no one could harm her with her mother by her side, and that neither of them, being dead, was
allowed in the village. She even invited her father to stay with them, telling him that they
could all “have a high old time” (SC 238) by themselves. So in this state of regression,
Boonyi felt secure and happy by herself on the hillside. Ormus Cama who happened to spot Mira Celano, a look-alike of his dead love Vina Apsara, was under the illusion that the forty-five year old Vina had chosen to return from the dead in the body of the twenty year old Mira. So he had her spied on both at work and even in the privacy of her room, thus maintaining a file on her which he showed Rai, asking him to bring her to him. Another example is also to be discerned in Maximilian Ophuls’ parents. Max was born in the city of Strasbourg in “a family of highly cultured Ashkenazi Jews” (SC 137), graduating from the University of Strasbourg in economics and international relations. He also studied law in Paris, was talented in forging paintings, declined a much coveted partnership in a famous firm, and went home to work as junior professor of economics at the university where he greatly impressed the vice-chancellor while also helping in the family printing business. He was twenty-nine when Strasbourg was evacuated in 1939 due to the German threat but his parents refused to leave even though he warned them that their German name would be meaningless in the face of their being Jews in a Jewish neighbourhood. It was during this period that he was introduced to the Resistance through a couple known as Bill and Blandine belonging to the group called the Seventh Column of Alsace. They wanted him to print identity documents for escape routes that were being built which he did painstakingly and with the expertise of a master forger. Then Paris was taken in 1940 and the Nazi flag was hoisted up in French occupied territories. The citizens of Strasbourg were returned to their city by the Germans and its young men were enlisted in the German army. It was then that he knew that his family had to escape as no mercy would be shown to “Jews, homosexuals and communists”. Moreover, his tools of forgery would soon be discovered once the family’s printing press was raided. Then early in 1941, Bill told him that arrangements had been made for him and his parents to escape to Gergovie where they would be given further instructions. But when he went home to give the news to his parents, he found them hopelessly in a state of regression, his mother playing the piano and saying that going away was out of the question as they had to attend the celebration of their friend Dumas’s son Charles’ graduation.
the next day, an event that had happened long ago. They had fully been aware of the fact that all the educational institutions had been closed down since the evacuation and that the people they were referring to were no longer in Strasbourg. But when their son tried to remind them of it, they told him adamantly that they would obey him after attending the celebrations. There was nothing he could do about it and so he bicycled twenty kilometres under cover of darkness to inform M.Finkenberger, the man who was to be responsible for them that there was going to be a twenty-four delay in the plan. Then he made his way back only to find his family’s printing press in flames and his parents taken away because he had made the mistake of leaving his parents’ false documents at home which had been discovered. Later he learned that as they had lost their reason, they had been used for scientific experiments as a reaction to pain.

The third form of defence mechanism is known as ‘autistic restructuring’ which is changing the world or oneself only in the imagination. In this way a person sees what he needs to see to enhance himself. A most common type is that of ‘projection’ which is:

“…attributing our own unworthy impulses or motives to other people.” (PUH 73)

This involves projecting the ‘thanatos’ onto others and seeing them as the aggressive and guilty ones. This happens when a person starts attributing his inner threats to those around him and starts suffering from delusions of persecution, harboring feelings of unjustified suspicion and mistrust of others. Epifania, the Moor’s maternal great-grandmother was just such a person and her morning rituals consisted of swearing oaths, breaking china, and slapping her fly-swatter around at the mosquitoes that had entered the holes in her net and had bitten her. Aurora, as a child, took delight in hearing the sounds emanating from her grandmother’s room and when she felt that she was at her most irritable, would:

“…put on her sweetest smile and breeze into the matriarch’s presence with a gay morning greeting, knowing that the mother of all the da Gamas of Cochin would be pushed right over the edge of her wild anger by the arrival of this youthful witness to
her antique helplessness. Epifania, hair-a-straggle, kneeling on stained sheets, upraised swatter flapping like a broken wand, and seeking a release for her rage, howled like a weird sister, rakshasha or banshee at intruding Aurora, to the youngster’s delight.” (MLS 8)

Her ‘inner threats’ was her ‘antique helplessness’ against those around her whom she felt were persecuting her like the mosquitoes who seemed to scorn her as they deftly evaded her swatter. Old Mr Shakil, “the embittered old recluse” (S 11) was filled with an inexplicable hatred for everyone and everything around him, and could not let go of it even on his deathbed, uttering obscenities and violently cursing his home town that he had hated all his life, calling down upon it demons to destroy it. It was not only the British populace of the town that he hated but the natives as well, and he chose to live a cloistered life within his fortress-like mansion, shutting in not only himself, but his three daughters as well. But the real reason why he had imprisoned himself within the walls of his home and felt threatened by those outside it was because he had put up a very effective façade of being a wealthy man with the help of his foul temper and proud hauteur. Now that he was on the verge of death, he was well aware that his hypocrisy would be revealed to all, so he concluded his imprecations by calling down damnation upon himself. His inner threats were thus his impoverished state accompanied by the fear of being exposed, which was precisely what had ‘got his goat’! (S 12). Bilquis raged at her daughter Sufiya Zinobia’s blushes even in the presence of others. However, it is stated that the anger thus provoked “looked like a practiced wrath” (S 121). It has been hinted earlier that her disappointment over the birth of a girl that should have been a boy might have caused her to deal repeated blows at the head of the new-born baby which was responsible for turning her into an idiot. So Bilquis’ inner threat could well be the fear of discovery that she was responsible for her daughter’s present state, and hence the vehemence of the anger at the poor girl.
'Identification’, yet another form of defense mechanism, means living one’s life through another. Mira Celano who impersonated Vina Apsara the dead singer, strongly resembled Vina’s physical features as well as her body. The resemblance extended also to her mixed-race family, early orphanage, and loveless childhood. With a voice like Vina’s, she had also to sing for her living. However, as her skin and hair being lighter than Vina’s, she darkened her skin and wore a red wig. Satisfied that people identified her with the dead singer, she also gave herself another ‘back-story’ because of the need to shed her past which was too painful to live with. When Rai, on Ormus Cama’s behest, finally caught up with her and she tried to give him the false front she had invented for herself, he told her that he knew everything about her. She started screaming and cursing, and even threatened him. Rai, understanding her anger says:

“It is an angering thing to be fingered as the self you’re struggling to shuck off. To learn at twenty that the past goes on clinging to you, it bursts out of the grave when you least expect it and grabs your ankle in a stenchy decaying claw.” (GBF 529)

Her real ‘back-story’ was that she had been born to a sixty-one year old Italian World War II hero Tomaso Celano and an Indian doctor named Mehra Umrigar who died of breast cancer when she was four. Like Vina, she was also brought up by unwilling relatives and at the end of a peripatetic childhood started running wild. At her first semester at University she released her voice that made her an instant campus hit, got pregnant and dropped out of college. Her father disinherited her for it and died shortly later, leaving her penniless and having to fend for herself and her infant daughter.

‘Introjection’ is adjusting to expectations by making the demands one’s own. In Psychoanalysis, it is defined as “the unconscious adoption of the ideas or attitudes of others”. Flapping Eagle was furious when he finally found his lost sister Bird-Dog, whom he loved and adored, because she had become the slave of Grimus who treated her very shabbily. But
Virgil had advised him to ‘bide (his) time’ (G 230), so he fought back his anger, thereby adopting Virgil’s attitude as his own.

‘Dissociation’ is “having two or more inconsistent phases of personality at one and the same time” (PUH 79) which is a rare neurosis more commonly known as ‘multiple personality’. India Ophuls a.k.a Kashmira as a child was a ‘problem child’, viciously kicking and biting her school-mates, and often getting herself into trouble for it. But she reined in her temper and put on a false front, becoming:

“…the cool, restrained, disciplined person that would become her preferred disguise throughout her life.” (SC 345)

Consequently, she was:

“…trapped inside a lie, far away from the truth, held captive in a fiction; and within her the turbulence grew, an unquiet spirit moved, like a giant coiled serpent stirring at the bottom of the sea.” (SC 346)

Cyrus Cama, kept away in a boarding school with “cold baths, bad food, regular beatings” (GBF 47) revealed two entirely different personalities. The first was as a violent and disturbed delinquent whereas the other was as a sweet charmer with a “disarming and winsome” (GBF 134) nature which literally helped him to get away with murder. As stated earlier, Uma Saraswati was a person with more than two personalities, and had an:

“…ability to take on radically different personae in the company of different people – to become what she guessed a given man or woman (but usually man) would find most appealing.” (MLS 266)

In short, she was a victim of the multiple personalities syndrome, with the ability to take on any identity and personality that was best suited to her present purpose. She had a ‘back-story’ for each of her personalities, and stuck to them so assiduously that her real identity was lost even to her. Aurora told her son to steer clear off her saying that she was sick, evil, and mad (MLS263). She also told him that she was a married woman with two other lovers
besides him – Jimmy Cash his sister Ina’s old flame, and Abraham Zogoiby his father. Even in death, the Moor says that her face seemed to undergo a thousand changes, which resembled the turning of the pages of a book. It was as if it needed to take on the many images of her different personalities, until finally it stopped changing and became a blank page, a face without any identity.

Another common defence mechanism is the ‘Denial’ mechanism which is that of misperceiving threatening objects or events as harmless. It is:

“…simply refusing to acknowledge anxiety-provoking stimuli.” (PCM 89)

Dolores & Virgil Jones lived at the foot of Calf Mountain in a paradise of their own making, refusing to think about the inhabitants of the town of K though they themselves had lived there for a long time. When Flapping Eagle in his search for his sister and Sispy the man who had lured her away asked them if there were any other inhabitants in the island, they gave him very evasive answers. Virgil Jones told him that he really wouldn’t want to know about them and Dolores added that they were “completely uninteresting” (G41). They were reluctant to answer his questions regarding his sister Bird-Dog or Nicholas Deggle, strongly advising him to pay more attention to personal details and forget his quest. What they wanted to ignore was the Grimus effect that was shaking up the island in small quakes and which would eventually destroy it. So they lived in a perpetual state of ignoring its presence.

‘Intellectualization’ is another mechanism whereby anxiety is reduced by analyzing threatening issues in an emotionally detached way. Boonyi spent her first night as a ‘dead’ person in her friend Zoon’s father’s woodshed. In the wee hours of dawn, her father Pandit Pyarelal Kaul spoke to the shed, telling her how to live the life of a dead person, thereby reducing the anxiety she felt about her future ‘in an emotionally detached way’. He spoke of the incessant demands of Time on human beings, which prevented one from reaching one’s potential, and said that only the ‘mritak’ (SC 225) – the living dead whose spirit was set free, was free of its demands. He told her that to live in the world and yet not live in it was a life of detachment which was the highest goal that man could aspire for. He said that it was a state
where the human spirit was unable to hurt or hate anyone, stoically bearing trials, thereby attaining peace and joy. He was telling her to abnegate all her senses and regard both the beautiful and the ugly in the same light, hear bad as well as good words with the same indifference, eat tasty and tasteless food and smell pleasant and unpleasant smells without any distinction. She had also to control her emotions by refusing to get excited or aroused sexually. In short, she had to erase herself completely in the name of enlightenment. Boonyi was faced with threatening issues like having to live alone in isolation for the rest of her life, having to get used to being treated like a dead person by the rest of the villagers, as well as running the risk of getting killed by either wild beasts or her blood-thirsty husband. She couldn’t have had a better mentor than her father who taught her the way of the Living Dead.

‘Sublimation’ is a mechanism where socially unacceptable urges are channeled into acceptable behavior. It is the transformation of:

“…dangerous urges into positive, socially acceptable motivations.” (PCM 91)

In The Moor’s Last Sigh, the Moor as marketing manager of Baby Softo Talcum Powder Private Limited in his father’s employ was arrested on charges trumped up by his mother of drug trafficking and placed in solitary confinement in Bombay Central lock-up. It was Lambajan Chandiwala their old chowkidar, now under the employ of the notorious Raman Fielding, who brought the necessary documents which released him from both counts of drug trafficking as well as what looked like murder of the death of Uma. Lambajan had recommended his club-like fist to Fielding who had his uses for strong fists. Now that he had saved the Moor from all charges, he practically owned him and his services. After a probationary period of some months, he started serving Fielding’s interests in a team comprised of men such as a Sammy Hazare, a ‘Tin-man’ with metal parts in imitation of a cyborg. The team carried out all Fielding’s dirty laundry and the Moor enjoyed his work and also acquired fame. He justified his deeds by employing the mechanism of sublimation:

“Can you imagine how much anger had been banked in me by the circumscriptions
and emotional complexities of my previous existence – how much resentment at the world’s rejections, at the overheard giggles of women, at teachers’ sneers, how much unexpressed wrath at the exigencies of my sheltered, necessarily withdrawn, friendless, and finally mother-murdered life? It was that lifetime of fury that had begun to explode from my fist.” (MLS 306)

‘Acting out’ is another defence mechanism that relieves anxiety or unpleasant tensions by expressing them in overt behavior. The Moor’s grandfather Francisco da Gama who was all for the independence of India from British rule hated the indolent ways of the British, while his wife Epifania loved British ways. Their son Aires da Gama, who hated his father defied and infuriated him by imitating British ways of luxuriously lounging around in his presence.

‘Fixation’ is yet another form of defence mechanism which is continuing a kind of gratification after one has passed through the stage at which it was appropriate. Fixation can occur in any of the Freudian stages of child development where childhood events leave deep patterns that underlie later personality. It can take place at the ‘oral stage’ before age two known as the weaning stage where there is a conflict between the id and ego. Those who find it difficult to pass through this phase remain concerned with being taken care of, otherwise known as dependency. It could also take the form of gluttony in the form of an excessive intake of either food or ideas, the latter leading to a constant search for new knowledge. It could also take the form of excessive love of talk or the tendency to be over-close to others. The ‘anal stage’ begins at age two where children are toilet trained. Those who are easily trained are said to develop a healthy personality whereas those who exhibit an unwillingness to be trained tend to show the same pattern of holding back in life resulting in over-neatness, obstinacy, or stinginess. The ‘phallic stage’ begins at age 5 where the Oedipus/Electra complex should be resolved. A healthy resolution results in wanting to be like the parent and imbibing the parent’s characteristics. An unresolved situation would result in the development of phobias – and a person could grow up with a fear of the opposite sex. The
uppermost layer of the mind - the Superego or ‘Consciousness’, acting as a person’s conscience and operating on the principle of perfection is concerned with right and wrong and is like an inner control system to cope with the uninhibited desires of the id. It therefore serves as the critical and moralizing function and supplies the ego with standards and ideals of behavior. The superego which has been developed appropriately in childhood through parental teaching and has attained identification with a parent as a model is said to develop a healthy mental make-up in adult life. It can also be identified as a combination of the Ego ideal (the person one wishes to become) with the conscience (allowing the realization of dreams within stipulated standards).

IV

Freud highly advocated the use of defence mechanisms, considering them an essential aspect of personality and equating the process to self-mastery which was for him:

“…the highest achievement which is attainable by any human being.” (HFP 74)

However, there are different views regarding the employment of defence mechanisms. One view is that it keeps memory repressed which prevents a person from enjoying a good psychological health, so psychoanalytic techniques are employed to uncover those repressed memories. This view is shared by Aradhana Goswami (1987) in her thesis “D.H.Lawrence and the Idea of Evil” where she states that:

“Repression of man’s natural being is one of the sources of evil in modern society. Man’s bodily life with its manifold instinctive needs is repudiated and physical responses based on feelings and emotions are slighted as indecent.” (AG 33)

Instances of the unleashing of fury which as mentioned earlier, is yet another form of defence mechanism through aggressive behaviour, also abound in the Novels. In Grimus, Virgil Jones unleashed his rage with far reaching consequences. He did not hold back his rage, with the result that: “…his speech became involuted and obscure” (G 91). He was
addressing a ‘Gorf’ from the Gorfic planet Thera, who used their vast mental powers to make themselves resemble enormous sightless frogs carved out of rocks. He was angry because the Gorf was meddling in the ‘personal dimensions’ of Flapping Eagle by giving him a mental puzzle to solve while suffering ‘dimension fever’. And by making him peevish and irascible, the Gorf was also making him lose his former self-confidence, which annoyed him even more. So he was arguing with it, though ‘it’ was also just a voice audible only to the one it addressed. The peculiar thing with Virgil Jones always producing abstruse language whenever he was angry was that: “it came of a horror of displaying his loss of self-control” (G 91). It also resulted in a physical display of his tongue playing about his mouth which caused saliva to drool down his chin while his hand worked ‘feverishly’ inside his pocket. Maintaining self-control over one’s emotions was of vital importance on Calf Island, as a display of feelings could hasten not only the island’s annihilation but also bring about their own deaths.

When Virgil Jones and Flapping Eagle first entered the town of K, they went to Flann O’Toole’s Elbaroom for food and lodging, where Virgil Jones was beaten up by O’Toole and literally thrown into the street for having gone down the mountain with his wife Dolores O’Toole. Flapping Eagle did not do anything to help the man who had not only helped him up the mountain but had also helped him survive the effects of Dimension Fever as he felt that siding with such an unpopular man would lessen his chances of finding his sister Bird-Dog. He was offered a room there but was taken away by Elfrida Gribb to her home whereas Virgil Jones was given shelter in the brothel of The Rising Son by its new owner Madame Jocasta. When Flapping Eagle went to the brothel to apologize to Virgil as well as to ask him why he had brought him to the town of K, Jocasta:

“……blazed with fury, not realizing how much that fury had done to widen the rift between the two travellers.” (G 158)
She was furious with Flapping Eagle for his ingratitude towards Virgil Jones for having deserted him in his time of need and told him that he was not welcome in her home. However, Virgil Jones told him that he, along with Grimus had expelled Nicholas Deggle from the island because he had wanted to destroy the Stone Rose, the destruction of which would bring about the destruction of the whole island and its inhabitants. He said that at first, everything had moved smoothly till one day things suddenly went wrong on the island and people started committing suicides by drinking from their blue bottles which had the power to release them from their gifts of immortality. This turn of events had made the people turn against them and Deggle had gone over to their side and had tried to destroy the Stone Rose. Grimus had been so enraged that he expelled Deggle from the island with the help of Jones. During the performance of the expulsion rite, Jones was so badly affected by the power of the Rose that he suffered from Dimension- Fever and had to be cured by the Rose itself. After he regained consciousness by returning from his “inner depths” (G 216), he found that he could no longer use the Rose for Conceptual Travels as he once had. Grimus then felt that he had to remove the Rose to a safer place and through “inradimensional Travel” transported it and himself to the summit of the mountain. He built a visual barrier of clouds around the peak as well as an impassable “forcefield” (G 217) with an invisible ‘gate’ that was controlled by the Rose. So Jones had begun to share Deggle’s opinion because he felt that Grimus could not control the Rose anymore as it was emitting the Grimus Effects and causing deaths. That was the reason that he had brought Flapping Eagle up the mountain to do what he couldn’t, as he was no longer able to approach Grimus. So what Flapping Eagle did not know was that Virgil Jones was using him as a tool to wreck vengeance on Grimus. Virgil Jones hated Grimus because Liv had left their house to live up the mountain to be as close as possible to Grimus. He also thirsted for revenge on Grimus for insulting Liv by refusing her plea of taking her with him as well as causing her to leave him. Having been a former grave-digger, he felt
guilty for having dug up the Stone Rose in the first place. So he had stayed for a short time in Jocasta’s care in the brothel and had decided to leave the town of K as he could not bear to live in it anymore. Meanwhile, the Gribbs had arrived and had successfully managed to implement their theory that neither Grimus nor his ‘Effect’ existed. So, Jones could not bear to be amidst a people whose: “Obsessionalism is their defence” (G 218), which became “the Way of K”. He blamed all this on Grimus who was bent on preserving the Stone Rose and its powers, and Virgil Jones in his helpless anger had made his way down the mountain with Dolores O’Toole who was leaving her foul-mouthed husband Flann O’Toole of the Elbarrom. Then his chance for ‘unleashing’ his rage finally came when Flapping Eagle landed on the island from the sea and things were set in motion when he decided to leave Dolores O’Toole and take Flapping Eagle up the mountain in the hope that somehow, having been selected by Grimus to be his successor, as he happened to be his look-alike, he would be able to gain access to the Stone Rose and destroy it for him. The unleashing of Virgil Jones’ fury led to the total disintegration of the machine-made island and ended in the total annihilation of its immortals.

Ignatius Gribb the philosopher, an immortal like all the inhabitants of Calf Island died of “his last rage” (G 185), which was caused by his wife Elfrida’s confession that she no longer loved him. Gnome-like Ignatius Gribb with violet eyes and a balding head told Flapping Eagle that when he first arrived on Calf island, he found the Grimus ‘myth’ in formation and so he started doing everything in his power to convince the townspeople of its being a mere myth. He accomplished this by denying the existence of Grimus and his Stone Rose, the machine that had not only built Calf Island but had also enabled immortality to its inhabitants. He was so successful in expunging the ‘myth’ in the town of K that no one in the town was ever encumbered with dimension fevers. It was like sending it in Freud’s unconscious layer of the mind and using a defence mechanism to keep it at bay. Grimus
inasmuch as being a quasi-science-fiction is very psychoanalytical in its thematic treatment and can be studied as such. Green eyed and beautiful elf-like Elfrida in spite of her dislike of diminutives had married the stunted philosopher Ignatius and they had until the emergence of Flapping Eagle drawn strength from each other. The confidence of ugly Ignatius bordering on arrogance, his strength in formulating and upholding theories, as well as his very life depended on the love of his beautiful wife. It was as if he was a vampire, needing her blood for sustenance. So it was inevitable that when she withdrew her love from him and told him that she no longer loved him, his resistance of the Grimus effect collapsed, killing him immediately. Her words had:

“…broken through the unconscious, ingrained defence mechanism, the mental barrier he had built for almost every member of the community of K. Elfrida’s withdrawal had removed the cornerstone of the persona he had built; and in that instant, when everything had seemed sure was suddenly flung into a state of flux, the fever of the Inner Dimensions had swarmed over him.” (G 177)

Flapping Eagle wondered how he must have felt when the Grimus effect got past his broken defence mechanisms, for the murder weapon had been the very thing the existence of which he had been denying himself for centuries. He also became aware of the fact that soon everyone would know that Elfrida had withdrawn her love from her husband because she had fallen in love with him and he would be held responsible not only of Gribb’s death but also of the safety of all the townspeople as their survival had depended on his theories.

Liv’s and Bird Dog’s rage, waiting to be unleashed for centuries, was unleashed on their common enemy Grimus of his free will. Grimus who was interested in numerology had

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*Rushdie had written it for a science-fiction competition but it was rejected.*
once stated to Liv that her name stood for the Roman numerology 54, which was exactly his petrified age and so he had told her that they were bound together by that number. But having said that, he had refused to take her with him up the mountain. So when Flapping Eagle entered Liv’s house, she had him lie down on her bed and aroused him beyond endurance. Then just before the final act of consummation, she pulled off him and stood above him, the act being:

“Liv’s revenge on Grimus, plotted in centuries of darkened, still-seated brooding. Now, possessed, entranced, she had wrought it on his spectre. It was a very final humiliation, hitting him in the core of his carnal pride, the only pride he had left. He looked up at the towering Valkyrie, staring at him with the full force of her century-festered hate…….”(G 221)

However, what she did not realize was that her act of revenge was just another of their ‘god’ Grimus’ machinations to increase her bile. She had been hypnotized by him into having sex with Flapping Eagle, and having woken from her trance would be even more infuriated with him on discovering that her plans for revenge had misfired. Grimus had also hypnotized Bird-Dog and had intentionally abused her for centuries so that she would also hate him and now was the time for the ‘unleashing’ of the rage of both women, which was just what Grimus wanted in order to bring about his own death. He made arrangements for Bird-Dog to go to Liv and tell her that she hated him, terming her obedience of his command “post-hypnotic suggestions” (G 239). Then the two of them would lead the antagonized men of K to murder Grimus. The plan was so successful that when Flapping Eagle tried to stop his sister Bird-Dog from executing the “post-hypnotic suggestions”, she quietly told him that she hated him and wanted him dead. So when the two women were finally allowed to unleash their fury, it came as an act of free will, which Grimus called: “…an illusion. People behave according to the flux-lines of their potential futures” (G 239). Their unleashed rage ended in a vindictive
slaughter of the man they both loved.

In *Midnight’s Children*, Doctor Aziz, who had been loved by the Kashmiri boat-man Tai as a boy, became a hated figure when he returned from Germany with a medical degree. He was furious at the German leather bag that he took with him on his rounds and constantly railed against it calling it a “sistersleeping pigskin bag from Abroad full of foreigners’ tricks” (MC 16). He refused to answer Doctor Aziz’s questions on their way across the lake, preferring to express his rage in bitter monologues. The small talk attempted by Aadam to allay Tai’s resentment were “brushed aside by the torrent of Tai’s fury” (MC 16). Doctor Aziz realized that Tai, who represented traditionalism, was fighting change and progress and felt sad about it. Tai fought it through a “gesture of unchangingness” (MC25) by refusing to wash or bathe for three years. This was Tai’s way of unleashing his rage. He:

“…chose to stink. For three years now, he had neither bathed nor washed himself after answering calls of nature. He wore the same clothes, unwashed, year in, year out; his one concession to winter was to put his chugha-coat over his putrescent pajamas. The little basket of hot coals which he carried inside the chugha, in the Kashmiri fashion, to keep him warm in the bitter cold, only animated and accentuated his evil odours.” (MC 25) It was called “self destructing rage” (MC 83) because he lost his occupation of boatman as no one wanted to be within his stench. The floating lake population then blamed Tai’s condition on Dr Aziz and started ostracizing him which hurt him deeply. Their rejection of him caused him to resent the enclosed and restricting atmosphere and so Tai’s anger began to:

“…affect him, to become his own, which erupts only rarely, but comes, when it does come, unheralded in a roar from his deepest places, laying waste everything in sight.” (MC 17)

This, then was the beginning of the suffocating rage that possessed him all his life. After marrying Naseem Ghani, his patient whom he examined in small parts through a perforated sheet, he left Agra to build new roots, away from the boatmen and their narrow views.
However, the past caught up with him in the form of his wife with whom he fought a life-long battle of principles. As a young bride, she insisted on using the purdah and when she continued to persist after he had expressed distaste for them, he collected all the veils from her suitcase and burned them in a waste paper basket. She next employed a Maulvi to impart instruction in religion to her five children, now ranging from the age of five to eleven. On the very first day of the Maulvi’s visit, he dragged him out by his ear and kicked him out, telling his wife that:

“…he was teaching them to hate, wife. He tells them to hate Hindus and Buddhists and Jains and Sikhs and who knows what other vegetarians. Will you have hateful children, woman?” (MC 43)

Naseem in return unleashed her rage by refusing to feed him and nearly starved him to death in the process, as he too refused to feed himself. Their next encounter occurred when Mian Abdullah ‘the Hummingbird’, founder of the “Free Island Convocation” (MC 47) in opposition to the partition of India was murdered and his personal Secretary Nadir Khan fled to Dr Aziz’s home for shelter. Naseem opposed her husband’s intention of giving temporary shelter to Nadir Khan in their cellar on grounds that they had grown up daughters and the presence of a young stranger in their house would not be ‘respectful’. Tired of his wife’s traditional principles:

“…the great destroying rage of Aadam Aziz is unleashed….” (MC 57)

Instead of reasoning with his wife that their guest would be safely out of their way as he would stay in the cellar, and also that there was no danger of his making advances at the girls owing to his bashful nature, he ordered her to be silent. She retaliated by refusing to speak from that moment on and the silence lasted for three years during which period her middle daughter Mumtaz was married to Nadir Khan, her eldest daughter Alia courted by a dealer in reccine and leathercloth named Ahmed Sinai, and her youngest daughter Emerald by Major
Zulfikar. The silence was broken only when Mumtaz on contacting cold in the damp cellar was examined by her father and her virginity was found intact after two years of marriage. Naseem’s fury was unleashed on her husband in a torrent of words, blaming him and his modern notions for what had so tragically transpired. Such was Doctor Aziz’s life long battle with his wife’s old-fashioned notions that in his old age:

“…he often disgraced himself by stumbling into mosques and temples with his old man’s stick, mouthing imprecations and lashing out at any holy man within range.”

(MC 332)

An educated man like him ended up half-crazed for unleashing his rage.

Ahmed Sinai, who courted Alia the eldest daughter ended up marrying Mumtaz after her fiasco with her first husband Nadir Khan. His rage originated over his wife’s preoccupation with their new-born son Saleem Sinai and he unleashed it in the form of heavy drinking sessions and unsuccessful attempts at flirting with his secretaries in his office. Years later, his wife and children along with all the servants left him for his intolerably bad temper. His assistant Alice Pareira in her attempt to redeem herself for the crime of stealing Joseph D’Costa from her sister Mary stayed with him for four years, trying to fulfill his demands. She would sit with him till midnight and listen to his drunken tales of woe but instead of feeling grateful towards her, he would unleash his rage on her with:

“…long tirades filled with gutter-oaths and the useless curses he had devised in the days of his deepest abstraction.” (MC 355)

A successful businessman ended up thus a drunk and a failure.

General Zulfikar’s son Zafar suffered from enuresis and was often thrashed for it by his father. Once at a very important dinner party hosted in their house, General Ayub Khan was discussing how to stage a coup, and Zafar in fear began to leak. His father was so furious with him that he hurled him from the room, calling him a pimp, a woman, a coward, a homosexual and a Hindu. When he grew up, his father enlisted him in the Pakistani army and
his incontinence made him the laughing stock of the military base. As a Lieutenant, he was assigned for duty in the supposedly haunted border of the Rann of Kutch along with five other soldiers where they spent time in a state of fear. Then one night they saw a phantom troop approaching them from the sea which reduced all of them to “absurd postures of abject terror” (MC 402) especially Zafar who found himself a gibbering wreck on the floor. However, he learnt from the phantom chief that they were smugglers commandeered by his father which turned out to be the last straw for Zafar. This humiliating incident coupled with the memory of childhood humiliations and beatings led him to go home on leave and murder his father by slitting his throat in his bath.

Musa the Sinai family’s bearer was becoming old and felt threatened by Mary’s superior status as nurse to the Sinai baby. That he regarded Mary’s presence as an affront is evident in his angry outburst to Amina:

“...you, and your sahib, and his father, have taken my whole life; and in my old age you have humiliated me with Christian Ayahs.” (MC 172)

So he unleashed his rage by stealing the family’s prized possessions as he also feared that he would be sooner or later dismissed from service which fear was also fuelled by the fact that his drink-provoked master Ahmed Sinai had of late become extremely rude to him. However, he swore his innocence to Ahmed, making an oath that he be lepered if proved otherwise. A police search unearthed the missing items in Musa’s bedroll and he left the house after leaving a curse on it. His oath that he be lepered came true and it had all started with the unleashing of his rage.

Dr. Narlikar, a strong opponent of fertility had refused to get married for his very principles and had erected a tetrapod symbolic of the sterile twentieth century concrete. So he was driven wild when he saw some beggar women performing the puja rites of procreation at the base of his obsession which so maddened him that he:

“...shouted his abuse at the worshipping women, gleaming fiercely in his rage; reaching them, he kicked away their little dia-lamps; it is said he even tried to push
the women…” (MC 209)

A Language March paused near them and he started abusing them too, denigrating their cause. This caused them to reach out at him and he clung to the tetrapod, refusing to be detached from it. The marchers then rocked it off its foundations and it crashed into the sea, carrying Dr Narlikar along with it. The unleashing of his rage thus led to his untimely demise.

As stated earlier, old Mr Shakil on his deathbed, satisfied with having cursed the outside world to his heart’s content, unleashed the last vestiges of his rage by:

“...calling eternal damnation down upon his soul.” (S 12)

Upto the last moments of his life, he waged a futile battle against the natural course of order that led to an undignified demise.

The Shakil sisters unleashed their rage on the erstwhile President Raza Hyder for having issued the order that killed their son Babur by poisoning both him and his wife. His wife succumbed to the poison and they made him stand naked in the dumb-waiter with the corpse of his wife by his side. Then they pulled the built-in levers that released sharp eighteen-inch stiletto blades from secret panels which cut him up in pieces, after which they left their home for the first time in their lives. Their embittered-crazed lives were bound to end in total catastrophe as they left their mansion which was their only sanctuary.

Omar Khayyam Shakil, epitome of shamelessness, as a boy hated his “ancestor-heavy” (S 32) fortress-like home with its unused rooms and corridors which terrified him. He unleashed his childish rage on it by arming himself with a hatchet and a broom and rampaging through it smashing up whatever he came across:

“‘Take that,’ he screeched amidst the corpses of his useless, massacred history, ‘take that, old stuff!’ and then burst….into illogical tears.” (S 32)

This uninhibited unleashing of rage continued in his dealings with the outside world where he neither gave nor reciprocated love, causing him to lead a loveless life.

Babar Shakil who was made to live in the shadow of his elder brother by his three mothers grew to hate them all so much that he unleashed his rage on them on his
twentieth birthday by burning all the possessions of his brother in their central compound. He then left the house to get drunk and joined the guerrillas the next day, never to set foot on his home again alive. His was an envious and cankerous life, ending in a violent death.

Raza Hyder was so furious at the birth of his daughter while expecting a son that he unleashed his rage by first remaining silent when the announcement was made to him after which he started shouting. He insisted that a mistake had been made and then implied that the sex of the baby could have been mistaken due to its not having been properly cleaned. He even demanded to see the hospital supervisor who pointed out to him in no unclear terms that the baby was indeed a girl and left him to his rage. In unleashing his fury, the war-hero had made an absolute fool of himself. Then when the baby was fifteen months old and Raza Hyder was promoted to the rank of Colonel, he was transferred to Needle Valley in the district of Q to protect its mines from tribal attacks. They travelled with members of a popular bioscopic company whom he thoroughly despised, and when they reached their destination and a huge crowd awaited their arrival at the station, he mistook the reception to be that of his own person. Anticipating a huge welcome, he stepped out of the train with outstretched arms and a speech ready on his lips and was shocked when he found that the reception was for the bioscopic team that he so scorned. The insult revived his rage of the birth of his daughter and he unleashed his rage on his wife who was also of a bioscopic background, her father having owned a cinema theatre. Then he began to blame his inability to produce a male heir on the cinemagoers of Q and absented himself for long periods to fight the dacoits in the wilderness. During one such absence of three months, his daughter contacted brain fever and as military and civil doctors failed to cure her, Bilquis used the services of a ‘Hakim’ who gave her a potion which would save her life but would also slow down her mental growth. The effects of the medicine was that Raza Hyder’s daughter became an idiot during his absence. When Hyder arrived in Q, he saw Babur Shakil standing at the window of Nishapur and gazed at him with longing. This envy for a son accompanied by the news of his daughter’s derangement incensed him so much that:
“…for the sake of his personal safety it was necessary to find a release for it as
soon as possible.” (S 101)

He sought release for his rage by going straight to the Chief Minister Gichki to obtain
permission for the law to be placed in his hands so that he could eliminate all threats in the
bandit-infested area of Needle valley. However he was told in no uncertain terms that the
army would never be allowed to flout civil law which so added fuel to his rage that he
shouted threats at the Chief Minister and:

‘…terrified the peons outside because they had issued from the lips of one so
habitually polite.’ (S 102)

Leaving the Chief Minister’s office in a foul temper, he rode home with the local divine
Maulana Dawood who informed him about his wife’s affair with the cinema executive
Sindbad Mengel. So the unleashing of his rage finally came in the form of the gruesome
mutilation of Sindbad that very night. His rotting corpse was found in pieces without the head
and his genitals “…severed and inserted into the rectum” (S 103). The next step he took was
by a very coarse love making to his wife the night of the murder. Another occasion when he
unleashed his rage that also ended with murder was at Iskander Harappa’s Mohenjo estate at
a house party. Hyder reacted outlandishly to Shakil’s revelation that Iskander had robbed him
of his obsession Pinkie Aurangzeb by tethering himself to the ground, challenging the
slanderer of his reputation to a duel. Hyder remained there all night, as drunken Shakil had
rushed indoors and had fainted of fright and Iskander to whom the challenge had really been
directed was in his wife’s expression: “…too mousey to take his medicine like a man”
(S 110). At dawn, the old servant Gulbaba crept up behind him to persuade him to go inside,
tapped him on his shoulder and was immediately struck down by the sleep-deprived Hyder
causing his death a month later. The unleashing of his rage ended in macabre deaths.

Bilquis Hyder continued to hold a grudge against Pinkie Aurangzeb, remembering
that her husband had been willing to stake himself all night for her at Mohenjo. So when
Pinkie became widowed and Iskander left her for politics, she decided to raise turkeys in an
empty plot of land between her house and the Hyders’ residence. However, when the gobbling turkeys irritated her highly-strung nerves and her complaint fell on her husband’s deaf ears, she:

“…placed her hands upon her hips and yelled at Raza in the presence of both her daughters.” (S 135)

This in turn seemed to be what drove her twelve year old daughter Sufiya to sleepwalk and decapitate two hundred and eighteen turkeys with her bare hands. This horrific act proved to be the final straw for Bilquis and she unleashed her rage by cutting off Sufiya’s hair till it resembled:

“… a cornfield after a fire; sad, black stubble, a catastrophic desolation wrought by maternal rage…” (S 140)

She fought a futile battle against odds in a patriarchal society and ended up mad.

Sufiya Zinobia’s marriage remained unconsummated because her maid Shahbanou wouldn’t let her husband near her bed on grounds of “a contractual clause” (S 210). Maybe she had a genuine concern for her mistress, an overly protective attitude, or she might have had it all craftily planned out. Whatever the reason, she ushered him into a room containing a single bed, and appeared for all purposes, a solicitous and formidable servant intent on protecting her mistress from lustful hands. Omar Khayyam assured her that he wouldn’t force himself on her until she was “agreeable” (S 211). So he led a celibate life, eating small amounts of food but nonetheless gaining weight at such an alarming rate that Shahbanou decided to fill in for Sufiya to prevent him from bursting. She went to him every night as soon as Sufiya fooled her with her pretence of sleep, while she herself was not fooled with what was going on between her husband and ayah. But the poor girl had no idea of the activity that they were engaging themselves in, as the instruction that she received from her ponderous mother before her wedding night as regards the nature of wedded life was about a fish swimming in the sea. She had compared him to a fish and told her to think of herself as an ocean where he could drown himself in. Sufiya had responded to her mother’s abstract
instructions by making faces and stating that she didn’t like fishes. So, recalling what her mother had told her, she imagined Shahbanou turning into water and her husband into a fish, wondering how they would clean up the mess in the room after turning back into their human forms. One day she checked her husband’s bed and finding it damp, continued to search for shells and weeds which she knew was contained by the ocean, found none and was genuinely puzzled. And as Shahbanou continued sleeping with her husband, the insomniac Sufiya worried over questions to which she had no answers. One topic of interest to her was that of the business of husbands. She knew that her father was a husband to her mother, and Talvar to her sister Naveed. She once asked Shahbanou about husbands and was told that husbands provided money and babies. But she was also told that she didn’t need to worry about money and babies were not meant for her, which puzzled her even more. She loved babies and loved playing with her sister’s children, and wanted to know why she couldn’t have them but Shahbanou couldn’t give her a satisfactory answer. She knew that she now had a husband and also that wives and husbands did something to each other at night. But Shahbanou was doing it for her, and it sounded frightening, judging from the shrieks she made while doing it. And so she concluded that if her husband didn’t come to her at night and if babies weren’t meant for her, it was because she was bad, and she was dimly aware of the fact that her mother and sister treated her like a ‘bad’ person. Sometimes while puzzling over these things, she felt that she was changing into something, but almost immediately dismissed the feeling. Then she started sleep-walking once more and walked the streets at night during which she was deflowered by four young men whose heads she severed after the act. The beast in her had been unleashed and she had been transformed into:

“…a tide rising towards flood, she feels something coming, roaring, feels it take her, the thing, the flood or perhaps the thing in the flood, the Beast bursting forth to wreck its havoc on the world, and after that she knows nothing, will remember nothing, because it, the thing, is free.” (S 219)

Sufiya unleashed the beast in her, laying waste everything around her.
Little Mir Harappa unleashed his rage on his cousin Iskander Harappa for having snitched away his French mistress from right under his nose by looting his home in his absence with a band of horsemen, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. He justified himself to Rani Harappa by saying that a man’s honour lay in his women, and Iskander had callously trampled on it. He was as he said “all worked up” and displayed his vast store of picturesque harangue ranging from the most common invectives to the absurd, calling Iskander:

“mother-fucker…bullock’s arsehole…pizzle of a homosexual pig…sisterfucking bastard spawn of corpse-eating vultures…sucker of shit from the rectums of diseased donkeys…murdering rapist of his own grandmother…nibbler of a crow’s left nipple.”

(S 96)

His habitual loud mouth and uninhibited display of rage led to his murder where his son was incriminated.

Iskander Harappa as the Prime Minister of a country increased in arrogance and ceased to be reasonable. When Raza Hyder the Commander-in-Chief of the Army took to him the problem of the defence budget, he rudely retorted that they had to make do with what they got and told him to get out of the room. Raza Hyder tried to reason with him by telling him not to forget his friends, but he replied that a man in his position did not have any. Hyder despairingly told him that he had “ceased to be a human being” (S 209), which caused him to be so furious that he unleashed his rage by jumping up from behind his desk, “screaming right into Raza’s face” (S 210), and striking him on his cheeks. During his house-arrest, “He began to chew betel-not non stop, deliberately spitting the juice out on the priceless rugs, because his rage had begun to overcome the fastidious elegance of his true nature” (S 225) and cursing General Raza Hyder for an hour and a half with his “enormous vocabulary of imprecations a deadlier rancor than it had ever possessed in the days of his rakehell youth” (S 225). His arrogant ways caused his family’s misery as well as his own death. Colonel Shuja visited ex Prime Minister Iskander Harappa in his death-cell for a full confession so that his
plea for clemency would be received more favourably, but was met with curses and “The obscenity of his language inflicted stinging blows, Shuja felt them piercing his skin…he felt the rage rising within him, he was unable to undergo such humiliation without giving way to the anger” (S 237). So, Iskander’s unpressed rage caused him to be shot through the heart.

The author of The courtier says of his sister Muneeza: “She was the true inheritor of my father’s black rage, and when she lost control it was terrible to behold.” (The courtier: EW 201) and adds: “I looked at my screaming sister and thought how brilliantly self-destructive she was, how triumphantly she was ruining her relations with the people she needed most.” (The courtier: EW 202) The description speaks for itself.

Belle da Gama was so angry at the damage done to their spice fields by the Menezes and Lobo men brought on by her mother-in-law Epifania and sister-in-law Carmen that she unleashed her rage on them by literally dividing the house in two. The house with its contents as well as the servants and courtyards and gardens were all divided in two with demarcating sacks of spice piled up in between as frontiers to be respected. She also went to see the lawyers of the Gama Trading Company and persuaded them to divide the business in two, and: “Neither Epifania nor Carmen had the strength, after recent events, to stand against the fury of Belle’s unleashed will” (MLS 42). So at the age of twenty-one, she took over the affairs of the business and worked hard to make it a success. Her enthusiasm however was short-lived and when death came to her in the form of lung cancer at the age of thirty-three, it found her totally unprepared: “She went quickly, in great pain, railing against the enemy in her body, savagely angry with death for arriving too soon and behaving so badly” (MLS 51).

Aires da Gama was so distressed by his father’s suicide that he unleashed his rage in seeking promiscuity. This greatly hurt his lover, nicknamed, ‘Prince Henry the Navigator’, who started sending him: “...a deluge of correspondence – letters on cheap paper…messages of desire and anger, threats of violence if the beloved persisted in his too-hurtful ways.” (MLS 28)

Aurora was secretly furious at her son the Moor’s deformity, but at his birth
comforted herself with saying that his club-like fist was just a little smudge in a masterpiece. The Moor reflects that her condoning act then was a mere act of putting: “...away her horror and disgust, locking it away in a dank basement of her soul until the day of our final quarrel, when she set it free, grown monstrous and slavering, and allowed the beast-within to have its way at last” (MLS 147). She unleashed her rage by having him arrested on trumped-up charges of drug trafficking, her deep-rooted anger overcoming even her maternal instincts.

Vasco Miranda the painter’s love and longing for Aurora Da Gama remained the same even after fourteen years away from them in Spain. Instead of spending the years in regenerating himself and finding healthier pursuits, he like Farida Balloch chose to spend it in dreams and schemes of revenge. His anger was fueled by Abraham Zogoiby’s shabby treatment of him and it led to madness and eventual death. After his banishment from Elephanta, he settled in Benengeli in a palace called the “Little Alhambra” where he shut himself in all the year through and acquired the reputation of a mad man. His two lovers Felicitas and Renegada informed the Moor that the reason for his reclusive life was caused by his resentment of a woman whom he used to love who had treated him badly. They took him to Vasco after informing him that the four stolen paintings which he sought were indeed in his care, and the upshot was that he was taken captive at the point of a gun, the reason for it being:

“...to get rid of all the Zogoibys I can lay my hands on, four pictures and one person – the last of the accursed line.” (MLS 412)

Vasco forced him up a tower and into a room containing X-ray equipment where one of the stolen paintings in palimpsest had been X-rayed. He was given his mother’s letter to Vasco where she had expressed her fear that she could be murdered at any time and that her murderer’s identity would be revealed in the palimpsest of her last painting captioned *The Moor’s Last Sigh*. She had asked him to reveal her murderer if she was killed, which wish however had not been fulfilled by Vasco who sardonically stated that Zogoibys expected to be cared for by people that they had shucked off. He told the Moor to look at the man that
his mother had concealed beneath her painting which could be made out in negative-image segments. The image was that of a tall, slender man and the Moor realized with shock that it was his father Abraham who had caused his mother’s fall, and not Mainduck as he had been told. From the X-ray chamber, he was next prodded up the stairs and brought to a circular cell where a Japanese woman in ankle chains was painstakingly exhuming the buried painting of bare-breasted Aurora in Vasco’s first work which had so incensed Abraham that he had been forced to paint over it with a picture of a galloping Moor. She had been incarcerated when she refused to undertake the work as it would entail months of labour to do what was required. The Moor was thrown in with her and promised that his life would be spared for as long as he would write the story of his life for the purpose of entertaining their diabolic host.

His fellow-captive, Aoi, advised him to “spin it out” (MLS 421) in the way that she was also carrying out her work, because she feared that she would be killed once her work was finished. Vasco had forced her to send letters and post-cards to her family, friends and workplace to avoid suspicion and she told him that she had been inserting deliberate mistakes in her writings to rouse suspicion. So she was buying time till someone was able to crack her coded messages. But the days passed and with them weakened any hope of rescue and the day came when the Moor’s story came to its present state and Aoi’s palimpsest was fully exhumed. Vasco had taken to drugs and he was heavily drugged on the day he planned to kill his two captives. After shooting Aoi through her heart, he started spouting blood and dropped dead himself which the Moor attributed to not an overdose of drugs but to:

“...an older needle, the needle of retribution that had been planted in him before he had even committed a crime; or, and, it was a needle of fable, it was the splinter of ice left in his veins by his encounter with the Snow Queen, my mother, whom he had loved, and who had made him mad.” (MLS 432)

As a teenager, Vina’s uncle Piloo Doodhwala beat her up on hearing of her involvement with Ormus Cama whereupon:

“...she attacked him with an abandoned savagery...a process during which she both
inflicted and received a number of wounds.” (GBF 112)

It resulted in her being driven out of the Doodhwala household in the rain.

The unleashing of Ameer Merchant’s rage on both her husband and Vina had far-reaching consequences. At twenty-seven, she refused Ormus’ proposal, who approached her in a very romantic mood at dusk with a bunch of wildflowers only to find her in a “viperfish mood”, for she had been “transformed into a hissing harpy” (GBF 368). The reason for her black moods is ascribed to Ameer’s rage that: “…ignited her own formidable rage” (GBF 368). Never having been exposed to conjugal happiness became greatly instrumental in Vina persistently shying-away from marriage.

After Vina’s death, Rai was suddenly seized with anger at having had to maintain a secret love-life with her that he decided to unleash his anger by showing Ormus the photos that he had shot of her in the nude. The purpose of it was to show him that he was not the only one missing her and grieving for her. It was also to show Ormus that he had been the one she trusted and not the other way around. And in this frame of mind he was:

“...ready for anything… I roared red-misted into the Rhodope lobby.” (GBF 431) ready for a confrontation with his friend over Vina which he termed “confrontational fury” (GBF 431).

India Ophuls unleashed the memory of an unhappy childhood in her weekly boxing sessions where: “…the cold fury of her hitting made the male boxers pause to watch” (SC 6) and after the murder of her father in archery sessions where she revelled in: “…unleashing in the silent venom of the arrow… hitting its target” (SC 6). She also took recourse to walking the streets at night: “...looking for trouble and once, twice, had rough sex with strangers in anonymous rooms and came home with dried blood under her fingernails”. (SC 333) After she was equipped with the knowledge that her father’s murderer had been the husband of her mother, she was so desperate to know about her mother who had loved him more than her that she called out to an absent Shalimar: “…with her eyes closed, like a witch in a séance” (SC 340). It was self destruction, and her rage completely possessed her.
Religious fury was also unleashed and the brutality in Pachigam is not described because shameful deeds were done in the name of religion: “There are things that must be looked at indirectly because they would blind you if you looked them in the face, like the fire of the sun” (SC 309).

When Man Bai’s attempt to kill Vespucci and his two whores by setting fire to their mansion went wrong and they fled the city by boat, she “...hated the incomplete nature of what had transpired and howled in vain for blood” (TEF 343). She next “...entered a state of mental confusion, at first shrieking and screaming for blood, and then, after Prince Salim rebuked her, falling into a profound melancholy” (TEF 346) which caused her early demise.

Freud himself cautioned that in order to avoid extreme aggression or violence, the aggressive instinct should be given an outlet in small amounts or in socially constructive ways as the energy that fuels aggression can accumulate and eventually explode which is precisely the case in the unleashing of fury discussed in this chapter. It is therefore discerned that the fury of Rushdie’s characters all stem from the use of different defence mechanisms such as repression, reaction-formation, rationalization, displacement, compensation, fantasy, regression, autistic restructuring, identification, introjections, dissociation, denial, intellectualization, sublimation, acting out, and resort to aggressive behaviour as a result of suppressed rage. All of which is again a reflection of Rushdie’s brilliant psychological treatment of his characters.
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