The Borders and Frontiers of Salman Rushdie's 'Literary Project':

Perspectives of Identity, Culture and Celebrity Drawn from *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*

Introduction

Imagining the edge of the permeable frontier

My "true language", declares Salman Rushdie, "is the language of literature".[1] This is quite a candid confession, one that potentially inspires a range of complex and possibly paradoxical questions. For example, how is this "true" language to be read? Does the apparent truth of the idiom of literature by some type of dichotomous implication render other communicative media false? Indeed, as Rushdie himself observes, Australian author David Malouf argues "talk" is the "enemy of writing".[2] What is it that distinguishes Rushdie's literary dialect from the cacophony of written voices with which literature, in its myriad forms, seeks to engage the reader? Through a structured examination of the thematic, symbolic and tonal dynamics of Rushdie's writing, the distinct timbre of his literary voice can be heard. This thesis seeks to decode the language of Rushdie's literature as expressed throughout the border and frontier themes that permeate particular facets of his literary project. In doing so, I aim to test and apply aspects of this project to broader concepts of "real" and imagined literary, political, personal and cultural borders and frontiers.

Rushdie's literature is characterised by pervading themes of borders and frontiers. The very nature of this distinctive thematic bearing ensures that it is difficult to define his writing in accordance with the categories of traditional literary conventions, such as those delineating imaginative, theoretical, autobiographical, confessional, fictional or non-fictional writing. Rushdie is committed to eschewing the limits of these categories. As he explains, he views himself as working at the edge of convention, freely traversing and challenging the very frontiers he argues impinge on creative and intellectual expression:

> The crossing of borders, of language, geography and culture; the examination of the permeable frontier between the universe of things and deeds and the universe of the imagination; the lowering of the intolerable frontiers created by

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[1] S. Rushdie, *Step Across This Line: Collected Non-Fiction 1992-2002*, Jonathan Cape, London, 2002, p. 293.

[2] Malouf is referring to what he views as the danger of talking about one's writing. He argues that in attempting to demystify the language of literature at its "embryonic, and fragile" stage, we risk stripping it of its imaginative power. See: ibid., pp. 69 & 75.

> the world's many different kinds of thought policemen: these matters have been at the very heart of the literary project that was given to me by the circumstances of my life, rather than chosen by me for intellectual or 'artistic' reasons.[3]

The "circumstances" of Rushdie's life are bound in representations of borders and frontiers. His personal experience of borders and frontiers is characterised by the dynamics of his emotional, cultural and imaginative response to them. This does not necessarily undermine the importance of the "intellectual" or "artistic" dimensions of his literary adaptation of border and frontier themes. Indeed, these factors are evident throughout his work, partly influencing the structure of his writing, his choice of subject matter, his engagement with theory, his critical focus, and the tone of his socio-political commentary. Rushdie's articulation of the "heart" of his literary project is, however, not concerned with detailing the "intellectual" and "artistic" mechanics of his writing. It is an account of the fundamental preoccupations that both motivate and inspire him to write.

Imagination is central to Rushdie's literary project; imagination unrestrained by literal or figurative limits. While he argues against restrictive borders and frontiers, the intensity of his focus on these features suggests that he is conscious of the multitude of meanings they hold. Much of his project is concerned with attaching a different set of meanings to borders and frontiers, most notably the notion that they can, as he suggests, be approached as "permeable" orientating devices rather than impenetrable and "intolerable" divides. Perception, then, is also a vital consideration for Rushdie. His is not a project designed to uphold one perception above all others, nor does he seek to promote an absolute or superior understanding of borders and frontiers. He is adamant that there are many ways of approaching them, many ways of seeing. This thesis examines these imaginative approaches, scrutinising Rushdie's treatment of the themes of identity, culture and celebrity - predominately in *Fury* and *Step Across This Line* - within the orientating framework of borders and frontiers.

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[3] ibid., p. 434.

0.1 Thesis aims

The major arms of this thesis are:

- To offer a critical account of the borders and frontiers of Rushdie's literary project as evident in perspectives of identity, culture and celebrity drawn from *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*.

- To locate the distinguishing features of Rushdie's treatment of identity, culture and celebrity in the context of comparable literary perspectives of these themes.

- To firstly identify the "spatial logic" of the interdisciplinary field of politics and literature and, secondly, the focus of that field: imaginative literary genres exhibiting "political purpose".

- To locate the borders and frontiers of Rushdie's literary project.

- To identify possible areas of future study arising from this thesis.

The manner in which these aims are addressed is outlined later in this introductory chapter. This will include a critical discussion of the contribution this thesis makes to the existing body of knowledge on Rushdie's literary project and relevant theoretical approaches to borders and frontiers, identity, culture and celebrity. Given Rushdie's claim that his project "was given to [him] by the circumstances of [his] life" rather than "chosen", it is crucial that these circumstances are appropriately countenanced at this early stage of the thesis. I now offer a brief Rushdie biography relevant to the aims of this thesis.

0.2 Frontiers "measured by the heart": an imagined Rushdie biography

It is somewhat ironic that Rushdie, an author who openly challenges borders and frontiers is regularly subject to the psycho-biographic blurring of the boundaries between his personal life and his literature. In discussing Rushdie's biographical

details, many have chosen to render, what may be called, the milestone moments of his life and career into brief point-form chronological highlights. Three prominent critical commentaries of Rushdie, by Catherine Cundy, Damian Grant and James Harrison, have employed this cursory mode.[4] While this approach can serve as a useful referencing companion to analysis primarily focussed on Rushdie's work (an approach that Grant and Harrison have adopted), it can become problematic when it is employed as an authoritative rationale for supposed links between his work and his personal life. Cundy confidently adopts this tenuous reading, suggesting that "Rushdie's early life as the only son of a professional, middle-class family in Bombay must be seen as a crucial factor in any assessment of his subsequent literary output".[5] Cundy places great emphasis on Rushdie's personal life, yet offers little detail or evidence to substantiate the apparent importance it has in relation to his work. Instead she makes cursory references to his "light skin", his "privileged education", his "perfect, accentless English" and, most extraordinarily, the apparent "god-shaped hole in his... identity" as a result of "loss of faith in the family religion of Islam".[6] To call these "early life" factors "crucial" and then capriciously afford them such scant attention (two-pages in total) highlights the potential pitfalls of such an approach.

Our past, viewed as a significant component of our identity, is potentially complex and contradictory. This thesis promotes the idea that identity is a process, not a static milestone on a chronology or a two-page summation. Our identities, our pasts emerge as stories with all the attendant creative exaggerations, insightful revelations and glaring oversights apparent in the most enthralling fiction. It follows then that for the purposes of this thesis, Rushdie's life, his identity, is best explained through the unique twists and turns of his story. Whether his story is reliable, relevant or indeed, as Cundy asserts, "crucial" in understanding Rushdie's work is naturally a matter for the reader to decide. It is significant, however, that Rushdie does not seek to highlight any of the chronological

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[4] See: C. Cundy, *Salman Rushdie*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1996, p. xv-xvi; D. Grant, *Salman Rushdie*, Northcote House, Plymouth, 1999, p. ix-x; and, J. Harrison, *Salman Rushdie*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1992, p. xiii-xiv.

[5] Cundy, op. cit., p. 1.

[6] ibid., pp. 1-2.

milestones many of his biographers and critics have avidly sought to promote. For Rushdie, his story is governed, not by a chronology of events, but by the imposition of borders and frontiers.

Rushdie recalls his personal story in a manner reflective of the thematic preoccupations apparent in much of his writing. "Eight weeks after I was born", he claims, "a new frontier came into being, and my family was cut in half by it."[7] Rushdie is referring to the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. It is significant that he chooses to align his birth with the geopolitical and theological severing of his homeland. It would seem to mark his personal story as the tale of a displaced or fragmented individual. Indeed, for all of the wanderings and travels Rushdie has experienced - for example, his schooling as a youth at Rugby and King's College, Cambridge, and his subsequent adult travels, most notably, between England, Pakistan, India, Australia, Nicaragua and the U.S. - he does not define these journeys in terms of physical divides, geopolitical borders or measured distance.

Rushdie adopts a view similar to that expressed by Malouf. In his critique of Australian historian Geoffrey Blainey's term "the tyranny of distance" - a term Blainey employs to account for the "problems of being Australian and of Australia's [geographically distant] relationship to the world" - Malouf argues, distance should not always be gauged in terms of miles. "We live in feelings as well as in conditions and events", explains Malouf. "Distance", he adds, "is also measured by the heart."[8] Rushdie's recollections of his early childhood experience of travelling regularly with his parents and sisters from Bombay to Karachi, (between India and Pakistan) to visit relatives could be seen as exemplifying Malouf's account of emotional cartography. "Bombay and Karachi were so close to eachother geographically," Rushdie observes, "and my father," he adds, "like many of his contemporaries, had gone back and forth between them all his life.[9] Then, all of a sudden, after Partition, each city became utterly alien to the other."[10]

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[7] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., p. 429.
[8] D. Malouf, "The People's Judgment", in *The Best Australian Essays 2000*, (ed.), P. Craven, Black Inc, Melbourne, 2000, p. 11.
[9] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., p. 430.
[10] ibid.

From this deceptively incidental recollection, the nature of Rushdie's dislocated and divided sense of self becomes apparent. It is a divide that is, in many ways, "measured by the heart". Despite their geographical proximity, the emotional distance between Bombay his culturally open "cosmopolitan home town", and the comparatively "closed, blinkered monoculture" of Karachi was immense.[11] For Rushdie, it seems the "shock" of this emotional gulf was far greater than any apparent cultural displacement many biographers infer he may have experienced as a "new boy" at Rugby or at "his father's *alma mater*" Cambridge.[12] Indeed, rather than being a dramatic cultural upheaval, his student experience of 1960s England could be seen as an experience that echoed much of the "cosmopolitan" verve he enjoyed in his "home town" Bombay.

"It was an exciting time... a very politicised period", Rushdie enthuses referring to his years at Cambridge.[13] "There was the Vietnam war to protest about," Rushdie continues, "student power to insist upon, drugs to smoke, flowers to put in your hair," and, he adds, "good music to listen to... I am pleased to have had those years", he concludes.[14] Rushdie readily admits that this "exciting" frontier stage of his life presented him with an array of choices. For example, he was tempted by the possibility of a career as an actor, performing in various "London fringe productions" before eventually admitting that his inappropriately comedic misadventures on stage ensured that he had a "limited future" treading the boards.[15] Rushdie also muses how, for a time, he strove to join the "inner circles" of swinging London's hippy "counter-culture", an idea that "enthralled" him until his quizzical "chattiness" was rebuffed by a "ragged" aficionado who spurned him with the deadpan flower-powered drawl: "conversation's dead, man".[16] Finally, as Cundy, Grant and Harrison all choose to note, Rushdie worked as an "advertising copywriter" in London for an extended period throughout the 1970s.[17] While Rushdie rarely discusses this venture in detail, Harrison quotes him

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[11] ibid.
[12] Harrison, op. cit., p. 1.
[13] ibid., p. 2.
[14] ibid.
[15] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., pp. 107-109.
[16] ibid., pp. 91-94.
[17] Harrison offers an insightful, albeit brief, account of this period. See: Harrison, op. cit., p. 2.

as referring to it as a kind of "industrial sponsorship" that gave him the fiduciary means to work part-time at his eventual vocation as a writer.[18] In time, this scribe's apprenticeship paid dividends. Six years after the 1975 publication of his relatively overlooked fictional debut *Grimus*, Rushdie achieved remarkable acclaim for his novel *Midnight's Children*.

Midnight's Children was awarded the 1981 Booker Prize.[19] As Rushdie explains, *Midnight's Children* is a text that places the "'unrealist' notion of children born at the midnight moment of India's independence" against the "canvas of 'real' India".[20] It is a novel that seeks to entwine, blur and question the frontiers of the real and the imagined, and indeed, it can be seen as Rushdie's first meaningful realisation of the technique of magical realism, a literary device that is, in the eyes of many readers, the definitive aspect of his style. The book also marked the beginnings of his longstanding fascination with personal-political borders and frontiers, an approach that has led many to place his work in the canon of political literature.

Returning to the notion of distance measured by the heart, Rushdie refers to *Midnight's Children* as a kind of chiasmic bridging of the emotional distance he felt between his professed Eastern homeland and his Western life. He describes the book as his "first attempt at a literary reclamation".[21] As he explains, "living in London, I wanted to get India back."[22] For Rushdie, the initially positive wave of reaction the novel received throughout the Indian sub-continent remains "the most precious moment of [his] writing life".[23] It is notable that this reclamation is realised, albeit fleetingly, via the forces of literary imagination rather than through a physical act of return to India. Indeed, as I intend to illustrate through the various perspectives countenanced by this thesis, the primacy of imagined journeys over actual is indicative of much of the tone of Rushdie's literary

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[18] ibid.
[19] The prestige of this already distinguished honour was heightened in 1993 with the novel being dubbed the "Booker of Bookers", making it, in the opinion of the judges' "the best book to have won the prize in its first quarter-century". See: Rushdie (2002), op. cit., pp. 77-78.
[20] ibid., p. 71. See: S. Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1981.
[21] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., p. 195.
[22] ibid.
[23] ibid.

engagement with frontier crossings. Despite its evidently immense personal impact, Rushdie's "precious moment" proved to be dramatically short-lived.

In the wake of the critical, creative and personal highs of *Midnight's Children*, Rushdie published his satire of Pakistani politics, *Shame*.[24] In 1987 he released the first of his forays beyond the novel form, *The Jaguar Smile*. Harrison aptly describes the text as an "extended piece of journalism" on the politics of Nicaragua.[25] Rushdie's fourth novel *The Satanic Verses* was released in 1988.[26] The publication of the book provoked the well documented events of the so-called "Rushdie Affair". To summarise: in February 1989, the Ayatollah Homeini, the then leader of theocratic Iran, declared a *fatwa* (a call to murder) against Rushdie in response to the novel's alleged "opposition to Islam, the Prophet, and the Qur`an".[27] As Harrison observes, the imposition of the *fatwa* dramatically altered Rushdie's life; he was "placed under police protection, constantly guarded, and frequently moved from one location to another".[28] Despite spending much of the next five-to-ten years in virtual hiding, Rushdie and his nominally coalesced supporters within the Rushdie Defence Campaign extensively lobbied various Western and Eastern governments, with differing levels of success, to denounce Iran and use economic, political and cultural "leverage" to pressure a retraction of the *fatwa*.[29] Concurrently, many prominent political, media and intellectual figures distanced themselves from Rushdie's cause. For example, some U.K. journalists, including Alexander Cockburn and Mary Kenny, sought to undermine efforts to

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[24] S. Rushdie, *Shame*, Vintage, London, 1995.

[25] Harrison, op. cit., p. 5. See: S. Rushdie, *The Jaguar Smile: A Nicaraguan Journey*, Pan Books, London, 1987.

[26] *Shame* won the Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize. See: "Author Profile: Salman Rushdie", *British Arts Council* (online), http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/profile/?p=auth87, 2006 (accessed 30 June 2006).

[27] Harrison, op. cit., p. ix.
While I discuss the *fatwa* throughout this thesis where it is relevant to my study of Rushdie's literary project, I do not offer an unnecessarily expansive account of the matter. The following texts offer more detailed analysis the so-called "Rushdie Affair": L. Appignanesi & S. Maitland, (eds) *The Rushdie File*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, 1990; M. Ruthven, *A Satanic Affair: Salman Rushdie and the Rage of Islam*, Chatto & Windus, London, 1990; and D. Pipes, *The Rushdie Affair: The Novel, the Ayatollah, and the West*, Birch Lane, New York, 1990.

[28] Harrison, op. cit., p. xiv.

[29] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., p. 195. For Rushdie's account of these events, a period he calls the "Plague Years", refer to: pp. 229-283 of *Step Across This Line*. Rushdie offers additional comments concerning the *fatwa* in: S. Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*, Penguin, Ringwood, 1992.

defend Rushdie presenting varied arguments. It was suggested that Rushdie had spitefully exploited religious tensions; that his protection was a waste of taxpayer's money; and that his past criticisms of Thatcherite Britain rendered his claims for protection by the then Conservative government hypocritical. Until the publication in 2002 of his various writings on the matter in *Step Across This Line*, Rushdie was reluctant to make any detailed account of the matter. This is despite the unrelenting references to it by nearly every interviewer, commentator or critic; a practice that, remarkably, continues today.

In keeping with his professed proficiency with the "language of literature", Rushdie retrospectively refers to the well-documented scandal that followed the release of *The Satanic Verses* as events to be metaphorically likened to those of "a bad Salman Rushdie novel. And, believe me," he ruefully adds, "it's a very dreadful thing to be stuck in a bad novel".[30] Rather than rehashing moral or theologically based commentaries, these days he seems more intent on offering selectively revealing accounts of the *fatwa's* influence on his personal life; for instance, its impact on his notion of emotional distance.

"You can measure love by the size of the hole it leaves behind", Rushdie claims in reference to the manner in which, for a time, the complications of the *fatwa* rendered him politically, culturally and personally estranged from his homeland.[31] India, the much-loved subject of his "literary reclamation", would be defined by its absence, by the "hole" it left in his sense of self. Compare this candid observation with Cundy's misplaced assertion that Rushdie's "identity" is defined by a "god-shaped hole". Rushdie could hardly harbour any "love" for an apparent "god-shaped hole", and indeed, one that bore the "shape" of theologically inspired persecution and violence. In spite of the constant reminders, the immediate repercussions of the *fatwa* have dissipated over time to the extent that Rushdie is now relatively free to move about as he pleases.

In the context of my aim to present this relatively brief biography of Rushdie as a story rather than a point-form chronology, it is significant that he

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[30] S. Majeskies. "When Life Becomes a Bad Novel", *Salon Magazine* (online), http://www.salon.com/06/features/interview2.html, 1996 (accessed 14 June 2005).
[31] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., p. 196.

refers to the nightmarish circumstances of the *fatwa* as a "bad Salman Rushdie novel". Considering his tendency to present the events of his own life within the stylistic parameters of story and his subsequent claim that the Rushdie Affair was a badly executed aspect of that tale, we can see that much of his concern regarding those "bad" events is based on a belief that they threaten to overshadow the virtues of *good* Salman Rushdie novels. In this figurative context, the Rushdie Affair can be deemed a "bad novel" because it was a poorly executed and hopelessly unimaginative glitch of realism in an otherwise imaginative biography. Events surrounding the *fatwa* read as a crude subplot somehow escaping the editor's scrutiny, occupying too much space in Rushdie's imagined world, threatening to obliterate the grand imaginative impetus of his literary project.

In the years following the events of his "bad" novel Rushdie gradually eroded the imposing threat of reality, producing several imaginative texts including, amongst others: his concerted attempt to "erase the division between the children's literature and adult books", *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (1990);[32] his collection of displaced critical commentaries and essays *Imaginary Homelands* (1991); a book of short stories and paradoxical cultural binaries, *East, West* (1994);[33] his satirical account of family, wealth, politics and corruption, *The Moor's Last Sigh* (1995); the co-edited (with Elizabeth West) post-colonial anthology, *The Vintage Book of Indian Writing 1947-97* (1997); his "*Ulysses* of rock'n'roll", *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* (1999);[34] the personally and politically apocalyptic novella, *Fury* (2001); his second substantial collection of challenging essays and provocatively imaginative writings, *Step Across This Line* (2002); and his fictional account of the "age of hyperbole and bloodshed", *Shalimar the Clown* (2005).[35]

Rushdie's life as a writer has been that of a migrant. Despite his well-documented, supposedly anxious existence in the "shadows" of the *fatwa* and his voluntary relocation, in the late 1990s, from London to New York, it is significant, that his self-defined status as a "migrant" is not necessarily a reference to his

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[32] ibid., p. 74.
[33] See: S. Rushdie, *East, West*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1994.
[34] R. Padel, An extract of an *Independent* review as reprinted on the cover of: S. Rushdie, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*, Vintage, London, 1999.
[35] J. Freeman, "Freedom Fighter", *The Weekend Australian*, 9-10 July 2005.

numerous physical journeys.[36] Rather, he again likens his personal position to the idiosyncratic "preferences" of his writing. As he states,

> I am conscious of shifts in my writing. There is always a tug of war between 'there' and 'here', the pull of roots and the road. In that struggle of insiders and outsiders, I used to feel simultaneously on both sides. Now I've come down on the side of those who by preference, nature and circumstance simply do not belong. This unbelonging - I think of it as a *disorientation*, loss of the East - is my artistic country now. Wherever my books find themselves, by a favoured armchair, near a hot bath, on a beach, or in a late-night pool of bedside light: that's my only home.[37]

It is this region, the "frontierless human terrain" of the novel in which Rushdie chooses to set his own story. When asked whether being "afraid" affected his writing Rushdie replies, "it never felt like fear, it felt more like disorientation".[38] As I will show in the text selection rationale offered later in this introductory chapter, it is this challenging spirit of disorientation in which *Fury*, the novel that this thesis predominately engages, is set.

0.3 A review of existing critical literature on Rushdie

Rushdie's apparent disorientation, his promotion of correlations between the fissures of his personal story and the thematic preoccupations of his writing have inspired an array of critical responses to his work. These critical approaches to Rushdie are many and varied, encompassing the genres of literary reviews, intensive theoretical studies, interviews, and even popular press feature articles. Naturally, the acclaim he received upon the publication of *Midnight's Children* inspired a heightened level of critical attention; however, it was the controversy surrounding the declaration of the *fatwa* that generated the peak of critical commentary. While many theorists place the *fatwa* in the context of Rushdie's greater literary project, viewing it as one of many noteworthy facets of his writing, others take this event to be the definitive feature of Rushdie's work. With reference to the *fatwa* orientated texts I highlighted earlier, certain critics construct their response to Rushdie on the basis that the symbolic machinations of *The Satanic Verses* and the *fatwa* reveal all questions of note about the author; matters of

[36] Rushdie (2002) op. cit., p. 415.
[37] ibid., p. 294.
[38] Majeskies (online), op. cit.

literary style, tone, structure and content become secondary considerations. Where relevant, this thesis engages literary reviews, interviews, and feature pieces on Rushdie, particularly those focussed on *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*. These commentaries will be appropriately introduced and contextualised as they are encountered in this study. At this introductory stage, however, I wish to include a brief review of substantial theoretical studies of Rushdie and his work.

I have already mentioned Catherine Cundy, Damian Grant and James Harrison, and will provide a broader account of their approaches to Rushdie later in this section. Three other literary theorists have also produced notable studies of Rushdie. As the title suggests, Timothy Brennan's text *Salman Rushdie and the Third World* places Rushdie's writing in the context of its exposition of certain features Brennan views as emblematic of the postcolonial literary category. With Rushdie's predominately Western readership in mind, Brennan describes the author as being one of a "group of literary celebrities" he calls "Third-World cosmopolitans".[39] These "celebrities" include figures such as Mario Vargas Llosa, Derek Walcott, Isabel Allende, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Bharati Mukherjee. Brennan's text critiques the implicitly "unequal" interplay between Rushdie's "First-World" audience and problematic renderings of authorial status as a "Third-World intellectual".[40] Brennan forms an ongoing comparative discourse between Rushdie as a "Third-World cosmopolitan" and "postmodern" treatments of "the nation", identifying a series of tonal, structural and thematic differences in authorial style. He constructs a robust critique of Rushdie's use of parody, magical realism and meta-narrative, examined in the broad context of "the nation" and the micro scale of personal-political "trauma in inches".[41] The focus is on Rushdie's early novels *Grimus, Midnight's Children, Shame* and *The Satanic Verses*. Brennan's commentary on *Shame* is particularly insightful, most notably for its unpacking of Rushdie's fragmented style and his "blurring of boundaries between colonising and decolonising consciousness".[42] While I draw on certain critical approaches

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[39] T. Brennan, *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation*, Macmillan, London, 1989, p. iix.
[40] ibid., pp. ix-x
[41] ibid., p. ix.
[42] ibid., p. 139.

developed by Brennan - particularly his reading of the writer-celebrity and "instant" culture - the intensive post-colonial preoccupations of his text are not directly applicable to the aims of this thesis.

When compared to Brennan's account, D. Goonetilleke's 1998 text *Salman Rushdie* approaches the author from a more formal critical standpoint. As one in a series of texts under the umbrella "Modern Novelists", Goonetilleke's study encompasses Rushdie's fiction from *Grimus* to *The Moor's Last Sigh*.[43] The emphasis on the category of "fiction" is problematic, particularly as it is applied to a versatile writer like Rushdie who expressly challenges categorisation. A study covering this period of Rushdie's literary output would perhaps do well to offer more detailed comparative consideration of category-blurring works such as *The Jaguar Smile* and *Imaginary Homelands*. Despite the limits governing the scope of Goonetilleke's text, he presents some engaging criticism of Rushdie's technique, identifying a range of the author's idiosyncratic structural approaches. In chapter three of this thesis I discuss Goonetilleke's analysis of personal-political allegory in *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

Published in 1994, literary theorist M. D. Fletcher's edited collection *Reading Rushdie* incorporates a series of essays on Rushdie's early work.[44] Fletcher's text offers a broad overview of Rushdie's writing in the context of an array of independent and, at times, intersecting themes, including postcolonialism, postmodernism, feminism, theology and history. Several contributors to Fletcher's collection develop their criticisms from a comparative standpoint, approaching Rushdie's technique and thematic preoccupations as they contrast with Western writers such as Milan Kundera, James Joyce and Gunter Grass. Cundy contributes a critique of Rushdie's construction of female characters. Additional commentaries include a focus on Rushdie's use of language and Eastern imagery. The diversity of works included in Fletcher's text makes it an invaluable resource for Rushdie scholars, particularly those interested in his early writing. Indeed, Fletcher's comprehensive bibliography of critical writings on Rushdie dates back to the early

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[43] D. Goonetilleke, *Salman Rushdie*, Macmillan, Houndmills, 1998.
[44] M. D. Fletcher (ed.), *Reading Rushdie: Perspectives on the Fiction of Salman Rushdie*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, 1994.

1980s. As a response to the thematic trajectory Rushdie's literary project at the time, the collection as a whole is generally developed around postcolonial perspectives of the author.

As discussed earlier, Cundy's approach to Rushdie is notable for what may be colloquially described as its focus on playing the man rather than the ball. Cundy offers a series of curious value judgements on the allegedly "allusive, elusive, erudite, arrogant, political and theoretically informed" Rushdie.[45] While these aspects of her approach may prove distracting for some readers, Cundy's attempt to present a "more prosaic" account of the author's body of work (dating to *The Moor's Last Sigh*) succeeds.[46] Her discussion of Rushdie's interweaving of "mythical and contemporary 'realities'" makes a worthwhile contribution to the growing theoretical discourse on the author's use of magical realism.[47] Similarly, Cundy locates a range of subtle and original intertextual correlations between Rushdie's use of imagery and comparable filmic imagery.

In his 1999 text *Salman Rushdie*, Damian Grant unambiguously refers to Rushdie as "a postmodern writer".[48] It follows then that his critical study of the author encompasses literary tropes recognised as characteristic of the postmodern form. Grant focuses on the centrality of "imagination" in Rushdie's work, drawing on the writer's comment that "the real frontiers of fiction 'are neither political nor linguistic but imaginative'".[49] To his credit, Grant does not seek to impose unworkable distinctions between fiction and non-fiction. He affords considerable imaginative license to Rushdie's nominally non-fiction text *The Jaguar Smile*, suggesting that it captures the "tensions" of imagination and material reality in a manner typically ascribed to texts of the fictional variety.[50] One potentially problematic aspect of Grant's study may be his tendency to take Rushdie at his word when discussing certain contested readings of the author's work. However, Grant affords these matters sufficient critical background to ensure that his

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[45] Cundy, op. cit., p. 11.
[46] ibid.
[47] ibid., p. 3.
[48] Grant, op. cit., p. 3.
[49] ibid., p. 4.
[50] ibid., p. 6.

occasionally resolute employment of Rushdie's self-reflective voice in no way detracts from his overall account of the author's early texts.

Published only three years after the declaration of the *fatwa*, James Harrison's 1992 text *Salman Rushdie*, is perhaps understandably concerned with presenting ways of reading Rushdie in light of this event. Harrison directs considerable attention towards the religious and cultural dimensions of Rushdie's literature, using Rushdie's statement that "you need a special style to speak or write about India" as justification for a lengthy chapter entitled "History, Religion and Politics in India".[51] The resulting study serves as highly detailed addition to the burgeoning collection of commentary on the *fatwa*. The contribution Harrison's study makes to our understanding of Rushdie's broader literary project is less forthright. However, despite its comparatively narrow focus, Harrison's text does work towards a series of informed readings of Rushdie in the context of postcolonial literature. Harrison's comment on Rushdie's juxtaposition of subtle and overt literary stylings proves to be one of the text's most insightful moments. "As a writer who exemplifies both excess and variety," Harrison observes, "Rushdie is almost bound, like a seven course meal, to offend the taste of someone".[52] The range of critical responses to Rushdie goes some way towards affirming Harrison's metaphor. It would seem that in the years since the *fatwa*, critical interest of this dedicated level has somewhat subsided, a fact that could, in part, be explained by Rushdie's gradual shift beyond the thematic considerations understood as typical of the post-colonial literary genre. Indeed, his work from *Fury* onwards can be viewed as a departure of sorts from the preoccupations of his earlier work. True to Rushdie's professed intolerance for restrictive categories and impassable frontiers, the scope of his literary project has broadened. I have sought to reflect this shift in determining the texts that form the basis of this thesis.

0.4 Rationale for text selection: *Fury*

Fury is chosen as the main source for the perspectives engaged in this thesis for several reasons. Firstly, at the time of writing this thesis, there are no substantial

[51] Harrison, op. cit., pp. 12-29.
[52] ibid., p. 128.

critical texts on *Fury*.[53] Additionally, as my earlier review of existing critical studies revealed, the focus on Rushdie to date has typically been concerned with negotiating his status within the category of postcolonial literature. Secondly, as with the bulk of his writing, *Fury* may be read as an exercise in "literary reclamation"; however, some significant differences are apparent. *Fury* engages themes more closely related to the reclamation of the self rather than the retrieval of the cultural dimension of an emotionally distant homeland. Rushdie's last three novels - *The Ground Beneath Her Feet, Fury* and *Shalimar the Clown* - all represent a shift away from the thematic trends of his earlier novels which are mainly concerned with the social, cultural and political dynamics of the Indian subcontinent. In no way do I wish to suggest that these texts do not also offer insightful treatments of themes such as identity and culture; it is notable, however, that Rushdie has described the aims of his earlier works of fiction (*Shame* in particular) to be primarily concerned with letting these themes "breathe" the "air... of the East".[54] Having pointed to the thematic departure evident in his latest three novels, it must be said that, while *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Shalimar the Clown* do oscillate between Eastern and Western perspectives, *Fury* offers the most sustained Western orientated account of identity, culture and celebrity. If we were to view the sum total of Rushdie's fiction on a lateral East-West paradigm, *Fury* is the text positioned in a manner most clearly directed toward the West. As such, it provides the necessary scope to present a comparative discourse with the predominately Western theoretical approaches to questions of identity, culture and celebrity I wish to present in this thesis.

The fact that *Fury* is predominately set in New York supports my description of the text as a Western orientated story, at the very least in terms of its subject matter; yet as I will show there are further complexities apparent in this

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[53] It should also be noted that, at this time, I have been unable to locate any substantial dedicated critical or theoretical accounts of *Fury*. Where appropriate, existing reviews and minor critical commentaries of the text that are available will be engaged in the course of this thesis. An internet search reveals that Gavin Keulks of Western Oregon University has committed a piece for future publication. The following details are available at the time of thesis submission: G. Keulks, "'New York, Los Angeles, and Other Toxicities': Revisiting Postmodernism in Rushdie's *Fury* and *Shalimar the Clown*" in *Reading at the Wake of Postmodernism*, (eds) N. Brooks & J. Toth, Rodopi, Amsterdam, (Forthcoming) 2007.

[54] Rushdie (1995), op. cit., p. 116.

description. Indeed, regarding the novel's setting, literary and cultural theorist Edward Said argues that New York is "an immigrants' and exiles' city that exists in tension with the symbolic (and at times actual) centre of the world's globalised late-capitalist economy".[55] Primarily through the perspective of its protagonist Malik Solanka, *Fury* explores various humanistic facets of this tension. Much of this thesis could also be viewed as an attempted articulation of this tension as it can be explained in the context of figurative and literal borders and frontiers.

Returning to Rushdie's account of "the shifts in his writing", it is significant that *Fury* is a novel that is deeply concerned with his professed preoccupation with the "struggle of insiders and outsiders". The dynamics of this struggle, when read in the context of Said's description of the "symbolic" (imagined) idea of New York and the "actual" (real) city of New York, allows the novel to be understood on one level as an examination of the tension that exists at the frontiers of the individual, Solanka, and the seemingly conflicting socio-economically focussed values of Western liberal democracies, as exemplified by New York. In line with the additional aims of this thesis, *Fury* also offers a commentary on culture and celebrity as it is manifest within the Western context.

0.5 A synopsis of *Fury*

Fury explores the journey of Solanka, a U.K. based academic, who, feeling crushed by the weight of seemingly irreconcilable personal, professional, political and social pressures (unnameable pressures he refers to as "furies") flees his wife, his young child and his career for New York.[56] Initially, he does not expressly seek to address or resolve this tension. Rather his sole intention is to silence the furies, to surrender to a culturally induced "amnesia", quell his anger and, as a survival mechanism, reconfigure his identity.[57] Solanka is convinced that this drastic and urgent task can only be enacted in New York, the city of immigrants and exiles; a city he describes as the insatiable epicentre of the "culture devouring" heart of capitalism. "America", Solanka muses, a nation at the "highest hour of its hybrid,

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[55] E. Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays*, Granta Books, London, 2001, p. xii.
[56] S. Rushdie, *Fury*, Vintage, London, 2001, p. 184.
[57] ibid., p. 51.

omnivorous power", would consume him.[58] Only in the midst of such a deafening whir of social, cultural, political and economic fury could he, as he puts it, "erase himself" and find "peace".[59] This desire for peace is ironically the point upon which the most readily identifiable conflict in *Fury* arises. Of course, Solanka's goal is ultimately unachievable. His exodus cannot resolve his identity dilemma. In attempting to silence the cacophony of his personal furies he becomes immersed in a greater, all-encompassing fury; the fury of social interaction, celebrity and the culture industry, the furies that relentlessly drive the engines of New York, capitalism's symbolic heart. In time, Solanka admits he is confronted by a seemingly irreconcilable dichotomy: in order to surrender himself to this greater fury he must engage it, for an identity based upon resignation and defeat cannot function in a world where, as he is forced to concede, only "the fittest survive".[60] It is competing ideas of the notion of "the fittest" that become the questions to be addressed.

Solanka is confronted with a series of binaries, as fitness, within Western liberal democracies. These binaries are characterised by impossible choices between the conflicting values of competitiveness or compassion, efficiency or emotionality, adaptability or loyalty. These choices, these crude rationalisations of human behaviour can, to some extent, be viewed as manifestations of particular aspects of the "tension" to which Said refers. Indeed, this tension only heightens Solanka's sense of "unbelonging". His attempts to find a "home" through his reconciliation of his personal state of "disorientation" can perhaps be likened to Rushdie's experience.[61] Despite the previously mentioned tendency of many critics and theorists to establish such a link (between author and fictional protagonist), this is not one of the aims of this thesis. Rather, *Fury* presents a real and imagined framework through which the dynamics of the borders and frontiers of contemporary identity, culture and celebrity can be explored.

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[58] ibid., p. 44.
[59] ibid.
[60] ibid., pp. 161-168.
[61] Rushdie (2002) op. cit., p. 294.

0.6 Rationale for text selection: *Step Across This Line*

Rushdie's 2002 collection of essays, *Step Across This Line* provides a companion perspective of Rushdie's treatment of the above-mentioned frontiers. Without attempting to pre-empt the detailed reading I present in chapter three of this thesis concerning the relationship between fictional and non-fictional literature, I wish to emphasis that my analytical use of selected writings and concepts engaged within *Step Across This Line* should not be considered as entirely separate from occasionally parallel readings of particular issues I locate in *Fury*. I do not subscribe to the view that the literary stylings of fictional and non-fictional forms are so readily delineated. Indeed, mindful of the previously discussed preoccupations of Rushdie's literary project, I would argue that the borders and frontiers of these forms are, in the context of his writing, increasingly blurred.

By virtue of the text's title and the various essays and columns assembled within, *Step Across This Line* is a collection of both segmented and thematically coalesced challenges to the imposition of limits. Similarly, Rushdie's willingness to engage such a varied range of topics suggests that he refuses to be confined by restrictive "subject matter" paradigms.

0.7 A synopsis of *Step Across This Line*

Step Across This Line is divided into four parts. Part One consists of a series of essays addressing diverse topics including literary criticism, popular music, film, media, politics and culture. As an example, his brief dissertation "In Defence of the Novel, Yet Again", somewhat belies its defensive title.[62] In actual fact, Rushdie uses this piece to counter the regularly proffered argument that the novel, as a literary form, is dead. His argument is not so much a defence of the traditionally understood novel form; rather, Rushdie argues for a dismantling of the structural restraints of this tradition. He suggests that the increasing influence of non-fictional reportage style writing within the novel form should not be seen as a transgression or dissolution of the novel. As is the case with the bulk of the essays presented in this collection, Rushdie argues that the frontiers between, in this

[62] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., pp. 54-63

instance fiction and non-fiction (the novel and reportage), need not be seen as fixed or impenetrable. Again, he offers a challenge to protectionist or definitive perspectives of art, culture and politics.

Part Two of *Step Across This Line*, "Messages from the Plague Years", presents additional challenges to frontiers; in this instance, focussed on what Rushdie views as restrictive readings of identity.[63] "Messages from the Plague Years" is a collection of Rushdie's writings regarding the *fatwa*. It is a challenge to those who, in response to his plight, sought to one-dimensionally categorise him as a victim, an antagonist, or a symbol of irreconcilable fissures between theological and sectarian perspectives. It is, as he attests, "a way of putting it to rest".[64] Over a decade after the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie declares, "now if anybody ever wants to know anything about what I think about the *fatwa*, there it is".[65] It is doubtful though, given my earlier comments regarding the apparent journalistic "bad novel" obsession with this aspect of Rushdie's personal "story", that the matter will be decisively put to rest.

Part Three is a collection of "Columns"; short, newspaper or journal format commentaries on matters topical at the time of their publication.[66] Again, Rushdie does not restrict his subject matter as he opines on diverse issues including English football, U.S. electoral politics, alternative films and "Islam and the West".[67] In the last of these examples, Rushdie again argues for a less restrictive approach to traditionally divisive cultural, historical and political binaries. Speaking of the "bad blood" that characterises much of the relationship between Islam and the West, Rushdie's argument is centred upon the need for "a more dispassionate version of events".[68] In keeping with the overarching themes of the text, Rushdie takes a dualistically provocative and conciliatory approach to traditional frontiers. At every turn, he challenges the imposition of restrictive and limiting modes of thought, yet he also recognises how such limits may embody the certainties of a believer's faith.

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[63] ibid., pp. 229-286.
[64] P. Catapano, "A New York State of Mind", *Salon Magazine* (online), http://dir.salon.com/story/books/int/2002/10/01/Rushdie/index.html, 2002 (accessed 6 June 2006).
[65] ibid.
[66] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., pp. 287-404.
[67] ibid., pp. 323-325.
[68] ibid., p. 323.

The text closes with Part Four, an extended dissertation entitled "Step Across This Line". Rushdie describes this as a "keynote piece of the book".[69] The theme of this "piece", the "frontier", Rushdie explains, has "literally... morally and metaphorically... been there throughout my writing. Because", he adds, "it's been there throughout my life".[70] The idiosyncratic narrative form of this essay bears out his claim. It reads as an almost cathartic treatment of a theme that has dominated his personal and literary life. Rushdie entwines a complex array of imagery, including, for example elements of science fiction, Sufi mysticism, history, photography and film, to illustrate his distinctive frontier thesis. Anecdotal aspects of his own story are also woven into the piece. Although he may not openly declare it, Rushdie does not segregate his personal experience from his writing. "Across the frontier", he argues, "the world's secret truths move unhindered".[71] His previously secret truths, for example, the earlier discussed account of "emotional distance", also move unhindered throughout this essay. It is an imaginative treatise that, in the mould of the writing Rushdie openly admires, blurs the stylistic and narrative forms of traditionally recognised borders delineating fiction and non-fiction.

0.8 Thesis structure

The brief accounts of *Fury* and *Step Across This Line* offered above illustrate their thematic relevance to the aims of this thesis. Both texts openly challenge and explore borders and frontiers in a manner that is not only open to direct analysis but also potentially inspires secondary, issue-based comparative investigation. Chapter one begins with an examination of conceptual understandings of borders and frontiers. I then discuss theoretical approaches to literature applicable to the style, structure, tone and thematic preoccupations of Rushdie's literary project. This is followed by an examination of the imagined borders and frontiers of politics and literature; firstly, as a mode of interdisciplinary inquiry, and secondly as a literary form. Having outlined the conceptual parameters and analytical focus

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[69] Catapano (online), op. cit.
[70] ibid.
[71] Rushdie (2002), op. cit., p. 413.

of this thesis, I then offer a dedicated study of the borders and frontiers of identity, culture and celebrity as evident in *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*.

While, as the title of this thesis suggests, I locate and critically engage questions of identity, culture and celebrity in accordance with Rushdie's treatment of them, I use his treatment as a starting point. Throughout this study, Rushdie's perspective of the above-mentioned questions is analysed in a comparative manner that utilises the thematically aligned views of other writers to identify the manner in which Rushdie differs or converges with both his literary contemporaries and a range of relevant theoretical perspectives and critical commentaries. As I will explain, this comparative methodology is a fundamental feature of the interdisciplinary field of politics and literature.

0.8.1 Chapter One: This chapter provides an account of conceptual understandings of borders and frontiers. In order to adequately contextualise and inform my analysis of Rushdie's literary project, this chapter focuses on readings of borders and frontiers as they are apparent beyond his texts. This incorporates a review of a diverse selection of theoretical readings of borders and frontiers encompassing perspectives apparent in fields such as political science, literary studies, history, cultural studies, anthropology, philosophy and law. Initially, a general delineation between borders and frontiers is offered; one that, firstly, identifies borders as records of historical, cultural, economic and social demarcation; and, secondly, interprets frontiers as amorphous, often ambiguous regions of contest, cooperation, transaction and challenge enveloping borders. This is followed by a discussion of relevant real and imagined articulations of the terms, thus enabling the formation of additional working distinctions between borders and frontiers as literal and figurative orientating devices. This chapter is not an attempt to master all areas of theoretical importance in relation to the study of borders and frontiers; rather, the concepts that are covered are revisited and advanced at various stages of the thesis. This fundamental stage of my study provides the necessary conceptual and theoretical foundation for the arguments and analysis that follow.

0.8.2 Chapter Two: In this chapter I present various ways of approaching literature, and indeed a literary project, in the context of borders and frontiers. Consideration is given to descriptions of Rushdie as an exiled writer, thus inspiring analysis of various readings of authorial perspective and exile as orientated by the spatial logic of border and frontier motifs. Recurrent structural and stylistic tropes evident throughout Rushdie's literary project are then discussed in the context of postmodern literature. I construct a way of seeing postmodernism based on its challenge to, and departure from, the borders and frontiers of preceding literary forms such as modernism. Again, this approach to the problematic and highly contested subject of literary categories is governed by a consciousness of Rushdie's overt challenge to the conventions and limits of form. By examining key structural, stylistic and thematic aspects of Rushdie's literary project, this chapter provides a rationale for the literary component of this thesis. The literary concepts covered in this chapter provide the necessary platform for, firstly, the interdisciplinary approach I introduce in the following chapter, and secondly, the critical methodology I apply to the multitude of literary themes engaged throughout the remainder of the thesis.

0.8.3 Chapter Three: Chapter three begins by bringing together the literary and political concepts discussed in the preceding chapters to provide a rationale for the interdisciplinary politics and literature methodology applied to this study of Rushdie's literary project. Consideration is also given to the challenges apparent in interdisciplinary study in the context of traditional understandings of the borders and frontiers of academic disciplines and the conventions of intellectual inquiry. I then work towards locating, describing and explaining the distinguishing features of Rushdie's literary employment of the structural features discussed in the previous chapter. The role of imagination, not only within Rushdie's writing but the writings of a selection of other comparable literary figures, is discussed and a link between imagination and political purpose is promoted as a distinguishing, albeit non-restrictive, feature of the political novel. I then engage arguments concerning the tension between the fictitious and the

"real" as apparent in various traditionally defined literary forms. Mindful of the complexities and structural licence of the postmodern form, arguments regarding the supposed psycho-biographic connection between authors and their work are also critiqued. In closing this chapter I present an argument conditionally aligned with that of Rushdie's concerning the permeability of the intellectual and imaginative frontiers of literature's "hybrid forms".

0.8.4 Chapter Four: Chapter four focuses on theoretical, imaginative and intellectual challenges presented by Rushdie's treatment of identity. In the first instance, broad scale readings of identity are discussed with particular focus on the role of similarity and difference in identity processes. I place significant emphasis on identity as a process rather than a static or complete phenomenon. This discussion informs my subsequent account of the factors shaping the frontiers of identity within the socio-political context of the "integrated global economy"; which is the context in which *Fury* is based. Rushdie's construction of Solanka's identity crisis and his interaction and immersion within the above-mentioned socio-political environment introduces a range of identity related themes for comparative analysis. The contemporary identity dilemmas evident in *Fury* are applied to, what could be described as, thematically aligned theoretical treatments. This includes themes concerning issues such as: the role and nature of personal narrative in identity processes; identity and notions of inclusion and exclusion; the tension between career values and personal values; semantics and socio-economically based definitions of illness and "wellness"; the expression of difference rationalised as a psychological event or a form of social deviation; and the role of reflexivity in identity processes. My discussion of these and other identity related theoretical themes is exemplified by comparable accounts evident within *Fury*. My overall engagement with the frontiers of identity is then reviewed in terms of Rushdie's Puppet Kings tale; an allegory of the pivotal role of perspective in identity. Without attempting to offer conclusive assessments at this early stage of my thesis, it emerges that the borders and frontiers of processes of identity initially encountered in *Fury* are shaped by the cultural dynamics of the previously mentioned socio-political environment.

0.8.5 Chapter Five: Having identified the cultural basis of identity processes, chapter five directly addresses understandings of culture and celebrity as they are, in the first instance, expressed in *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*. Acknowledging the diverse array of understandings of culture, I begin with an account of selected cerebral, idealist, collective and elitist readings of the term. My initial account of celebrity is presented with a similar acknowledgement; however, I draw upon several of the concepts of identity engaged within the previous chapter to describe celebrity as a cultural form of "meta-identity". Mindful of Rushdie's profile as a writer and a public figure, I introduce the notion of a "subject-object" frontier in which an individual is defined in accordance with his or her position on that culturally contextualised frontier. In examining the processes governing this "subject-object" dynamic I discuss notions of image control. This discussion is developed into an exploration of the treatment of image within the public sphere; specifically practices of image control within politics and the tension between celebrity and political modes of image control. Further investigation into the cultural environment that generates and perpetuates these practices leads to an examination of their theoretical basis; thus, there is significant engagement with *The Frankfurt School's* "culture industry" theory as it is exemplified both within and beyond the selected Rushdie texts. Given the geo-political setting of *Fury*, Solanka's musings regarding the substance behind the phenomenon of "self-creation" are also discussed. This discussion provides the impetus for an exploration of the tension between Eastern and Western cultural articulations of subject and object. As with the previous chapter, my analysis of the borders and frontiers of culture and celebrity is presented within the context of perspective, thus introducing the tone of the analytical processes of review, reiteration and resolution that are presented in my concluding chapter.

0.8.6 Conclusion: The over-arching aim of the conclusion is to critique Rushdie's statement concerning his literary project. This does not necessarily entail the presentation of a simplistic validation or refutation of his claims regarding the importance of borders and frontiers to this project; such an approach would belie

the complexities of Rushdie's writing and the sophisticated and highly contested nature of the issues it engages. Rather, I seek to systematically test, exemplify and explicate his claims through a structured review of this thesis' examination of his literary employment of border and frontier themes. My conclusion will also consider Rushdie's treatment of the themes of identity, culture and celebrity as well as the subsequent theoretical accounts and other comparative readings of these themes offered throughout the course of this study. It is proposed that my engagement with broader readings of borders and frontiers will facilitate a more qualified account of Rushdie's literary project as expressed in *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*.