

**The Borders and Frontiers of Salman
Rushdie's 'Literary Project':
Perspectives of Identity, Culture and Celebrity
Drawn from *Fury* and *Step Across This Line***

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Drawn from *Fury* and *Step Across This Line***

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Abstract

Salman Rushdie claims borders and frontiers are “at the heart of [his] literary project”. Given the diverse tone, thematic range and structural diversity of his literature, how are borders and frontiers manifest throughout his project? Compounding this question, how are we to intellectually engage borders and frontiers both within and beyond the context of Rushdie’s writing? The term border may infer limits, restrictions, clarity and delineation, yet borders can also be records of transition, transgression, conflict and challenge. Similarly, what are we to make of the spaces in-between, those ambiguous regions of the frontier that amorphously envelop and recede away from borders? This thesis seeks to qualify Rushdie’s premise through a concerted examination of five vital facets of borders and frontiers. Firstly, conceptual accounts of borders and frontiers are engaged in a manner designed to delineate real and imagined, literal and figurative understandings of the terms. Secondly, in view of the over-arching literary focus of this thesis, representations of borders and frontiers within postmodern literature are discussed. Thirdly, the disciplinary field of politics and literature and, subsequently, the political novel are examined. Then, mindful of the thematic tack of Rushdie’s 2001 novel *Fury*, the real and imagined borders and frontiers governing processes of identity are explored primarily within the context of Rushdie’s representation, within *Fury*, of the individual and the conflicting socio-economic ethos of Western liberal democracies. Finally, the borders and frontiers of contemporary culture and celebrity are tested via perspectives which, in the first instance, are drawn from Rushdie’s texts *Fury* and *Step Across This Line*. This thesis finds that Rushdie’s description of his literary project, at least in terms of the two above-cited texts, is accurate. His writing is deeply characterised by a consciousness of borders and frontiers; however, rather than seeking to offer a clearly delineated, static or consistent account of them, his project is executed in a complex and sophisticated manner that presents a meaningful and distinctly human challenge to traditional notions of the nature and permeability of real and imagined borders and frontiers.

Certification

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, has been acknowledged in this thesis.



Andrew Wayne Marks

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