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Dancing with a Literary Devil: The Rushdie Affair in Britain

A Capstone Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
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Introduction:

A popular narrative in European countries claims that Europeans are engaged in a battle for their Europeanism against immigrants who are ruining Europe by replacing the European way of life with their backwards and totalitarian way of life. Each country has its separate issues, but the immigration debate, especially concerning migrants from Muslim countries, has dominated the political and social spheres. The European Union is home to over fourteen million Muslims and about half of them reside in Britain, France, and Germany.¹ Their presence has exacerbated fears of a “Eurabia” or gradual Sharia takeover of European territory to become Islamic lands. These hypotheses and theories are based off the perceptions of Europeans that Muslim immigrants have failed to assimilate and become a part of their nation of residence. Instead of assimilating, the narrative goes; they have resisted and implemented their traditional values and beliefs. There is a popular sentiment in Europe that Muslim immigrants are culturally incompatible to living in European liberal democracies. There are general societal problems, such as immigrant poverty, low school achievement, and high crime rates. Then there are perceived cultural irreconcilabilities, such as totalitarian controlled societies versus individual, liberal rights societies. The resentment against European Muslims largely avoids the topic of race and intimations of biological inferiority.² The anti-Muslim immigrant narrative eschews the racial overtones for cultural inferiority, placing European civilization

¹ H.A. Hellyer, *Muslims of Europe: The Other Europeans* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 7.

² Paul Hockenos, “He’s not alone,” *Foreign Policy*, April 19, 2012
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/19/he_s_not_alone.

above the “ignorant and violent” Islamic civilization and societal issues to show that multiculturalism is not working.³ These sentiments have channeled into larger xenophobic and Islamophobic social movements, which have found resonance with political parties.⁴ Far right political parties are founded on a mistrust of Muslim immigrants and have accrued large followings, especially among Europe’s youth. Far right parties do not always receive enough electoral support, but they influence politics and policy through coalitions or forcing more moderate conservative parties to the right.⁵ Individual European nations have their share of different problems, but a commonly perceived issue is Muslim immigration.

The Rushdie Affair was a complex and heated series of events from 1988-1990 with global ramifications, many of which impacted Britain. Britain played a starring role in the saga, as author Salman Rushdie was a British subject who had written an allegorical novel about contemporary Britain and its multitude of social issues. The publication of *The Satanic Verses* engendered a controversy that erupted throughout Britain and spread throughout the world. International trade came to a halt between some nations and tense diplomatic relations were threatened. Protests throughout the Middle East and South Asia turned into violent looting and deaths. Ordinary booksellers, publishing houses, and employees were targeted for their role in producing and selling the book. Rushdie had to be escorted underground and into constant protection under the British

³ Paul Hockenos, “He’s not alone,” *Foreign Policy*, April 19, 2012
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/19/he_s_not_alone

⁴ Paul Hockenos, “He’s not alone,” *Foreign Policy*, April 19, 2012
http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/04/19/he_s_not_alone

⁵ The List, “The new nativists: Europe’s most prominent anti-immigration parties,” *Foreign Policy*, February 27, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/24/the_new_nativists.

authorities. The Rushdie Affair itself became a banner for a clash of the Islamic and Western cultures. It opened various debates in Britain about the Commonwealth immigrant population, multiculturalism, and the limits of free speech. To many Britons, it showed that the culture of the immigrants was not conducive to the free society of Britain.

Angry sentiments towards immigrants in Europe have not been limited to disputes over material that is permissible or offensive. A former minister of Angela Merkel's cabinet, Thilo Sarazin, wrote a book explaining the negative impact German Turks have on German society.⁶ *Germany Abolishes Itself* is the most sold book in Germany in over a decade, and its criticisms of Muslim immigrants (mostly Turkish) include lower intelligences, refusal to integrate, female oppression, and living off the generous welfare state.⁷ Sentiments such as these pervade debates in many European countries and sometimes germinate into political movements. The prevailing sentiment is that Muslim immigrants are too fundamentally different from European culture and refuse to become a part of it.⁸

It is simple and diametric to claim that the culture of Muslim immigrants and the culture of their country of residence are fundamentally different, but events like the Rushdie Affair from 1988-1990 and the Danish Cartoon Affair in 2005 and 2006 seemingly served to confirm that line of argument. They will be described more fully in subsequent chapters, but the events that constituted these

⁶ Newsbook, "An immigration row in Germany: Sarazin vs. the Saracens," *The Economist*, September 1, 2010,

http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2010/09/immigration_row_germany.

⁷ "An immigration row in Germany: Sarazin vs. the Saracens," *The Economist*

⁸ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Nomad: From Islam to America: A Personal Journey Through the Clash of Civilizations* (New York: Free Press, 2010), 246.

affairs evinced a visible schism between the native Europeans and immigrant Muslims. Europeans did not grasp the violent fuss that Muslims made about published material they found to be offensive. Muslims engaged in demonstrations, some threatened and incited violence, and some committed it. These events quickly transformed into transnational crises, involving many different countries and populations in an interconnected web of chaos.

The main population under investigation in this paper is the Muslim population in Britain, which is mostly comprised of South Asian immigrants. This paper will document how immigration was a feature of the 20th century, with the Irish and Jews earlier in the century to West Indians and South Asians following World War II. The presence of immigrants was not a new phenomenon with Commonwealth immigration, as Britain had to re-configure its relationship with its former colonies and colonized peoples. Rather, as this paper will argue, South Asian immigration differed from previous iterations of migration by virtue of their sustained poverty, a myriad of social problems they were associated with, and a virulent hatred they engendered among the British population. A series of immigration acts were passed by Parliament in the 1960s to stem the flow of immigration, but they prioritized family reunification and continued to bring immigrants to Britain. The South Asian Muslim immigrants were the primary protestors of *The Satanic Verses* and the subjects of scrutiny throughout the Rushdie Affair.

In addition to studying and detailing the trends and history of immigration, it is important to recognize that immigration was a feature of a new British society

in the 1950s and 1960s. It was not the entirety of the new society – entitled by opponents as the “permissive society.” Britain transformed in many social arenas, including marriage, divorce, media, and drugs. It was labeled as the permissive society because it seemed that traditional values and ways of life were eroding and being supplanted by radical values. South Asian immigration fits into this picture by altering the demographics of Britain, arriving during a third wave of immigration and concentrating together in urban areas, such as Bradford. Bradford is now known as a “parallel community,” ethnically segregated by its white and Pakistani Muslim populations.⁹ South Asian immigrants settled together in urban communities, such as Bradford and Birmingham, because that is where their factory jobs and social networks were.¹⁰ Alarmed by various social problems ailing Britain, politicians built platforms and campaigns of xenophobic sentiments and attached blame for social ills on the immigrants.

The historical and current situation of Muslims in Europe has been analyzed and commented upon by various intellectuals, politicians, and academics. While European Muslims can be studied as a general social phenomenon, this project attempts to study British Muslims mostly and their responses to the Rushdie Affair, Danish Cartoon Affair, and *Jewel of Medina* controversy. It also attempts to analyze the positions taken by politicians, prominent figures, and the media during the affairs, as the British reactions vastly differed from the Rushdie Affair to the Danish cartoons. For example, the British government, bookstores, and leading figures rallied behind Salman Rushdie’s

⁹ Tahir Abbas, *Islamic Radicalism and Multicultural Politics: The British Experience* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 72.

¹⁰ Abbas, 96

right to free speech in *The Satanic Verses*.¹¹ In contrast, the British government, newspapers, and some public figures repudiated the Danish cartoons as insulting and unfit for publication.¹² The possibility of violence in reaction to the publication of *The Jewel of Medina* caused one publisher to dismiss publication and then the firebombing of the offices of another publisher led to that house dropping its printing.¹³ Each affair had its own unique circumstances, but they all revealed insights into the immigrant Muslim population and their relation to the state. The reaction to all of these offensive artistic works was widespread protesting, threats of violence, and social unrest in Britain. These events showcased a massive disconnect between the mostly South Asian Muslim immigrants and British society, which could not understand their reactions. Much of the rhetoric in current Europe concerning incompatibility of Muslim immigrants and European society finds resonance in events such as these, where seemingly innocuous publications became rallying cries for the immigrants to unite and impinge on freedoms.

This paper argues that the Rushdie Affair has changed the way that Britain views freedom of speech, so that materials deemed to be “gratuitously offensive,” are self-censored by media outlets. The position of withholding gratuitously offensive publications has been taken by publishers and supported by the British government. British Muslims campaigned unsuccessfully to ban *The Satanic*

¹¹ “Works of art need no apologies,” *Observer*, London, February 19, 1989, in *The Rushdie File*, eds. Appiganensi and Maitland (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), 98.

¹² Jytte Klausen, *The Cartoons That Shook the World* (Yale University Press: London, 2009), 9.

¹³ Alison Flood, “Muhammad novel publisher undeterred by fire bomb attack,” *The Guardian*, September 29, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/sep/29/jewel.of.medina.firebomb?INTCMP=SRCH>.

Verses in 1989 and future publications have been stymied in some way. It might not be the case that the British media outlets and government have cowered into censoring anything that seems anti-Islamic, but that they have incorporated a different conception of free speech to limit gratuitous offenses. *The Satanic Verses* were published before the controversies in 1988 and then the paperback version was published in Britain during the sustained outrage in 1989.¹⁴ Rushdie's subsequent novels have been published without issue in Britain and the rest of the world since then, but they also have not covered the topics of *The Satanic Verses* and in the way that *The Satanic Verses* did. It is a thought experiment, but it is questionable as to whether *The Satanic Verses* of 1988 would be published in Britain in 2012.

¹⁴ "Issue of softcover edition of *Satanic Verses* splits Labour Party," *Publishers Weekly*, Aug. 4, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 129.

Chapter One: Post-War Immigration to Britain

In order to dissect the Rushdie Affair, it is critical to understand the population that vehemently protested against *The Satanic Verses*. This requires going back to the end of the World War II and examining Britain's changing society. The salient difference between pre- and post-war Britain was the influx and presence of immigrants. Britain had gradually lost its global preeminence and chunks of its empire were consolidated into sovereign nations, some of which joined the newly formed British Commonwealth.¹⁵ Following World War II, prominent observers of British society, such as George Orwell, characterized the population as provincial, jingoistic, and closed off from the world.¹⁶ The British population was devastated by the two world wars and manpower was needed to replace lost labor. The first wave of immigrants to Britain arrived from Ireland, Italy, and Germany and this group of immigrants was fragmented and disparate.¹⁷ British society was receptive to and heralded immigration for a number of reasons, in addition to boosting the ravaged population. One reason was that before WWII, there had been a successful migration and integration of Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe who brought Britain unprecedented scientific prestige at a time when science was dominated by Germany.¹⁸ While physiological needs do not constitute a major impetus for immigration, the British palette was whetted for new appetites to replace the blandness and repetitiveness

¹⁵ Brain Harrison, *Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom 1951-1970* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 6.

¹⁶ George Orwell, *The Lion and the Unicorn: Socialism and the English Genius* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1941),

¹⁷ Anthony Messina, *The Logics and Politics of Post-WWII Migration to Western Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 108.

¹⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 54

of English food.¹⁹ Following WWII, London streets were characterized by the Italian *ristorante*, Turkish coffeehouse, and Chinese eatery.²⁰ Increased affluence and diversification of the British palette enhanced the prominence of these foreign cuisines. It is remarkable how amenable British society was to the expansion of gastronomy. Statistics demonstrate that by the 1960s, Chinese food was a runaway favorite cuisine.²¹ Immigration and foreign influences came to define the landscape and composition of post-World War II British society.

Immigrants from Ireland and the Mediterranean countries dominated the second wave of post-war immigration, accompanied by a significant group of migrants from Poland and Baltic nations.²² These first two large-scale arrivals were not homogenous, but they were distinguished by their European character. The third wave altered this trend by introducing British society to a massive influx of New Commonwealth migrants from the Caribbean and South Asian subcontinent.²³ In addition to the sheer number of immigrants, New Commonwealth migrants added a color and non-European dimension that rendered them salient. Immigrants from earlier waves of post-war immigration were invisible with respect to skin color, but black Caribbean and brown South Asian immigrants were not afforded that veil of invisibility. Immigrants clustered together and accumulated social capital, emphasizing their ethnic loyalties. Social capital refers to the resources that immigrants had at their disposal, such as

¹⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 4

²⁰ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 59

²¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*,

²² Thomas Lane, *Victims of Hitler and Stalin: The Exodus of Poles and Balts to Britain*, (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004), 179.

²³ Stephen Castles, *Here for Good: Western Europe's New Ethnic Minorities*, (London: Pluto Press, 1984), 42.

community networks. Their influx was necessary to fill a labor gap and many South Asian males arrived without a promised job.²⁴ Britain was welcoming to Commonwealth immigration because the majority of Britons were proud of their imperial legacy and also because some groups had served honorably in the world wars (Bangladeshis in particular), thus earning a place in British society.²⁵

As Britain absorbed an ever-increasing population, the issue of immigration became a political one for the Conservative and Labour parties. It was especially poignant and divided with respect to the previously colonized immigrants, as social problems were conflated with immigration in general.²⁶ Conservatives were not opposed to all immigration, but they envisaged Britain as a national family dedicated to protecting itself against potentially hostile foreigners and foreign influences.²⁷ Labour was amenable to Commonwealth immigration, as a result of the immigrants' proclivity to vote Labour.²⁸ A series of racially-motivated riots in 1958 known as the Notting Hill Riots helped Conservatives build the case for restricting immigration from the Commonwealth, resulting in the Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1962.²⁹ This statute helped control entry by focusing on essential occupational skills and labor shortages as reasons for entry.³⁰ The subsequent Commonwealth Immigrants Act of 1968

²⁴ Kenneth Morgan, *Britain Since 1945: The People's Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 203.

²⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 38

²⁶ Castles, 43

²⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 64

²⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 64

²⁹ Castles, 45

³⁰ Morgan, 204

removed the right of entry for British passport holders without a UK born parent or grandparent, leaving immigration to Commonwealth dependents.³¹

Legislation permitting certain forms of immigration and prohibiting other kinds did not provide a solution to the pressing problem of assimilating immigrants to their new country. The third wave of immigrants clustered together and concentrated themselves in urban areas, often with extended families living under one roof.³² As a result of this and different conceptions of property, there was friction with whites over inner-city crowding.³³ The newly formed Institute for Race Relations merely instructed immigrants and natives to adapt to the new situation.³⁴ Labour and liberals were optimistic that the Commonwealth immigrants would follow the previous trends of assimilation. However, the previous iterations of immigrants had been white and not as visible as the Commonwealth immigrants. Combined with their poverty and skin color, the new wave of immigrants became scapegoats for inner city problems.³⁵

Once immigrants became convenient scapegoats for inner city problems, they became easy targets for Conservative candidates seeking office. Whereas the “successful” immigrants – Huguenots and 17th Century Protestant refugees and pre-war Jews had set an assimilationist precedent – largely by virtue of being invisible, immigrant communities of the 1960s were conspicuous and visible.³⁶

³¹ Castles, 45

³² Messina, 47

³³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 219

³⁴ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 219

³⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 220

³⁶ Messina, 27

One MP termed them as “literally marked people.”³⁷ Inner city crowding had the consequence of a “white backlash,” resembling the urban strike and resentment of the United States in the 1960s race riots.³⁸ The backlash exacerbated following economic troubles in the early 1970s.³⁹ An MP representing the Midlands constituencies had campaigners who brandished a brusque campaign slogan: “if you want a nigger neighbour vote Labour.”⁴⁰ Another Conservative candidate proposed a total five year ban on all immigration.⁴¹ The self-conscious patriotism of the Conservative Party did not lend itself to open immigration, but its nostalgia and positive remembrance of empire compelled it to feel a special obligation towards immigrations from former colonies.⁴² South Asian immigrants and the post-war generation of immigrations were more inclined towards voting Liberal and Labour, but the Conservative Party was not entirely against Commonwealth immigration, wistful of their imperial days.⁴³ Jewish immigrants from the pre-war period had been staunchly Labour voters, but there was a large-scale transition to solid Conservative voting.⁴⁴ Conservatives made special efforts to recruit voters among new and old immigrant groups, but South Asians were reluctant to take up their message of assimilation.⁴⁵

³⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 220

³⁸ Morgan, 284

³⁹ Messina, 23

⁴⁰ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 220

⁴¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 220

⁴² Harrison, *Finding a Role?: The United Kingdom 1951-1970* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 2010), 17.

⁴³ Steve Bruce: *Politics and Religion in the United Kingdom* (New York: Routledge, 2012), 24.

⁴⁴ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 198

⁴⁵ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 199

Conservative MP Enoch Powell ignited public debates and attacked immigration for political purposes.⁴⁶ His first move was to predict race-riots equivalent to those spreading across the United States in the civil rights cause. He sounded the usual alarms of high birth rates and changing demographics, prognosticating total white flight from urban areas.⁴⁷ His constituents received his speech favorably and his beliefs as a parliamentarian compelled him to advocate and articulate his constituents' views and feelings.⁴⁸ Gallup polls found that 74% agreed with Powell's statements and only 15% disagreed, so he was merely reflecting how his constituents felt like a good delegate would.⁴⁹ In 1970, when British views towards Commonwealth immigration were especially sour, the Conservative Party received an extra 6.7% of the vote solely for the reason of their stance on immigrant exclusion.⁵⁰ Powell's enthusiastic support and foreboding comments also thrust him into a national debate over whether it was the parliamentarian's duty to guide and educate their constituents or to be megaphones for them.⁵¹ These inflammatory national debates occurred in the context of imminent South Asian immigration from Uganda, where a nascent self-government had expelled its highly successful Indian Ismaili Shiites and Gujurati Hindu populations.⁵² The impulse toward immigration changed after the 1960s not only because of provincial and national political motivations, but also in part

⁴⁶ Morgan, 285

⁴⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 221

⁴⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 221

⁴⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 221

⁵⁰ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 204

⁵¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 222

⁵² Harold Coward, John Hinnells, Raymond Brady Williams: *The South Asian Religious Diaspora in Britain, Canada, and the United States* (Albany: State University of New York, 2000), 95.

to faraway political events.⁵³ Some members of the Conservative Party suggested repatriation, segregation, and separatism to counter urban rioting and recalcitrant inner-city clustering.⁵⁴ The Ugandan Indians under their leader Aga Khan IV would soon migrate to Britain and integrate into suburban life seamlessly, but the prospect of massive waves of immigration from Asia and Africa soured British sentiment towards Commonwealth immigrants. The Immigration Acts of 1968 and 1971 limited the waves by permitting migrants only if they had a UK born parent or grandparent.⁵⁵

The Conservative Party provided an outlet for frustrated constituencies and MPs to vent their grievances with what they perceived to be an issue that threatened Britain's national character and stability.⁵⁶ While the Conservatives gained traction with some restrictive measures and anti-immigrant sentiments, they did not match the obstinacy of nascent Fascist parties. The National Front was the most boisterous and largest of the anti-immigrant Fascist parties out of a wider anti-immigration movement.⁵⁷ Immigration played a significant role in voting (evidenced by the 6.7% boost in 1970), but it did not cause splintered parties or a totally anti-immigrant Conservative Party. The party enjoyed surges in popularity coupled with periods of obscurity.⁵⁸ The National Front's attempt to recruit the incendiary Enoch Powell failed and his own Conservative Party

⁵³ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 16

⁵⁴ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 204

⁵⁵ Castles, 45

⁵⁶ Morgan, 204

⁵⁷ Morgan, 285

⁵⁸ Messina, 56

discredited him after a particularly xenophobic speech, in which he claimed Britain would witness “the River Tiber foaming with much blood.”⁵⁹

Motivations between post-war immigrant groups varied, from political to economic. The motivations of a Polish immigrant were different from those of a Pakistani, even if they migrated around the same time. Many Poles migrated to escape the portending Communist regime, whereas the chief motive for many Pakistanis was economic in finding work. Less than 10% of South Asian immigrant men had procured jobs before their arrival, but many found employment in the engineering trade, textiles, and electronic retail, not to mention small corner shops.⁶⁰ Many immigrant men toiled away in hard labor, but some Pakistani and Indian immigrants emanated from prosperous localities that had been influential during the British reign, and were thus educated and possessed more skills.⁶¹ However, many South Asian immigrants settled into factory life and aroused the ire of MPs and their constituencies, such as Enoch Powell’s, as a result of inner city strife.

Their counterparts from Italy, Cyprus, and China had a longer history of immigration and settling in Britain and were renowned for their entrepreneurial spirit and success.⁶² Some Italian families were entering their third and fourth generations of residence in Britain, so newer immigrants had larger networks and more social capital to connect with, and they succeeded in the catering business

⁵⁹ Morgan, 285

⁶⁰ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 226

⁶¹ Castles, 42

⁶² Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 228

and in coffee shops.⁶³ The typical South Asian immigrant lacked these crucial advantages. Cypriot immigrants were self-employed at twice the rate of the population at large and launched business operations in male tailoring, female dressmaking, and catering.⁶⁴ Chinese immigrants opened the British palate and Chinese restaurants proliferated through London, quickly becoming one of England's favorite cuisines.⁶⁵ The culinary endeavors of immigrant populations proved to be very successful not only in financial gain, but also in changing the British diet, both rich and poor.⁶⁶ Ironically, the entrepreneurial spirit among South Asians was most pronounced in the African-Indian population that Enoch Powell feared.⁶⁷ South Asian migrants largely found themselves toiling in factories and did not attain the same level of success of Chinese, Cypriot, and Italian immigrants. Given their poor social and economic circumstances, many Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Caribbean immigrants seemed destined for an "Irish future."⁶⁸ This pejorative term implied that they had replaced Irish immigrants as the scourge of society and low-wage earners.

British reception to post-war immigrants was predicated on an expectation of assimilation. The rhetoric of assimilation is couched in the vagueness of 'values' in contemporary Britain, but measures of assimilation include voluntary geographic dispersal, business success, and social mobility into white-collar professions. Commercially successful immigrants – Italians, Cypriots, and

⁶³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 229

⁶⁴ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 229

⁶⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 230

⁶⁶ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 335

⁶⁷ Messina, 110

⁶⁸ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 192

Chinese - eschewed urban packing by dispersing to avoid mutual competition.⁶⁹ Many of the Commonwealth immigrants clustered in previously British-occupied metropolitan areas, with many South Asians cloistering together in West London.⁷⁰ Urban clustering was facilitated by the necessities of immigrants and the first generation, such as mutual help and shared facilities.⁷¹

Much of the debate on Commonwealth immigration in the 1970s and 1980s centered on the societal and urban problems that commentators believed it caused. Urban areas were a priority in Britain, and they suffered from severe overcrowding. and to illustrate just how crammed they were, The overcrowding can be illustrated by the fact that ninety percent of the population in England and Wales occupied urban areas, despite only accounting for one-seventh of the land mass.⁷² Sociologists, city planners, and clergymen were equally concerned with the atrophying situation in the cities. Urban areas and their denizens were experiencing social polarization and fragmentation, making the inner city the territory of the impoverished, reinforced by heavy waves of immigration.⁷³ The affluent created their own niches as separate territories within cities.⁷⁴ Burglar alarms and police sirens marred the inner-city areas and when measured by “criteria of deprivation,” (levels of unemployment, broken families, overcrowded housing, population decline, ethnic background) the London boroughs where

⁶⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 230

⁷⁰ Messina, 27

⁷¹ Messina, 27

⁷² Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 94

⁷³ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 94

⁷⁴ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 94

immigrants resided scored the worst.⁷⁵ These trends were exacerbated by declining social capital among immigrants and the Labour Party realizing that it could not rely solely on the “dispossessed vote,” such as that of impecunious immigrants and factory workers.⁷⁶ The inner-city immigrants came under scrutiny and focus during the Thatcher years when there were violent race riots between different ethnicities and with the police apparatus.⁷⁷

Many of the South Asian and Commonwealth immigrants arrived in Britain when the domestic and global economies began receding from the post-war economic miracles.⁷⁸ Economic misfortunes combined with a growing hostility towards South Asian immigrants, exemplified politically by Enoch Powell and certain conservative factions. Issues were not restricted to just economics, as South Asian and Caribbean immigrants became the focus behind race riots with white neighbors. The Notting Hill Riots of 1958 were a series of violent clashes between white Britons and mostly Caribbean immigrants that escalated with police involvement.⁷⁹ The mass migration of Pakistanis and Indians to Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s brought the immigrants into conflict with the native population.⁸⁰ The Middleborough Riots of 1961 pitted white Britons against the immigrant Pakistani population and included stabbings, destruction of Pakistani restaurants, and violent clashes with the police.⁸¹

⁷⁵ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 94

⁷⁶ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 171

⁷⁷ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 526

⁷⁸ Castles, 84

⁷⁹ Jean Malcolm, “Nightfall at Notting Hill: A Study in Black and White,” *The Phylon Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 4, (1958), 364.

⁸⁰ Panakos Panayi, “Middleborough 1961: A British Race Riot of the 1960s?” *Social History*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1991), 140.

⁸¹ Panayi, 144

Xenophobia was not a nascent concept in Britain that emerged in response to increasing immigration from Commonwealth nations. Xenophobia had a rooted tradition in the pre-war era, focusing on German, Irish, and Jewish immigration.⁸² It morphed into a different strand in response to the rising migration of Caribbean and South Asian migrants.

Post-war Britain underwent a variety of societal transformations, one of which was an increasing number of immigrants and different sources of their emigration. Immigration was perhaps the most significant development of the societal transformation, altering the demographics and dynamics of Britain. Britain needed to replace its diminished population and create new relationships with its former colonies and the transition from moribund 20th century imperial power to a post-war nation. Massive increases in immigration were a necessary but ultimately contentious development in post-war Britain. Inter-race relations were characterized by a rising tide of racism in the political sphere and incidents of violence and riots.⁸³ South Asian immigrants were at the forefront of the Rushdie Affair in Britain and immigration remains a major point of contention in contemporary Britain. Post-war British society did not resemble pre-war Britain and a main reason for that was Commonwealth immigration.

⁸² Panayi, 139

⁸³ Panayi, 140

Chapter Two: Rushdie's, Britain's and the World's Satanic Affair

Sir Salman Rushdie's worldwide fame stems largely as the author of *The Satanic Verses* and the massive worldwide uproar it caused. There is much more to Rushdie than one novel and the overreactions surrounding its publication, though. His life story and migration to Britain from India at the age of fourteen figure prominently in his novels, most notably in *Midnight's Children* and *The Satanic Verses*. He was part of the South Asian Muslim population that immigrated to Britain as part of the third wave of post-war immigration. He never truly was part of that population, as his circumstances in India and in Britain were entirely different from anything the population he tried to write about in *The Satanic Verses* experienced. *The Satanic Verses* tells the story of the trials and tribulations of the migrant, but the book was not intended for that audience. The population he attempted to portray as sympathetic characters reacted violently to the book, viewing it as an insult to Islam rather than a positive story. Despite delivering an award-winning novel, it became clear that Rushdie did not understand 'his' population as well as he thought he did. In order to understand *The Satanic Verses* and Salman Rushdie, it is crucial to understand Rushdie's origins and migration to Britain.

Salman Rushdie was born in Mumbai (Bombay) in June of 1947, two months before official Indian independence, to a Muslim family that spoke English and Urdu.⁸⁴ Half of his family would later move to Karachi, Pakistan, while the other half remained in Mumbai.⁸⁵ *Midnight* allegorically represents the

⁸⁴ Appignanesi and Maitland, 1.

⁸⁵ Ameena Meer and Salman Rushdie, "Salman Rushdie," *Bomb*, No. 27 (Spring, 1989), 37.

beginning of Indian independence, and he was born before “the stroke of midnight,” in *Midnight’s Children*.⁸⁶ *Midnight’s Children* even begins with the autobiographical statement, “I was born in Bombay.”⁸⁷ His religion, language, and family straddled the line between India and Pakistan, which would be created in 1948 as a secessionist state for South Asian Muslims.⁸⁸ Unlike the many South Asians who migrated to Britain after Rushdie did in 1961, he was born into a privileged business family that had a favorable relationship with the moribund British Raj.⁸⁹ His father sent him to Rugby, where he first encountered the nastiness of English schoolboys and racism.⁹⁰ Rushdie thanks his pale complexion and impeccable early English education for mitigating worse manifestations of racism.⁹¹ He escaped public school for King’s College at Cambridge where he read in history, writing his senior thesis on Islam.⁹² The autobiographical nature of *Midnight’s Children* and *The Satanic Verses* was explicitly mentioned in book reviews and reviewers lauded Rushdie for giving flesh and voice to Indian identity and the travails of migration, as his own life was a quest for identity and overcoming the obstacles of migration.⁹³ The immediate tribulations of migration are beautifully illustrated in *The Satanic Verses* through the migrant protagonists’ arrival in Britain – thrown out of a plane and thrust into an unfavorable

⁸⁶ Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 2006), 1.

⁸⁷ Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, 1

⁸⁸ Appignanesi and Maitland, 1.

⁸⁹ Appignanesi and Maitland, 2.

⁹⁰ Appignanesi and Maitland, 2.

⁹¹ Appignanesi and Maitland, 2.

⁹² John Gray, “Salman Rushdie: hiding from himself,” *Globe & Mail*, Toronto, Feb. 18, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 5. It was specifically on Prophet Muhammad and the Rise of the Caliphate.

⁹³ “Salman Rushdie: hiding from himself,” 5.

situation.⁹⁴ Rushdie admitted as much, especially in regards to migration, in an interview.⁹⁵ Rushdie's novels, particularly *The Satanic Verses*, were intended to illuminate the struggles of South Asian identity and migration in the modern world. He was shocked to see his sympathetic portrayal of the community burned, slandered, and resented by that very community.⁹⁶

While Rushdie has become reviled by the immigrant community he thought he was defending in *The Satanic Verses* and by the country of his birth, he has enjoyed incredible success as a writer. *Midnight's Children* won the Booker Prize for best novel in 1981, and *Shame* was shortlisted for it.⁹⁷ *The Satanic Verses* was also shortlisted for that award, and it won the Whitbread Award for best fiction.⁹⁸ Fiction writers all over the world have adulated his writing ability and perspicacity; they have even expressed jealousy over the fury he engendered with *The Satanic Verses*.⁹⁹ There have recently been calls for Rushdie to win the Nobel Prize in Literature, though that would likely brew controversy. Queen Elizabeth knighted him in 2007 for his services to literature and that high honor brought protests from those who continued to be offended by a book published in 1988.¹⁰⁰ Among countless literary awards he has garnered for various novels (*Shalimar the Clown*, *Shame*, *The Enchantress of Florence*,

⁹⁴ Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, (Dover: Consortium Incorporated, 1992), 4.

⁹⁵ "Sean French talks to Salman Rushdie," *Observer*, London, Sept. 25, 1988, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 7.

⁹⁶ "The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent," *Sunday Times*, London, Feb. 19, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 3.

⁹⁷ Aparna Mahanta, "Allegories of the Indian Experience: The Novels of Salman Rushdie," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 19, No.6 (Feb. 11, 1984), 244.

⁹⁸ Appignanesi and Maitland, xiii

⁹⁹ Rustom Barucha, "Rushdie's Whale," *The Massachusetts Review*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Summer, 1986), p. 222.

¹⁰⁰ "Muslims set for Rushdie protest," *This Is Lancashire*, June 27, 2007, accessed March 13, 2012 http://www.thisislancashire.co.uk/news/1501642.muslims_set_for_rushdie_protest.

Haroun and the Sea of Stories), perhaps most impressive is that he won the Booker of Bookers in 1993 and then the Best of the Bookers in 2008.¹⁰¹ The man presenting the trials and tribulations of the Britain's South Asian immigrants was already an accomplished and heralded writer.

The Devil in the Novel: The Satanic Verses

Very few people read this dense 547 page novel, but everyone had visceral feelings that they expressed publically.¹⁰² Muslim protestors from Britain to Pakistan did not touch the book except for the purpose of burning it. Nonetheless, a couple people went through the offending passages and shared them with the population, so that they would not have to be subjected to reading them. The vociferous and sustained uproar were based on perceptions that Rushdie had insulted Islam, the Prophet, and the Koran.

Chapter Two of *The Satanic Verses* is entitled "Mahound," the name of one of the protagonists.¹⁰³ The Islamic holy city of Makkah was allegorically labeled *Jahilia*, which is the Arabic term for the ignorance and darkness that existed in the world before the revelation of Islam.¹⁰⁴ The Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) is a butcher and is referred to as a bastard.¹⁰⁵ The protagonist Gibreel (who protestors assumed represented the archangel who spoke through God to the Prophet), had revelations when it was convenient and approved of sodomy.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ "Midnight's Children wins Best of the Booker," July 10, 2008, accessed March, 13, 2012, <http://www.themanbookerprize.com/news/stories/1099>.

¹⁰² "Magnificent Puzzle," *Indian Post*, Bombay, Oct. 2, 1988, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 9.

¹⁰³ Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, (Dover: Consortium Incorporated, 1992), 89.

¹⁰⁴ The Islamic Defence Council, Jan. 28, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 65.

¹⁰⁵ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*,

¹⁰⁶ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*,

There are goddesses and impermissible false images.¹⁰⁷ The veracity and supremacy of the Koran and its revelation are questioned and the character of the Prophet is presented to be imperfect and not a paragon of human behavior.¹⁰⁸ Overtly a book of fiction, protesting Muslims interpreted it to be a calumnious distortion of history; this view was shared by ordinary Muslims protesting in Bradford and the Supreme Leader of Iran.¹⁰⁹ Rushdie attempted to counter these misinterpretations and even provided his own interpretations of the work, but it was futile.¹¹⁰ The anger and indignation Muslims felt by having the tenets of their faith scrutinized questioned in what they perceived to be a historical work channeled into riots, demands, and book burnings.

The Early Response: Britain, India, and Pakistan

“Where they burn books, men will be burned.”¹¹¹

By 1988, Salman Rushdie was a literary star in Britain. He had written critically acclaimed books during the decade, including *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*, racking up various prestigious literary awards.¹¹² His forthcoming book in the fall of 1988 generated even more anticipation when he abandoned his previous publisher for Viking for a tidy advance of \$850,000.¹¹³ The literary coterie and general audience were caught up in anticipation for *The Satanic Verses*, which was released on September 26, 1988.

¹⁰⁷ Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses*, 450

¹⁰⁸ Islamic Defense Council, Jan. 28, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 65.

¹⁰⁹ Syed Ali Ashraf, “Nihilistic, negative, satanic,” *Impact International*, London, Oct. 28 – Nov. 10, 1988, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 19.

¹¹⁰ Salman Rushdie, “Choice between light and dark,” *Observer*, London, Jan 22, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 61.

¹¹¹ Heinrich Heine, quoted in Christopher Hitchens, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 161.

¹¹² Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland, *The Rushdie File*, eds. Lisa Appignanesi and Sara Maitland (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990), vii.

¹¹³ “The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent,” 1

Rushdie's Indian heritage permeated his earlier novels and riled up the political establishment in India, as the Gandhi family (who were often subjected to Rushdie's allegorical insults and barbs) tested India's democracy and banned *Midnight's Children*.¹¹⁴ Instead they forced him to apologize.¹¹⁵ The first hostile reaction to *The Satanic Verses* came from India; the negative British response was a week later. Muslim MP Syed Shahabuddin demanded the Indian Parliament censor the book, and he penned an intransigent open letter to Rushdie with a line that would rally many aggrieved Muslims, "I have not read it, nor do I intend to. I do not have to wade through a filthy drain to know what filth is."¹¹⁶ Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was caught in a political quagmire, having to respond to an opposition party's MP during an election year. His Congress Party was dwindling in popularity and the electoral importance of India's one hundred Muslims was too crucial.¹¹⁷ Nine days following the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, Rushdie's country of birth banned it.

An incredulous Salman Rushdie wrote his own open letter to Rajiv Gandhi, accusing him of playing 'political football' and betraying the fundamentals of a civilized and democratic society.¹¹⁸ The Indian political response to *The Satanic Verses* was just the beginning for Rushdie. Following pressure from a vocal Muslim minority, South Africa banned the book and then Rushdie from entering the country, where he was supposed to deliver a keynote

¹¹⁴ Appignanesi and Maitland, vii.

¹¹⁵ "The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent," 2.

¹¹⁶ "The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent," 3.

¹¹⁷ *Sunday Times*, London, Feb. 19, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 28.

¹¹⁸ Salman Rushdie, "An open letter to the Indian prime minister," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 35.

address against apartheid and censorship.¹¹⁹ The Rushdie Affair became famous for its international racket, but the early international events were accompanied by an enraged response from Britain's Muslims. A Muslim professor at Cambridge University wrote that he was personally 'morally offended' and claimed that Rushdie's writing was a state of 'total moral degradation.'¹²⁰ A populist response occurred in Bolton, an area of Manchester where many South Asian immigrants had clustered together. Seven thousand Muslims attended what they termed a "peaceful demonstration," in which they burned copies of *The Satanic Verses* in their appeal to the government to ban the book much like India had.¹²¹ Bradford – a hamlet of London populated by South Asian immigrants – took center stage with similar "peaceful protests" that were marked by book burnings and angry demands for censorship.¹²² The popular Bradford mosque Jamiyat Tabligh Ul-Islam wrote a letter to Margaret Thatcher and Bradford's MP, campaigning on behalf of Bradford's 65,000 Muslims to ban the offending book.¹²³ The demonstrations and Muslim campaign to ban the book compelled some chain bookstores to withdraw their copies from display cases, fearing for their employees.¹²⁴ There were even calls by South Asian writers for Britain to establish separate communities for immigrants.¹²⁵ South Asian Muslims felt

¹¹⁹ "Moslems block 'blasphemous' Rushdie's trip to South Africa," *Daily Telegraph*, London, Nov. 3, 1988, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 50.

¹²⁰ Syed Ali Ashraf, "Nihilistic, negative, satanic," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 19.

¹²¹ "Furious Muslims to stage mass protest," *Bolton Evening News*, Dec. 1, 1988, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 53.

¹²² "Fury as book is set ablaze," *Bradford Telegraph & Argus*, Jan. 15, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 54.

¹²³ *Bradford Telegraph & Argus*, Dec. 6, 1988, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 53.

¹²⁴ "Dangers of a Muslim campaign," *Independent*, London, Jan. 16, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 55.

¹²⁵ *Daily Telegraph*, London, Feb. 16, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 94.

particularly betrayed by Rushdie's incisive and acute knowledge of the community and its fears and insecurities.¹²⁶

Rushdie responded to the British uproar to his novel with an Orwellian attack against the Thought Police and Fascism eclipsing what was nominally a democratic society.¹²⁷ He stressed that the book was not anti-religious and countered the zealots by acclaiming the virtues of literature and pointing out that the book was a sympathetic portrayal of the beleaguered community that was up in arms against him.¹²⁸ Much to the chagrin of the protestors, the novel won the Whitbread Best Novel Award and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize, feeding into the belief that the book was an international Western plot hatched against Muslims.¹²⁹ Muslim protestors remained steadfast and continued to stage demonstrations and book burnings throughout Britain, garnering extensive media attention throughout the ordeal.¹³⁰ These protests culminated into an organized rally at Hyde Park that channeled popular rage into legal calls to ban the book on account of blasphemy laws, destroy all circulated copies, and issue an apology to worldwide Muslims.¹³¹ The protestors made a final push through the Islamic Defense Council to demand that Penguin Books cease publication of the offending novel by pointing out how various aspects of the novel enraged Muslim sensibilities, but it was to no avail.¹³² It seemed like the situation was fizzing out

¹²⁶ Ashraf, "Nihilistic, negative, satanic," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 19

¹²⁷ Salman Rushdie, "Choice between light and dark," *Observer*, London, Jan. 22, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 62.

¹²⁸ Rushdie, "Choice between light and dark," 62

¹²⁹ "Dangers of a Muslim campaign," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 55

¹³⁰ Appignanesi and Maitland, 63

¹³¹ *Chiswick, Fulham & Hammersmith Recorder*, Feb. 8, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 63-64.

¹³² The Islamic Defence Council, Jan. 28, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 64.

in Britain, so that the focus was more on the broad issue of multiculturalism and competing freedoms rather than addressing this particular question.¹³³ British Muslim organizations called for a rewriting of censorship and blasphemy laws to address and rectify their offenses.¹³⁴ The domestic situation and worldwide situation had yet to be ignited.

Ayatollah Khomeini's Valentine's Day Fatwa

Compared to the events occurring in response to the book in India and Pakistan, the demonstrations in Bradford and Bolton were relatively peaceful, as the protestors claimed. Two thousand Pakistani protestors attacked the United States Information Center in Islamabad and burned the complex before the Pakistani riot police responded with bullets, resulting in five dead and dozens of wounded.¹³⁵ Even more violence escalated in Kashmir on the contentious India-Pakistan border, despite the book being banned for months in both countries.¹³⁶ These events were significant by themselves, but their real importance was that they reached the Supreme Leader of Iran and leader of the Islamic Revolution, Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini. It had been a full four and a half months since the publication of *The Satanic Verses* and all previous events paled in comparison to what Khomeini did next.

Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa on February 14, 1989, in which he implored all zealous Muslims to execute everyone involved in the publication of

¹³³ Appignanesi and Maitland, 66

¹³⁴ Marina Warner, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 193.

¹³⁵ "Five killed in Pakistan anti-Rushdie protest rally," *Independent*, London, Feb. 13, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 66.

¹³⁶ Appignanesi and Maitland, 67

the book for its unconscionable offenses to Islam.¹³⁷ He also called on anyone too squeamish to execute Rushdie to refer him to someone who would be willing to, promising martyrdom and riches to the assassin and anyone who attempted to assassinate Rushdie.¹³⁸ A fatwa is a legal edict that a learned scholar can issue, as an ayatollah is a cleric who has achieved elite status in reading and interpreting Islamic theology and law.¹³⁹ The Supreme Leader's fatwa resonated throughout Iran, as the speaker of the Majlis (Iranian Parliament), explained that the book was an unforgivable insult to Islam and a Western-Zionist plot against Muslims.¹⁴⁰ Rushdie was an agent and 'hireling' of the British Intelligence services contracted to give literary merit to a book created for the sole purpose of distorting Islam and the Koran and insulting Muslims in Europe and throughout the world.¹⁴¹ The negative review by the Ayatollah was incongruent with a book review in the Tehran Times, which merely said that The Satanic Verses contained many historical falsehoods.¹⁴² Iranian religious and secular political leaders devoted all of their energy to denouncing the book and exhorting someone to fulfill the dictates of Ayatollah Khomeini's fatwa.¹⁴³ The book was not the only pernicious offense; the refusal of the British government to ban the book or

¹³⁷ Ayatollah Ruhollah Musavi Khomeini, quoted in *Observer*, London, Feb. 19, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 68.

¹³⁸ Khomeini, eds Appignanesi and Maitland, 68

¹³⁹ "Context for the Ayatollah's decree: The religious and political in Islam," *Baltimore Sun*, Feb. 26, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 223.

¹⁴⁰ "Iran's Majlis speaker says publication of The Satanic Verses was 'worse than an officially declared war'," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, Feb. 17, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 70.

¹⁴¹ "Commentary on 'Satanic Verses,'" *Foreign Broadcast Information Service*, Feb. 16, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 71.

¹⁴² "Rushdie has fallen into total moral degradation," *Independent*, Feb. 21, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 18.

¹⁴³ "Iranian President's sermon at Friday prayers attacks British policy on *The Satanic Verses* issue," *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, Feb. 20, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 73.

Penguin to cease publication was tantamount to the same offense.¹⁴⁴ Khomeini's death sentence made the publication of a novel a sticky geopolitical affair and intensified a situation that was already subject to angry protests, riots, and deaths. The impact of the fatwa was nearly immediate. The following day, Salman Rushdie entered a police protection program.¹⁴⁵

The Rushdie Affair had transformed into a situation where the religious and political leader of a sovereign state ordered the death of a citizen of a different sovereign state five thousand miles to the West. The geopolitical element of the Affair pervaded subsequent comments made by statesmen, writers, and public figures. Writers passionately defended literature and Rushdie.¹⁴⁶ Diplomatic and trade relations between Iran and Britain had been at a standstill since the Islamic Revolution, but an attempt at normalization lost all momentum.¹⁴⁷ Britain decided against upgrading its Tehran embassy, but it did not go as far as to sever ties.¹⁴⁸ Iran attempted to forge an alliance with the Vatican, seeking a salubrious religious relationship between Islam and Christianity to counter publication of *The Satanic Verses*.¹⁴⁹ The Vatican rebuffed this diplomatic-religious alliance, but many prominent European religious figures defended the reactions of Muslims in their countries and requested their governments move to ban the offending book. The Archbishop of Canterbury

¹⁴⁴ "Iranian President's sermon at Friday prayers attacks British policy on *The Satanic Verses* issue," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 73.

¹⁴⁵ "Rushdie in hiding after Ayatollah's death order," *The Guardian*, London, Feb. 15, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 77.

¹⁴⁶ "Writers rally to Rushdie," *The Guardian*, London, Feb. 16, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 81.

¹⁴⁷ "Rapprochement heading for rocks," *The Guardian*, London, Feb. 16, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 80.

¹⁴⁸ *Independent*, London, Feb. 17, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 84.

¹⁴⁹ *Telegraph*, London, Feb. 16, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 81.

sympathized with the “sufferings” of Muslims and claimed only the most insensitive could not see the offense.¹⁵⁰ Likewise, the Chief Rabbi sympathized with the aggrieved and urged the British government to seek legislation to prevent the publication of future hate speech.¹⁵¹ A French Cardinal, the Archbishop of Lyons, attacked *The Satanic Verses* for offending religious faith in general.¹⁵²

Members of the British government had varying opinions on *The Satanic Verses* and the fatwa calling for a citizen’s murder. Parliamentary members and government officials decried the fatwa for inciting violence.¹⁵³ Tories were largely unified in opposition to the Ayatollah and what they viewed as an attack on civilization and free society, but the Labour party was divided in its response to the fatwa.¹⁵⁴ Party leader Neil Kinnock emerged as a friend of Rushdie’s and unrelenting passionate defender of the book, whereas deputy leader Roy Hattersley and other senior leaders of the party called on Rushdie to cease further publications.¹⁵⁵ Labour was divided because some of its members represented constituencies with large Muslim populations and were concerned that if they did not unite against further publication or withdrawal, that they would suffer electoral defeats.¹⁵⁶ Margaret Thatcher ignored requests made by councils and mosques to ban the book, but she criticized *The Satanic Verses* after Khomeini’s

¹⁵⁰ *Independent*, London, Feb. 22, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 93.

¹⁵¹ Chief Rabbi, “Paying due regard to our beliefs,” *Times*, London, March 9, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 200.

¹⁵² “French cardinal joins attack on ‘insulting’ novel,” *Independent*, London, Feb. 23, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 130.

¹⁵³ *Times*, Feb. 15, 1989, London, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 78.

¹⁵⁴ “Issue of softcover edition of *The Satanic Verses* splits Labour party,” *Publishers Weekly*, Aug. 4, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 129.

¹⁵⁵ “Issue of softcover edition of *The Satanic Verses* splits Labour party,” eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 129.

¹⁵⁶ “Issue of softcover edition of *The Satanic Verses* splits Labour party,” eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 129.

fatwa for offending religious sensibilities.¹⁵⁷ Home Secretary Geoffrey Howe made an attempt to jump on the anti-Rushdie bandwagon by claiming that the ‘philistine’ book painted Britain in a negative light by comparing it with Nazi Germany.¹⁵⁸ A book chronicling the South Asian migrant’s experience in a new land – Britain – might have cast certain aspects of Britain negatively, but Howe’s claim was absurd.¹⁵⁹ Perhaps fearful of geopolitical consequences and of domestic peace, the British government was steadfast in refusing to ban the book, but it was quick to denounce various aspects of it and invent criticisms.

Rushdie is alive and has written nearly a dozen best-selling and award-winning books since the ugly fatwa episode, but not everyone escaped unscathed. In addition to deaths as a result of rioting in India and Pakistan, a Belgian imam and his aide were assassinated in Brussels by a Muslim who was enraged by lenient statements the imam made on television towards Rushdie.¹⁶⁰ An Italian bookshop was burned in Milan after Italian translators announced their intent to rush publication of the Italian version.¹⁶¹ Ravenna Muslims threatened to destroy a monument of Dante in retaliation for the publication and for relegating the Prophet Muhammad to the ninth pit of hell in *The Divine Comedy*.¹⁶² There were arson attempts on Norwegian bookstores, but it seems that racist groups were

¹⁵⁷ Appignanesi and Maitland, 114.

¹⁵⁸ “Rude, as in rudimentary,” *The Guardian*, London, March 4, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 115.

¹⁵⁹ “Rude, as in rudimentary,” eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 115.

¹⁶⁰ “Imam in Rushdie row is killed,” *The Guardian*, London, March, 30, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 126-127.

¹⁶¹ Appignanesi and Maitland, 138.

¹⁶² Appignanesi and Maitland, 138.

involved in that fray.¹⁶³ Middle Eastern nations were able to ban the book with virtually no protest; most of their energies were channeled into encouraging European nations to follow their lead.¹⁶⁴ France and Germany experienced minor protests by their Muslim populations and their politicians denounced the fatwa and attempts made to suppress the freedom of expression.¹⁶⁵ The demonstrations in continental Europe were lighter and the reactions by politicians, writers, and the press were stronger. It was in Britain that the situation endured the longest and evoked the most polarized reactions.

Rushdie's life changed irrevocably, as he moved from police shelter to police shelter nearly daily, and lived under the watch of the British police at all times.¹⁶⁶ In fact, his marriage crumbled, as his wife was unable to withstand the pressures of being on the run.¹⁶⁷ Rushdie was notable in the 1980s for being an unrelenting critic of the British police apparatus in their treatment of minorities and immigrants, so it was ironic that his life depended on their guardianship.¹⁶⁸ The novelist's initial response to the fatwa was acrimonious and angry, and he wished that he had written a more critical book.¹⁶⁹ Rushdie wrote this immediately following the fatwa. Perhaps given the explosive international

¹⁶³ "Norway's Aschehoug rushes *Satanic Verses* to print," *Publishers Weekly*, May, 5, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 139.

¹⁶⁴ Naguib Mahfouz, "Khomeini is a terrorist," *Der Spiegel*, no. 9, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 141.

¹⁶⁵ Jacques Chirac, *Le Monde*, March 2, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 133.

¹⁶⁶ Salman Rushdie and Friends in Conversation, "The Only Subject Is Love: Imagining Better Worlds," Emory University, February 26, 2010.

¹⁶⁷ Salman Rushdie and Friends in Conversation, "The Only Subject Is Love: Imagining Better Worlds," Emory University, February 26, 2010.

¹⁶⁸ Homi Bhabha, *The New Statesman*, London, March 3, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 113.

¹⁶⁹ Salman Rushdie, "Rushdie in hiding after Ayatollah's death order," *The Guardian*, London, Feb. 15, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 77.

situation and the realization that many people's lives, including his own, were on the line, Rushdie attempted to proffer an apology to offended Muslims.¹⁷⁰ The apology was terse and uncomfortable, as Rushdie tried to walk the tightrope of not wanting any violence committed in the name of his book, while trying not to compromise artistic integrity and freedom of expression.¹⁷¹ The perfunctory apology did more harm than it did to quell the powder keg situation, as writers, artists, and many conservatives decried the action of apologizing and Muslims and their sympathizers refused to acknowledge the flaccid apology.¹⁷² For his part, Ayatollah Khomeini announced that even if Rushdie were to repent and become the most 'pious man of his time,' it was still incumbent on all believers to devote their lives to 'send him to hell.'¹⁷³

The fatwa and the initial responses to the death sentence constituted the climax of the Affair. Western societies were confronted with new and serious issues. Britain especially debated the freedom of expression and whether it covered the right to offend.¹⁷⁴ Many Western countries, particularly European nations with significant Muslim populations had to recognize the growing visibility and demands of those populations. Many writers pointed blame at Islamic societies for their hierarchal and uncritical nature, evidenced by their inability to handle a critic from within like Rushdie.¹⁷⁵ They wrote of an

¹⁷⁰ Salman Rushdie, "Rushdie expresses regret," Feb. 18, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 97-98.

¹⁷¹ Rushdie, "Rushdie expresses regret," Appignanesi and Maitland, 97-98.

¹⁷² "Works of art need no apologies," *Observer*, Feb. 19, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 98.

¹⁷³ Ayatollah Khomeini, *Irna Iranian News Agency*, Feb. 19, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 99.

¹⁷⁴ "Lessons of the Rushdie Affair," *Los Angeles Times*, Feb. 23, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 211.

¹⁷⁵ "On Islam," *International Herald Tribune*, Feb. 21, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 214.

oppressive Muslim fanaticism, thanking Rushdie for tackling the phenomenon.¹⁷⁶ Writers had the freedom to speak, as government officials, of course, might have had to cloak their true sentiments in carefully worded language so as not to upset diplomatic relations. Labour MP and Booker Prize judge Michael Foot ventured out of cloaked language to lay the blame in the killings and riots on Islam and irresponsible Islamic governments throughout the world, citing the recently ended decade long war between Iran and Iraq as an example of poor governance and widespread killing within Islam.¹⁷⁷ Muslims responded in the public debate with cries for toleration and more protective laws, a point that former president Jimmy Carter supported, as he excoriated Rushdie for writing such a malicious book.¹⁷⁸

In the Spotlight

As the Enoch Powell saga in the late 1960s and early 1970s and the persistence of anti-immigrant Fascist parties evinced, immigration was a problem that aroused hostility among native Britons. The third post-war wave of immigration consisted largely of South Asians and Muslims who were not able to assimilate into the population or carve a successful niche as well as Polish, Jewish, Italian, and Chinese immigrants were able to do. Instead, they remained clustered and resigned to menial labor, poor literacy, and poverty. The Rushdie Affair suddenly thrust this population to the forefront. The group demanded more political power and a society better suited for them.

¹⁷⁶ Mario Vargas Llosa, "Words for Salman Rushdie," *New York Times Book Review*, March 12, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 169.

¹⁷⁷ Michael Foot, "Historical Rushdie," *The Guardian*, London, March 10, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 231.

¹⁷⁸ Jimmy Carter, "Rushdie's book is an insult," *New York Times*, March 5, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 237.

The Rushdie Affair is almost like a Rushdie novel in that it is effused with paradoxes, ironies, confused characters, identity issues, and East and West culture clashes. Following the fatwa and his rush to safety, Rushdie lashed out against angry Muslims, claiming that they had fulfilled every negatively held Western stereotype by acting in the violent and furious manner they had.¹⁷⁹ The ultimate irony of *The Satanic Verses* and the Rushdie Affair was that Rushdie did not understand the community he claimed to be a leading intellectual and defender of. Fellow literati heralded Rushdie as a great defender and communicator of South Asians migrant communities.¹⁸⁰ The Rushdie Affair made it painfully evident that Rushdie did not entirely understand his population and subject matter. He was a staunch defender of institutional racism in the early 1980s, but his efforts were usually aligned with leftist groups that did not have much resonance with the South Asian migrant population.¹⁸¹ Rushdie could empathize with his compatriots through their harsh journey and difficulties of acclimating to British society, but his British society was radically different than their British society. He came to Britain as the son of an upper class, well-educated family that had been involved with the British Raj.¹⁸² He was subject to racial abuse, but he was protected within the confines of private school and university life.¹⁸³ That situation contrasts with the origins of the majority of South Asian migrants, who were poor and illiterate rural dwellers thrown into the maelstrom of crammed urban life.¹⁸⁴ It would be

¹⁷⁹ Salman Rushdie, *Guardian*, Feb. 15, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 77.

¹⁸⁰ "Salman Rushdie: Hiding from himself," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 5

¹⁸¹ Homi Bhabha, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 112

¹⁸² "The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 2

¹⁸³ "The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 2

¹⁸⁴ "Dangers of a Muslim Campaign," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 55

callous to dismiss the racial abuse that Rushdie faced in his adolescence, but his circumstances paled in many respects to his subject population. Perhaps he could grasp their struggles and fears intellectually, but he was not a part of the population. By the time he wrote *The Satanic Verses*, he was well ensconced as an elite member of the British literary circle and decorated as a best-seller.¹⁸⁵ South Asian migrants blithely refused to read *The Satanic Verses*, but it is not as if they had swallowed *Shame* and *Midnight's Children*, anticipating the release of another novel to engross. There is widespread consensus amongst literary scholars that Rushdie's books are inaccessible to the general reader.¹⁸⁶ South Asian migrants did not even qualify as general readers; many were not even literate in their native tongues of Urdu and Hindi.¹⁸⁷ Rushdie claimed to have represented this underclass, but the befuddling elements of the Affair showed that he did not understand some fundamental aspects of his population, such as their reactions to offending material. If he did know that the book would create a worldwide uproar, then perhaps he knew something particularly insidious about his population.

¹⁸⁵ "The marked man: a writer driven by life to dissent," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 2

¹⁸⁶ John Walsh, "Words that outraged Islam," *Sunday Times*, London, Feb. 19, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 25.

¹⁸⁷ Fadia Faqir, "Islam and Literature," *Times Literary Supplement*, London, Jan 6-12, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 226.

Chapter Three: Britain's Changing Post-War Society

Immigration was a massive development in post-World War II Britain, altering demographics and the social landscape. However, immigration was only part of the story of Britain's post-war society, which included: increasing numbers of female workers, growing private and public secularism, declining standards of censorship, and dissolving notions of the traditional family. The different attitudes in these sectors were successful in convincing Parliament to pass legislation, notably in liberalizing divorce laws.¹⁸⁸ The growing prevalence of these new views and legislation efforts caused conservatives and traditionalists to label 1960s Britain as “the permissive society.”¹⁸⁹ They perceived new attitudes as evidence of Britain's moral decline, and they were repulsed by it.¹⁹⁰ British society transformed immensely in the post-war period in many respects, regardless of how moralists felt or labeled it. The Thatcher Revolution germinated off the backlash of the permissive society, but the Thatcher government did not channel moralist fury and repeal disliked legislation. Instead, the Thatcher government set out to strengthen Britain by focusing on economic reforms and not on social reforms.¹⁹¹ South Asian immigrants who came to Britain in the 1960s were rural villagers with traditional values incompatible with the new permissive society.¹⁹² Their struggles included racism and poverty, but their

¹⁸⁸ Christie Davies, *The Strange Death of Moral Britain* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2004), 94.

¹⁸⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 482

¹⁹⁰ Paul Addison, *No Turning Back: The Peaceful Revolutions of Post-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 125.

¹⁹¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 525

¹⁹² Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 482

traditional values concerning gender roles, marriage, and family clashed with Britain's post-war society.

Post-war Britain experienced a trend of secularization that reflected in public and private life. Growing secularization silenced ringing church bells, which had been a staple of city and town ambiance.¹⁹³ Church attendance carried tremendous significance historically in England because in the midst of religious upheaval, Tudor monarchs had decreed fines and punishment for forgoing church.¹⁹⁴ There is evidence that church attendance rates had been falling since the 1880s gradually, but it was not until the 1960s that those rates declined precipitously.¹⁹⁵ In the 1960s, Sunday school attendance rates for children dropped sharply, in addition to church attendance for adults.¹⁹⁶ Church attendance rates dropped for all denominations of Protestantism, though it seems that Roman Catholicism enjoyed an upsurge in church attendance and improved public visibility.¹⁹⁷ Instead of having lax Christian school teachers teach the doctrines and theology of Christianity in schools, reformers suggested replacing theology with comparative religious studies.¹⁹⁸ Religion was becoming a topic of academic study, rather than a practiced social phenomenon. The rising prominence of athletes, sporting events, and musicians accompanied declining rates of church attendance.¹⁹⁹ Sporting events, along with a subsequent sojourn to the bar,

¹⁹³ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 78

¹⁹⁴ Richard Bucholz and Newton Key, *England: A Narrative History, 1485-1714* (Blackwell: Singapore, 2009), 161.

¹⁹⁵ Hugh McLeod, *Religion and the People of Western Europe, 1789-1970* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 113.

¹⁹⁶ Davies, 46

¹⁹⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 346

¹⁹⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 346

¹⁹⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 348

provided a much more invigorating alternative to churchgoers for weekend activities than church did.²⁰⁰ The Beatles captivated a generation of young fans, inspiring John Lennon to summarize the era adequately in the eyes of moralists; the Beatles were more popular than Jesus.²⁰¹ Church attendance rates were reaching nadirs because many Britons felt indifferent. Atheism was not rising in inverse proportion to declining church attendance; Britons were easing off public displays of religion in favor of specialized private beliefs or indifferent beliefs.²⁰² Such indifference or reluctance to display faith publicly did not lend itself to attending church. Church leaders decried the falling attendance rates as presaging the fall of morality throughout Britain.²⁰³ Secularism dominated private and public spaces.

Church leaders were swift in declaring religious attitudes that they perceived as negative - the apparent demise of religion in private and public life. The most worrisome aspects of post-war society that signaled the decline of morality in Britain for church leaders and moralists related to marriage. Marriage was undergoing a multi-faceted breakdown with a rapid spike in affairs, divorces, abortions, out of wedlock births, and non-traditional households.²⁰⁴ Traditional notions of right and wrong in marriage did not tender a strong influence with many British people in the post-war era. A paradigm shift in gender roles affected the labor market, marriage, family life, and British society overall.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ McLeod, 116

²⁰¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 348

²⁰² Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 348

²⁰³ Addison, 79

²⁰⁴ Addison, 76

²⁰⁵ Addison, 90

Comparing pre-World War II with post-World War II attitudes regarding feminism and women in society reveals a clear shift in opinion. Popular magazines of the 1920s and 1930s were tellingly entitled *Women and Home*, *Modern Home*, *Wife and Home*, and *Good Housekeeping*.²⁰⁶ Nascent magazines in the period focused more on women than the home, but they emphasized the paramount importance of marriage and keeping a happy husband.²⁰⁷ Their attitude was that work was only acceptable before marriage and should cease upon matrimony, which was the best job for a woman.²⁰⁸ On the topic of divorce, they warned against pursuing legal changes to make divorce easier, claiming that “a bad husband was better than no husband.”²⁰⁹ They labeled divorce a “folly,” even when wives were ridding themselves of unfaithful husbands.²¹⁰ These types of forays into social affairs were cautious, however, as magazines feared alienating readers by discussing birth control and controversial issues.²¹¹ Magazines in the pre-World War era steered clear of advancing any social positions by limiting themselves to sharing recipes and upholding the dominant contemporary positions.

Following the war, female leaders following the war stressed that they could not claim full citizenship rights if they were not contributing to the economy.²¹² They portrayed the increase of women working as bridging the

²⁰⁶ Martin Pugh, “Domesticity and the Decline of Feminism,” in *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century* ed. Harold Smith (University of Massachusetts Press: Amherst, 1990), 150.

²⁰⁷ Pugh, 151

²⁰⁸ Pugh, 151

²⁰⁹ Pugh, 151

²¹⁰ Pugh, 151

²¹¹ Pugh, 153

²¹² Jane Lewis, “Myrdal, Klein, Women’s Two Roles, and Post-War Feminism 1945-1960,” in *British Feminism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Harold Smith, 176.

gender inequality gap created by the labor specialization of the industrial revolution.²¹³ Social and moral traditionalists countered the exhortations of working women by taking especial care to laud the work of domestic women and depicting their important work as the linchpin of a stable society and country.²¹⁴ As women had the franchise, parties had to court them for electoral advantages, but all parties struggled to solidify the female vote.²¹⁵ Governments were unsure of how to approach the issue of women working, and they attempted to incentivize a higher national birth rate.²¹⁶ There was a short and significant marriage and baby boom in the early 1950s, but post-WWII society was witnessing a dual transformation of more women entering the labor market and a shift in working women's attitudes toward social institutions.

Women were integral to the war effort in World War I and World War II, constituting the bulk of the labor force.²¹⁷ Post-war adjustment was difficult for soldiers re-integrating into society, but also for women who faced the prospects of post-war life without their war-time jobs and family members.²¹⁸ During the war and especially following World War II, juvenile delinquency emerged as one of Britain's most dire problems, reaching record-breaking levels.²¹⁹ Furthermore, opponents of women working in the labor force connected rampant delinquency with changing gender roles and female employment.²²⁰ They also linked new

²¹³ Lewis, 176

²¹⁴ Lewis, 179

²¹⁵ Pugh, 157

²¹⁶ Pugh, 158

²¹⁷ Addison, 88

²¹⁸ Addison, 88

²¹⁹ Addison, 96

²²⁰ Addison, 96

gender roles and female employment to the high percentage of marital infidelities that occurred after the war.²²¹ The character of the family suffered with the increasing number of abortions that characterized post-war society.²²² Women complained that abortion served as birth control because contraception was difficult to receive, even within marriage.²²³ Reform was needed in respect to birth control and abortion because many women were injured or killed through dangerous and unregulated operations.²²⁴ The Protestant and Catholic churches of Britain experience a rift over the abortion debate, with some Protestant churches advocating in favor of legalization.²²⁵ Self-identifying Protestants did not oppose birth control on the whole.²²⁶ Parliament passed legislation in the 1970s in response to the second wave of feminism, and contraception advice and contraceptive devices then became available from the National Health Service.²²⁷ Parliament was merely acting in accordance with popular opinion and the NHS expanded. The second wave feminists focused on shifting gender roles in terms of employment, but also in regards to sexuality and marriage. The radical faction of the second wave feminists found marriage to be a wholly unattractive prospect, but the majority of the feminists were insistent on passing legislation allowing them more control with birth control and divorce.²²⁸ If the changes within marriage were distressing to the moralist protectors of Britain, the changes outside

²²¹ Addison, 88

²²² Addison, 349

²²³ Addison, 94

²²⁴ Davies, 83

²²⁵ Davies, 187

²²⁶ Addison, 83

²²⁷ Addison, 346

²²⁸ Addison, 355

marriage were appalling. The average age of first-time sex fell to sixteen in the permissive society of the 1960s as the age of marriage rose simultaneously.²²⁹ More premarital sex engendered more abortions and more illegitimate children.²³⁰ The silver lining for the children born out of wedlock was that the father and mother either married later or cohabitated, so that the children had their biological parents raising them.²³¹ Cohabitation before marriage became more prevalent throughout Britain and although serial monogamy did not overtake the traditional institution of marriage, it was an increasingly popular alternative.²³² Perhaps a relevant indicator of how attitudes toward marriage in the permissive era transformed was the replacement of the terms ‘husband’ and ‘wife’ with ‘partner.’²³³ As a result of shifting views on marriage, the percentage of religious marriages and baptisms declined in the 1960s.²³⁴ The main result of changing gender roles and different views towards marriage was that divorce became more accessible to women to escape bad marriages; following the passing of divorce legislation in 1973, divorce rates soared to record highs before hitting a plateau.²³⁵ This is partially explained by many women having wanted to obtain a divorce for years not being able to do so. Moralists concerned were concerned about females obtaining divorces because of negative ramifications on the nation’s birth rate. The birth rate’s most precipitous decline occurred between 1860 to the 1920s,

²²⁹ Addison, 349

²³⁰ Addison, 349

²³¹ Davies, 41

²³² Addison, 349

²³³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 528

²³⁴ McLeod, 135

²³⁵ Addison, 76

when British mothers were begetting an average of two children.²³⁶ By the 1960s, the birth rate stabilized at below the sustainable 2.1 children per household.²³⁷ However, increased rates of marital infidelity, divorce, and illegitimate births defined the permissive society of 1960s Britain.²³⁸

Homosexuality was another topic that signaled a moral slide for British moralist commentators. Its increasing prominence in the 1950s and 1960s fit under the destruction of the traditional family, along with illegitimate children and divorce. As in many nations, homosexuality was categorized as a mental illness in Britain, a status which it retained for decades after World War II.²³⁹ Opponents of homosexuality found it an easy and obvious target to criticize as reprehensible for lowering the birth rate, which they viewed as harmful Britain's national security by hurting manpower.²⁴⁰ Moralists decried homosexuality as a mental illness that was thought to damage society, so it was prosecuted vigorously in the 1950s.²⁴¹ Out of the many aspects of the permissive society that commentators found repulsive, homosexuality was chief among them.²⁴² The group Gay News achieved notoriety when the Christian group Crown for Christ sued it for portraying a homosexual Jesus.²⁴³ Moralists especially decried homosexuality and Parliament waited until 1997 to pass an equal rights bill for homosexuals. In 1966, the British Council of Churches realized that homosexuality was more

²³⁶ Michael Anderson, "The Emergence of the Modern Life Cycle in Britain," *Social History*, vol. 10, no. 1 (1985), 73.

²³⁷ Anderson, 74

²³⁸ Addison, 76

²³⁹ Davies, 98

²⁴⁰ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 31

²⁴¹ Addison, 99

²⁴² Addison, 208

²⁴³ Addison, 348

common than previously thought and declared it imperative to introduce “gay liberation.”²⁴⁴ Despite their recommendations, reforms pertaining to homosexuality did not fare well. The Sexual Offences Act of 1967 was not a sweeping reform because it did not legalize homosexuality and it ended up criminalizing public acts.²⁴⁵ Following its passing, recorded incidents of male indecency doubled and the number of prosecutions trebled, so it was an ineffective piece of legislation.²⁴⁶ Homosexuality was part of the permissive society, but it was one aspect of it that took much longer than other aspects to receive legislative acceptance. The fears and disgust at homosexuality was not solely due to homosexuality as a phenomenon by itself. HIV and the AIDS epidemic that spread through Britain exacerbated homophobia and made it a public health concern.²⁴⁷ Despite the permissive society, it was not until the Blair government that Parliament successfully passed efficacious legislation pertaining to the protection of homosexuals from persecution.²⁴⁸

Parliament in nineteenth century Victorian Britain passed the Obscene Publications Act, banning the publication of material if it passed “an obscenity test.”²⁴⁹ The nineteenth century was lean on media and the law referred to printed materials. The twentieth century and the post-war era presented the challenge of radio and television in addition to more widespread and accessible print media. Growing affluence in a post-war economic boom for British families after the war

²⁴⁴ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 510

²⁴⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 511

²⁴⁶ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 510

²⁴⁷ Addison, 360

²⁴⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 510

²⁴⁹ Addison, 199

also meant the presence of televisions and radios in their homes.²⁵⁰ A law dating back to 1857 in Victorian Britain and containing an ambiguous barometer for censorship was anachronistic for post-war Britain. The BBC, theater, and cinema had governed and maintained their own standards of decency.²⁵¹ It was not until 1959 that Parliament passed an act that permitted publishers to defend banned publications on the grounds that the offending work had literary merit.²⁵² That bill had proven necessary because local magistrates had banned 1,500 works of fiction in the span of three years from 1950 to 1953.²⁵³ Publications and censorship altered dramatically in this permissive period, starting with a court allowing the publication of D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* after it had been banned for thirty years.²⁵⁴ The company to challenge Lord Chamberlain in court for the right to publish the novel was Penguin Books.²⁵⁵ Penguin Books would later be the same publishing house to be caught in the middle of the Rushdie Affair three decades later. The publication of Nabakov's *Lolita* followed that overturned decision, allowing British readers to read a novel starring a pedophilic main character.²⁵⁶ Those two books were the most monumental in allowing other censored material to be published. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* was sold at an exorbitant price to discourage readers from purchasing and reading the book, but it sold into the millions nevertheless.²⁵⁷ *Lolita* had to be smuggled in from Paris,

²⁵⁰ Addison, 171

²⁵¹ Addison, 77

²⁵² Addison, 199

²⁵³ Addison, 78

²⁵⁴ Adam Parkes, *Modernism and the Theater of Censorship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 108.

²⁵⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

²⁵⁶ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

²⁵⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

where it was not banned, until English courts overturned the ban.²⁵⁸ Subsequently, two million copies were purchased and *Lolita* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* - two previously banned books - were national best-sellers.²⁵⁹ The British press and ordinary readers had excoriated the expurgated and smuggled versions of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* in 1929 for being lewd, obscene, sloppy, and indecent.²⁶⁰ Thirty years later, the unexpurgated version became a national bestseller. Other previously banned books whose bans were overturned in the late 1950s included *The Naked and the Dead* by Norman Maller and *Catch 22* by Joseph Heller, which both exceeded a million purchases.²⁶¹ The permissive outlook of courts reviewing censored cases was in congruence with society at large. When these previously censored novels won publication and widespread notoriety, eroticism and 'pornographic' novels became popular in British literature and print media.²⁶²

Books were not the only media to benefit from the permissive revolution. Previously unconscionable material found its way onto television. The word 'fuck' and female and male nudity bypassed the censure and were broadcast.²⁶³ 'Fuck' provoked a national firestorm when it was uttered on BBC and *The Guardian* was the first newspaper to print the word.²⁶⁴ The BBC had been stringent in its regulation of scurrilous material, but it opened its airwaves and relaxed its standards of censure.²⁶⁵ The economic boom of the 1950s allowed for

²⁵⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

²⁵⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

²⁶⁰ Parkes, 109

²⁶¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

²⁶² Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

²⁶³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 507

²⁶⁴ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 507

²⁶⁵ Addison, 200

increasing affluence of middle and lower class British families, which allowed them the purchasing power to own televisions with which to watch scandalous media.²⁶⁶ The British public reveled in its love of cinema and proudly celebrated that Britain watched more movies than any other nation.²⁶⁷ Cinema mirrored television in its lenience towards censorship, so that movies which would have been banned in previous years were screened to an eager movie-going audience.²⁶⁸ Newspapers and magazines allowed journalists to cover topics in sexual education, such as masturbation, venereal diseases, and menstruation.²⁶⁹ The new standards and loss of censorship in media caused a vociferous outrage by traditionalists. Mary Whitehouse – a housewife and mother infuriated by the media her children were subject to – coalesced similarly outraged moralists to assail the moral decay of British media.²⁷⁰ Their protests fell on deaf ears and the relaxed standards of censorship for media – television, radio, and books – were entrenched as part of the permissive society.

If pre-war society was defined by self-control, probity, and sobriety, then drugs and drunkenness, criminal activity, and violence characterized some of the negative aspects of post-war society.²⁷¹ The perpetually critical George Orwell overlooked some rampant soccer hooliganism when he stated that the mass of British people and society were well-behaved.²⁷² Drug addiction pervaded British society in a way that it did not in the pre-war era. The late nineteenth century

²⁶⁶ Addison, 172

²⁶⁷ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 57

²⁶⁸ Addison, 201

²⁶⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 507

²⁷⁰ Addison, 202

²⁷¹ Davies, 16

²⁷² Davies, 18

witnessed an acceptance of daily and controlled opium use among the upper classes.²⁷³ That did not compare to the introduction of heroin in British society following the war, which affected not only its increasing population of users and abusers, but also accounted for an increase in crime through illicit dealing.²⁷⁴ The number of known heroin addicts rose twenty fold during the 1960s, especially afflicting youth involved with music.²⁷⁵ Drunkards littered the streets, leading appalled moralists to declare that public drunkenness sounded the salvo of moral decline.²⁷⁶ Cannabis had been introduced to Britain through Caribbean immigrants, and it became notorious as the “white harmless drug.”²⁷⁷ Popular musicians such as the Beatles popularized the drug and campaigned unsuccessfully for its legality.²⁷⁸ Convictions for cannabis offenses rose in the 1950s, quadrupled in the early 1960s, and doubled in the late 1960s.²⁷⁹ Starting in 1964, white people constituted the majority of those convicted for cannabis offences.²⁸⁰ Since drug usage and addiction were afflicting the population and society in the 1960s, Barnes Wooton chaired the Advisory Committee on Drug Dependence to produce a report suggesting recommendations on legal penalties and state power to curb drug use.²⁸¹ The report instructed laws to distinguish between soft drugs like cannabis, which it considered to be less harmful than

²⁷³ Davies, 14

²⁷⁴ Davies, 38

²⁷⁵ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 515

²⁷⁶ Davies, 27

²⁷⁷ Addison, 216

²⁷⁸ Addison, 216

²⁷⁹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 515

²⁸⁰ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 515

²⁸¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 516

cigarette smoking, and hard drugs like heroin.²⁸² Home Secretary Callaghan was not receptive to the suggestions of the report, and he excoriated it for advancing the malignant permissive society.²⁸³ Legality efforts were futile for cannabis, but as part of the permissive society, drug offenders were treated more leniently in the 1970s than they had been before.²⁸⁴

The various facets of the permissive society in the 1960s became embedded into British society in the 1970s and 1980s. Attitudes crystallized and legislation was passed to protect groups of the permissive society. The various aspects of society – marriage, censorship, drugs – coalesced into a changing society that many ordinary people and leaders came to detest. This is evidenced by apocalyptic statements made by church and political leaders portending the downfall of Britain and by citizen groups that were outraged at the changing landscape.²⁸⁵ Despite some resentment, Conservatives never made a sustained effort to repeal unfavorable legislation. Dissatisfaction with British society pervaded politics and Margaret Thatcher exploited Conservative dissatisfaction in winning the party's leadership over Edward Heath in 1975.²⁸⁶ She did not seize her leadership and party with a coherent ideology, but rather with her concern of the decline of Britain.²⁸⁷ When Conservatives won the 1979 election and Thatcher became the first female prime minister, prognosticators declared that her reign

²⁸² Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 516

²⁸³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 516

²⁸⁴ Addison, 215

²⁸⁵ Davies, 176

²⁸⁶ Peter Riddell, *The Thatcher Era and Its Legacy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 5.

²⁸⁷ Riddell, 6

would be short-lived.²⁸⁸ Their predictions looked likely to materialize through early economic struggles, but a recovering economy and rallying victory over Argentina in the Falklands War in 1982 propelled her to an overwhelming electoral victory in 1983.²⁸⁹ Their approach to solving national problems was through economics and Thatcherites aimed to transform the decline of British society by weakening trade unions and nationalized industries.²⁹⁰

The Thatcher Years of 1979 – 1990 were infamous for race riots and police brutality, especially towards minority groups in inner cities.²⁹¹ Critics claimed that the Thatcher government was authoritarian and prone towards abrogating civil liberties.²⁹² The concern over eroding civil liberties led to calls for constitutional reform on the three hundredth anniversary of the Glorious Revolution in 1988.²⁹³ To counter the perceived authoritarianism of the Thatcher government, a centrist movement named Charter 88 suggested constitutional changes, including a Bill of Rights to ensure civil liberties. It was during the Thatcher years that leftist and anti-racist movements forged forces to combat a rising tide of institutional racism by the police.²⁹⁴ The leader and most visible face of these anti-racist movements was the celebrated novelist and staunch anti-Thatcherite, Salman Rushdie. His BBC series *The Empire Within* assailed the Thatcher government for perpetuating colonial rule within the boundaries of the

²⁸⁸ Shirley Robin Letwin, *The Anatomy of Thatcherism* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1992), 1.

²⁸⁹ Riddell, 10

²⁹⁰ Riddell, 8

²⁹¹ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 526

²⁹² Riddell, 168

²⁹³ Riddell, 175

²⁹⁴ Morgan, 561

nation.²⁹⁵ Incarceration rates and the number of prison buildings increased during the Thatcher years, but violent crime figures remained high.²⁹⁶ The violence was not limited to England; English football clubs were banned from international (Union of European Football Associations) competitions as a result of violent hooliganism that led to deaths.²⁹⁷ Conservatives found it politically beneficial to attack the permissive society in the 1970s and prominent leaders, including Margaret Thatcher, blamed the 1960s permissive society for generating a legacy of drugs, crime, and violence.²⁹⁸ Norman Tebbit, Conservative Party chairman from 1985-1988, singled out the permissive society of the 1960s and its accompanying legislation for social problems during the Thatcher years.²⁹⁹ Thatcher's particular phrase to define the rampant social problems was "a culture of excuses" engendered by broadcasters, social workers, and politicians.³⁰⁰

Parliament passed sweeping legislation during the 1960s pertaining to homosexuality, abortion, divorce, sexuality, and censorship that Conservatives under Thatcher did not reverse. Despite fomenting and riding the backlash against the excesses of the permissive society to power, Thatcherites did not revert to a pre-1960s society. British Conservatives were unable to fashion a 'moral majority' to repeal the permissive society.³⁰¹ Labour had been careful not to be associated with the permissive society, so Conservatives could not politically pin

²⁹⁵ Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticisms, 1981-1991* (New York: Granta Books, 1992), 81.

²⁹⁶ Riddell, 171

²⁹⁷ Riddell, 173

²⁹⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 525

²⁹⁹ Riddell, 171

³⁰⁰ Riddell, 171

³⁰¹ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 526

their societal displeasures with their main opponents.³⁰² Secularization made deep inroads into British society and individual people, so a religious revival was not plausible.³⁰³ The changes made during the 1960s benefitted many groups, such as women and cohabitating unmarried couples, so it did not make sense for Conservatives to alienate voters.³⁰⁴ Thatcherism reviled some aspects of contemporary British society, but it aimed at making economic reforms rather than social ones.³⁰⁵

Moralist commentators declared that Britain was not a Christian country, as a result of moribund morality and the permissive society.³⁰⁶ Twentieth century Britain was a society of large, impersonal institutions with an increasingly secular foundation.³⁰⁷ Different political, religious, and social leaders had their own red lines for how far they were willing to see the permissive society advance and many leaders were reluctant to continue making reforms.³⁰⁸ Britons in the post-war period displayed new attitudes regarding women, sexuality, marriage, work, and secularism that were matched by enacted legislation. Strident opposition to new aspects and attitudes of post-war British society demonstrates that sentiments were not unanimous. To the moralists of the era, the social and moral fabrics of Britain were unraveling and the nation was in full decline. Labeling it as the “permissive society” was their way of conveying that message. Irrespective of

³⁰² Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 526

³⁰³ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 526

³⁰⁴ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 526

³⁰⁵ Riddell, 171

³⁰⁶ Davies, 50

³⁰⁷ Davies, 100

³⁰⁸ Addison, 196

labels and terms, post-war society heralded attitudes and legislation, so that social attitudes in the 1970s were radically different from the 1930s.

Commonwealth immigration represented one of the most serious challenges to British society following the war. South Asian immigrants brought their traditional values with them when they migrated from the subcontinent to Britain. It is difficult to match and claim that their values were congruent with those of aggrieved moralists of the period, but they certainly were incompatible with the permissive society. The waves of immigration preceding South Asians were better able to adapt and settle. The South Asian wave faced increasing levels of racism and urban poverty that diminished their ability to assimilate into their new society. They were also subject to inner city police brutality during Thatcher's era that Salman Rushdie, attempted to expose.³⁰⁹ The values of the permissive society exacerbated their migration pains. South Asian Muslims practiced arranged marriages (especially at a young age for girls), did not allow for women to instigate divorces, and maintained traditional gender roles with women in the domestic sphere.³¹⁰ Whether or not *The Satanic Verses* would have passed the outdated Obscenity Act of 1857 that was still in place in the 1950s is a moot hypothetical complicated by an array of factors, but standards of censorship in print and electronic media were relaxed to allow publications of literary merit, such as Rushdie's offensive novels. Even if South Asian migrants were literate in English, the majority of them were probably too concerned with everyday affairs to read *Lolita* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and feel morally outraged by the content

³⁰⁹ Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticisms, 1981-1991*, 81

³¹⁰ Hellyer, 51

and characters. Whereas the British population at large – with some dissenters who felt that free speech should not include the right to offend – was comfortable with the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, the South Asian Muslim population was ready to burn and draw Rushdie's blood.³¹¹

³¹¹ "Dangers of a Muslim Campaign," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 55

Chapter Four: Modern Day Affairs

The Rushdie Affair demonstrated very clearly to the world that many Muslims are ultra-sensitive to provocations about the basic tenets of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad and the Koran.³¹² The consequences of the publication of *The Satanic Affair* were riots and arsons in Britain and deaths around the world. A Western scholar of Islam claimed that anyone in the field could have forecasted the violent reactions and protests if they had been consulted before publication.³¹³ The multifaceted complexity of the Rushdie Affair might not ever be replicated again; recent events have resuscitated the apparitions of the Rushdie Affair. Recent controversies include the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons and *The Jewel of Medina* by Sherry Jones. *Jyllands-Posten* is a newspaper in Denmark that commissioned a cartoonist to draw cartoons about Muhammad, which it and other newspapers across Denmark printed.³¹⁴ The cartoons' controversy in Britain owes to the fact that no newspaper or media outlet published them.³¹⁵ *The Jewel of Medina* is a novel written by American journalist Sherry Jones, and it is her historical fiction attempt to present Aisha, who was Muhammad's young wife, to Western readers.³¹⁶ The book was a source of controversy because a British publisher, Random House, dropped the book before publication. Random House hoped for a positive blurb to adorn the cover, so they sent a manuscript to

³¹² John Leo, "In search of the middle ground," *US News & World Report*, March 6, 1989, eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 249

³¹³ "In search of the middle ground," eds. Appignanesi and Maitland, 250

³¹⁴ Gwaldys Fouche, "Danish court dismisses Muhammad cartoons case," *The Guardian*, October 27, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/oct/27/pressandpublishing.race>.

³¹⁵ "Insults and injuries," *The Guardian*, February 3, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2006/feb/04/religion.muhammadcartoons>.

³¹⁶ Lorainne Adams, "Thinly veiled," *New York Times*, December 12, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/14/books/review/Adams-t.html>.

American academic and expert on Middle Eastern History, Denise Spellberg.³¹⁷ She returned a scathing report to Random House on how the book amounted to “soft core pornography,” and that it would incite heated emotions throughout the world.³¹⁸ Random House did not want to undergo the hassle that Penguin endured accompanying publication of a dangerous book, and they decided not to publish it. The Danish cartoons and *The Jewel of Medina* illuminate how the situation in Britain has changed in the way that the government and media respond to their Muslim population. The same debates rage on about freedom of expression, multiculturalism, and democratic limits in 2009, just like they did in 1989.

Jyllands-Posten Draws the Prophet and Global Ire

If there is anything comparable in magnitude to the Rushdie Affair, it is the Danish Cartoon Affair. Much like *The Satanic Verses*, the original printing of the Muhammad cartoons by the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper and newspapers around the world incited a worldwide reaction, including violence, riots, and deaths.³¹⁹ The Danish newspaper requested a cartoonist to illustrate a series of twelve cartoons, one of which included Muhammad with a bomb turban and another with him running out of heaven because it had run dry of virgins.³²⁰ The cartoons were printed in the culture section of the newspaper and an editorial that explained the need and reasoning for the cartoons accompanied them.³²¹ Editor Carsten Juste declared that the cartoons were an experiment to test whether Danes

³¹⁷ “Muhammad novel publisher undeterred by fire bomb attack,” *The Guardian*

³¹⁸ “Muhammad novel publisher undeterred by fire bomb attack,” *The Guardian*

³¹⁹ Klausen, 118

³²⁰ Michael McDonough and Mark Oliver, “British Muslims protest over cartoons,” *The Guardian*, February 3, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/feb/03/religion.uk>.

³²¹ Klausen, 15

would be willing to draw and print cartoons of the Prophet, for fear of retribution by oversensitive Muslims.³²² Aside from the immediate conflation of Muslim with suicide-bombing terrorist, the larger issue for Muslims was that images of the Prophet are prohibited.³²³

The Danish cartoons touched off a worldwide reaction, even though very few countries initially re-printed the cartoons. Much like with *The Satanic Verses*, many angry and aggrieved Muslims were protesting against something that they had not seen.³²⁴ Newspapers in Jordan and Yemen printed the cartoons and their editors quickly resigned before threats to their lives materialized.³²⁵ In total, 143 newspapers in 56 countries printed the cartoons, though some newspapers ignored the first eleven cartoons in the series and printed the most offensive drawing.³²⁶ Violence erupted in countries across Asia, North Africa, and the Middle East, where fifty deaths were recorded.³²⁷ It has been observed that news of the cartoons spread through the Middle East with alacrity because of al-Jazeera, which has interconnected diverse and disparate Muslim populations.³²⁸ Protests escalated into riots, which usually amounted to looting and arson, leading to the involvement of police firing at recalcitrant crowds.³²⁹ The Organization of Islamic Conference, a fifty seven member body of Muslim nations, claimed shrinking

³²² Klausen, 16

³²³ "British Muslims protest over cartoons," *The Guardian*

³²⁴ "Insults and injuries," *The Guardian*

³²⁵ Brian Whitaker, "Muslims angry at new Danish cartoons scandal," *The Guardian*, October 9, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/oct/10/broadcasting.cartoonprotests>.

³²⁶ Klausen, 9

³²⁷ "Muslims angry at new Danish cartoons scandal," *The Guardian*

³²⁸ March Lynch, *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, al-Jazeera, and Middle East Politics Today*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 1.

³²⁹ "Muslims angry at new Danish cartoons scandal," *The Guardian*

tolerance in Europe as the cause for the violence.³³⁰ Arab nations complained of diminishing tolerance in Europe and took diplomatic actions against Denmark, even though the offended nations probably did not see the cartoons and have no standards of freedom of the press nor speech.³³¹ State-controlled Arab newspapers are also renowned for printing vicious Nazi-esque anti-Semitic cartoons, so their diplomatic actions against Denmark were woefully hypocritical.³³² The cartoons were printed in not printed in very many prominent newspapers; *Harper's Magazine* in the United States and *Liberation* in France were the prominent ones in the West.³³³ Newspapers all across the Scandinavian nations, Spain, and Germany reprinted the cartoons.³³⁴ Not only did French magazines print the offending series of cartoons, their editors received staunch public support, including from prime minister hopeful Nicolas Sarkozy.³³⁵ Sarkozy asserted that freedom of expression was highly valued in France, and that he would defend anyone who was practicing and upholding the value.³³⁶

The French situation contrasted conspicuously with the British situation. Not a single British newspaper initially reprinted the Danish cartoons, right-wing, centrist, nor left-wing.³³⁷ *The Guardian* defended its decision to refrain from including the illustrations in its papers by claiming that it “believed uncompromisingly in the freedom of expression,” but that it did not believe in

³³⁰ “Muslims angry at new Danish cartoons scandal,” *The Guardian*

³³¹ “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

³³² “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

³³³ Kim Willsher, “Editor defends publication of Danish cartoon,” *The Guardian*, February 7, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/feb/08/france.muhammadcartoons>.

³³⁴ “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

³³⁵ Kim Willsher, “Editor defends publication of Danish cartoon,” February 7, 2007, *The Guardian*.

³³⁶ Kim Willsher, “Editor defends publication of Danish cartoon,” February 7, 2007, *The Guardian*.

³³⁷ “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

“the freedom to offend gratuitously.”³³⁸ The newspaper seemingly redefined ‘uncompromisingly’ in its statement, but that line of defending the freedom of expression while avoiding gratuitous offense held throughout Britain.³³⁹ *The Economist* refused to print the cartoons, calling them a “schoolyard prank.”³⁴⁰ Newspaper editors referred to the cartoons propagating the “worst prejudices” as pertaining to gratuitous offense and their lack of “intrinsic value.”³⁴¹ If a Brit wanted to see the twelve cartoons, they were available on the Internet.³⁴² The BBC broadcast visual stills of the cartoons on their news coverage of the affair and had to defend itself against attacks from both sides for not defending free speech enough and for cowering to totalitarians.³⁴³ The channel employed the same gratuitous offense logic. It claimed that the way it showed the cartoons in its news coverage was not gratuitously offensive because they were merely showing the newspapers.³⁴⁴ The British government’s line correlated with the view that British newspapers took. Foreign Secretary Jack Straw assailed the cartoons for being “gratuitously inflammatory.”³⁴⁵ He defended freedom of speech much like *The Guardian* did, but did not approve of intentionally insulting and inciting peoples.³⁴⁶ Prime Minister Tony Blair and Jack Straw both said that they supported the Danish government, but some elements of the British government

³³⁸ “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

³³⁹ “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

³⁴⁰ Klausen, 50

³⁴¹ “Insults and injuries,” *The Guardian*

³⁴² John Plunkett, “BBC defends cartoon coverage,” *The Guardian*, February 6, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/feb/06/broadcasting.pressandpublishing>.

³⁴³ “BBC defends cartoon coverage,” *The Guardian*

³⁴⁴ “BBC defends cartoon coverage,” *The Guardian*

³⁴⁵ “British Muslims protest over cartoons,” *The Guardian*

³⁴⁶ “British Muslims protest over cartoons,” *The Guardian*

seemed displeased with the Danes' handling of the situation.³⁴⁷ Home Secretary Charles Clarke chastised the Danish press for making a mistake in printing the cartoons and extended his displeasure to Prime Minister Rasmussen for refusing a conciliatory meeting with the heads of state of eleven Muslim countries.³⁴⁸ The British government and print media generally condemned the cartoons or at least their gratuitously insulting nature, but there was dissent from Salman Rushdie. Sensing that the cartoon crisis was a reincarnation of his struggles in 1989, he and eleven other authors penned a letter against an increasing totalitarian encroachment of society.³⁴⁹ Rushdie's letter urged European countries to resist allowing a form of multiculturalism that would allow for religious considerations, fearing that they could trump considerations of freedom.³⁵⁰

In Denmark, newspapers communicate an ideology and are closely aligned with a corresponding political party.³⁵¹ *Jyllands-Posten* is the newspaper for the Danish Liberal Party, to which Prime Minister Rasmussen belonged. Denmark exacerbated the cartoon affair a year later when the far right People's Party produced an election advertisement with the slogan of a hand-drawn Muhammad.³⁵² The party stated that its purpose was to express true Danish values against self-censorship and gender inequality and for solidarity.³⁵³ *Jyllands-Posten* eventually ended up as a defendant in a libel case initiated by a collection

³⁴⁷ Helene Mulholland, "Clarke criticizes Danish mistake over cartoons," *The Guardian*, March 8, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/mar/08/muhammadcartoons.uk>.

³⁴⁸ "Clarke criticizes Danish mistake over cartoons," *The Guardian*

³⁴⁹ Klausen, 41

³⁵⁰ Klausen, 41

³⁵¹ Klausen, 11

³⁵² Gwaldys Fouche, "Danish election ad reignites Muhammad cartoon controversy," *The Guardian*, October 25, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2007/oct/25/muhammadcartoons.gwaldysfouche>.

³⁵³ "Danish election ad reignites Muhammad cartoon controversy," *The Guardian*

of Muslim organizations in 2007.³⁵⁴ The Muslim organizations claimed to recognize and uphold the freedom of speech, as long as it did not discriminate or injure dignity, which they claimed the cartoons had done.³⁵⁵ Multiple courts dismissed the case because they declared that the cartoons were not intended to offend.³⁵⁶

The editor of *Jyllands-Posten* acknowledged that he would not have printed the twelve cartoons if he had known the devastating consequences.³⁵⁷ This apologetic stance lacks the resolution and strident defense that characterized Penguin Publishing, PEN (Poets, Essayists, and Novelists), and independent bookstores during the Rushdie Affair. The newspaper's editor technically withheld his apology, calling it a useless gesture, "because nobody could have known the consequences."³⁵⁸ He also refused to apologize to fundamentalists.³⁵⁹ His statement contained his resignation to the fact that the freedom of speech did not exist anymore and that a difference of values between liberal individual and ultra-strict collective cultures were straining Denmark's overall freedoms.³⁶⁰ His belief that the consequences were unpredictable overlooks the history of the Rushdie Affair. What the editor did apologize for was overlooking the feelings of those aggrieved and insulted.³⁶¹ His lament over the loss of the freedom of speech and his observations that there was a clear culture clash ignore the basic events

³⁵⁴ "Danish court dismisses Muhammad cartoons case," *The Guardian*

³⁵⁵ "Danish court dismisses Muhammad cartoons case," *The Guardian*

³⁵⁶ "Danish court dismisses Muhammad cartoons case," *The Guardian*

³⁵⁷ Gwaldys Fouche, "Danish paper regrets publishing cartoons," *The Guardian*, February 3, 2006, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/2006/feb/03/pressandpublishing.religion4>.

³⁵⁸ "Danish paper regrets publishing cartoons," *The Guardian*

³⁵⁹ "Danish paper regrets publishing cartoons," *The Guardian*

³⁶⁰ "Danish paper regrets publishing cartoons," *The Guardian*

³⁶¹ "Danish paper regrets publishing cartoons," *The Guardian*

that constituted the Rushdie Affair. Fundamentalists and ordinary Muslims citizens in European countries reacted vehemently in reaction to the publication of *The Satanic Verses* with arson, book-burnings, and demonstrations. Muslims across North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia reacted with large-scale riots that resulted in deaths in both situations. While not to make a judgment on whether *Jyllands-Posten* intended to provoke a segment of the Danish population or stir a controversy, the statement from the editor clearly displays that the newspaper failed to take the history of the Rushdie Affair into account. Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen claimed that he would not apologize for the cartoons and could not do so because the media are an independent branch, but a February 2006 speech contained an apology for aggrieved feelings.³⁶² In 2009, Rasmussen was appointed as the Secretary-General of NATO, but he could not earn the position until overcoming strenuous objections from Turkey on behalf of Muslim countries.³⁶³ Rasmussen did not issue a full apology for the cartoons, but he mentioned his “great admiration for Islam,” and he pledged to make future efforts at interreligious tolerance and understanding.³⁶⁴

The worldwide response to the cartoons mirrored the worldwide response to *The Satanic Verses*: severed and threatened diplomatic relationships, riots and deaths throughout Muslim countries, and protests among Muslims in European nations. The Danish Cartoon Affair lacked a death sentence from a political and religious head of state, but cartoon protestors in Britain incited murder and were

³⁶² Klausen, 148

³⁶³ Klausen, 183

³⁶⁴ Klausen, 184

sentenced to jail time for it.³⁶⁵ Umran Javed was found guilty for calling for the murder of Americans and Danes outside the Danish embassy in London.³⁶⁶ Considering that very few outlets in the United States reproduced the cartoons and that Americans were not involved, his incitement to murder probably reflected a general feeling of anti-Western sentiments.³⁶⁷ Another young British Muslim male, Abdul Muhid, was found guilty of soliciting murder when he instructed demonstrators to commit violence during a protest.³⁶⁸ His motives might have been more vicious, though, as he was a follower of the radical and controversial British cleric, Omar Bakri Muhammad.³⁶⁹ The worrying aspect of the British Muslim protests was the overall incitement to murder for something that had not entered Britain's territory. Protestors carried such signs as, "behead those who insult Islam," "massacre those who insult Islam," and "BBC: British Blasphemous Crusaders."³⁷⁰ The protestors demanded the deaths of those involved with the drawing and printing of the cartoons, reminiscent of the deaths called for during the Rushdie Affair. Some London demonstrators even called for the bombing of Denmark by Britain, believing that their narrow and violent political interests would manifest into a bellicose foreign policy against an ally.³⁷¹ They did not have to take their cues from a "mad mullah;" however feeble the signs might have

³⁶⁵ "Cartoon protestor guilty of calling for murder," *The Guardian*, January 5, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/jan/05/politics.muhammadcartoons>.

³⁶⁶ "Cartoon protestor guilty of calling for murder," *The Guardian*

³⁶⁷ "Cartoon protestor guilty of calling for murder," *The Guardian*

³⁶⁸ "Cartoon protestor guilty of encouraging murder," *The Guardian*, March 7, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/mar/07/ukcrime.religion>.

³⁶⁹ "Cartoon protestor guilty of encouraging murder," *The Guardian*.

³⁷⁰ "Cartoon protestor guilty of encouraging murder," *The Guardian*.

³⁷¹ Klausen, 118

been, the calls for murder were real.³⁷² Only a couple of young men were charged and convicted of incitement to murder, but they represented a widespread sentiment. British media outlets had decided not to print any of the twelve cartoons; the only way to see them would have been through the occasional clips on BBC or actively searching for them on the internet. Aside from the fact that the demonstrators were “protected” from seeing the cartoon through deliberate censorship, they were still eager to spill blood over an offense that did not affect their lives in any way. The British Muslim protests of the cartoons were less sustained than their protests of Rushdie, but their sentiments against material they considered to be offensive remained virulent.

Private and state media seemed to learn from the Rushdie Affair by the decision of print media not to publish the cartoons. British media were willing to compromise aspects of free speech to avoid the uproar and general unpleasantness the Rushdie Affair engendered. Media and government both decided to practice self-censorship, hoping to avoid the protests that happened anyway.³⁷³ Self-censorship results in a general outcry among writers, some media outlets, and interested general readers. When it is used to protect minorities, it can generate a hostile reaction from conservatives who see a concession of values. Printing inflammatory material results in unpleasant international situations, widespread protests, rioting and looting, and deaths. Whereas Denmark spent months trying to repair broken international relationships, domestic unrest, and economic boycotts,

³⁷² “Cartoon protestor guilty of encouraging murder,” *The Guardian*.

³⁷³ Klausen, 59

Britain suffered some protests and reopened a debate about free speech.³⁷⁴ Instead of dealing with dissatisfied and violent protestors, the better option for potentially offensive material seems to be enduring the eloquent but nonviolent harangues of writers and defenders of free speech. Britain has set itself on this course, allaying the grief and offense caused to its sizable Muslim population by “gratuitous insults.”

The Danish Cartoon Affair was reborn in 2009 when a book chronicling the entire affair and offering scholarly analysis of it was called into question for including illustrations of the Prophet.³⁷⁵ *The Cartoons That Shook the World* by Jytte Klausen attempts to explore art and illustration depicting the Prophet (Muhammad was drawn throughout early Islam) from the Islam’s founding, through the medieval era, and to the Danish cartoons.³⁷⁶ One of the more provocative art works to be included in the book was an 18th century painting of the Prophet being tortured in Dante’s *Inferno*.³⁷⁷ The main thesis of the book was that the worldwide protests of the cartoons were not spontaneous; rather they were the results of organized efforts by political parties in Denmark and Egypt and extremists trying to destabilize regimes in Pakistan, Lebanon, Libya, and Nigeria.³⁷⁸ It should be noted that this is an academic monograph and not a mass-published book that would be stocked on every book shelf with the intent to provoke and offend. The publisher, Yale University Press, had reservations over

³⁷⁴ Klausen, 171

³⁷⁵ Alison Flood, “Publisher bans images of Muhammad in new book,” *The Guardian*, August 14, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/aug/14/publisher-bans-images-muhammad>.

³⁷⁶ “Publisher bans images of Muhammad in new book,” *The Guardian*.

³⁷⁷ “Publisher bans images of Muhammad in new book,” *The Guardian*.

³⁷⁸ Klausen, 82

including those “blasphemous images” that had spawned the violence and protests three years earlier.³⁷⁹ Yale University Press questioned scholars about a possible backlash, some of whom (including Professor Klausen) urged the publisher to go ahead and print the book with the illustrations.³⁸⁰ Other scholars believed that printing the book with the illustrations would reignite protests and violence, so the fear of retaliation forced Yale to backtrack and exclude all images from the book.³⁸¹ The publisher’s statement in the opening pages claims that Yale University Press is “an institution deeply committed to free expression.”³⁸² However, after consulting with leading scholars in Islamic studies and experts in diplomacy, intelligence, and national security, the republication of the cartoons “ran a serious risk of instigating violence.”³⁸³

Rushdie’s Knighthood

Queen Elizabeth II announced her intention to knight Salman Rushdie for his contributions to literature in 2007.³⁸⁴ The announcement of knighthood reignited a replay of the Rushdie Affair in Britain and around the world. Her venerable position as monarch of Britain and head of the Anglican Church did not shield her or Britain from protests within and outside Britain. Muslims globally protested this decision, with Pakistanis and Iranians reprising the burning of his effigy and Muslim majority nations officially protesting the award.³⁸⁵ The

³⁷⁹ “Publisher bans images of Muhammad in new book,” *The Guardian*.

³⁸⁰ “Publisher bans images of Muhammad in new book,” *The Guardian*.

³⁸¹ “Publisher bans images of Muhammad in new book,” *The Guardian*.

³⁸² Klausen, Publisher’s Statement

³⁸³ Klausen, Publisher’s Statement

³⁸⁴ Esther Addley, “Literary world applauds Rushdie’s knighthood,” *The Guardian*, June 16, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2007/jun/16/books.politics>.

³⁸⁵ “Protests spread to Malaysia over knighthood for Salman Rushdie,” *New York Times*, June 20, 2007, http://www.nytimes.com/2007/06/20/world/asia/20iht-rushdie.1.6228425.html?_r=1.

successor to Ayatollah Khomeini, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, announced that the old religious leader's 1989 fatwa was still in effect and that Rushdie's death would meet with great approbation.³⁸⁶ Protests were heated and near violent in India, Pakistan, Iran, Malaysia, and Afghanistan. Like the Rushdie Affair of almost two decades ago, the knighthood announcement flared protests in Britain by the Muslim population. A Muslim lord, Lord Ahmed of Rotherham, requested further consideration on the decision, and declared that *The Satanic Verses* were just as much of an affront to Christianity as to Islam.³⁸⁷ The knighthood was meant to signify a lifetime contribution to literature, but critics brushed that aside and focused on the offensive nature of one novel. British Muslims responded to the announcement of knighthood by protesting in Regent's Park, burning a British flag, and renewing the calls for Rushdie's death.³⁸⁸ The knighthood opened unrepaired wounds among British Muslims. Threats were also made against Tony Blair's life for rewarding an apostate like Rushdie.³⁸⁹ Despite popular anger, the Hyde Park Mosque and Muslim Parliament condemned the protests and their actions.³⁹⁰ They endeavored to separate the protestors as lunatics giving the overall community a negative name.³⁹¹ These condemnations broke with organizational responses in 1989, when organizations channeled the populist

³⁸⁶ "Iranian cleric: Fatwa against Rushdie is 'still alive,'" *Journal of Turkish Weekly*, June 22, 2007, <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/46317/iranian-cleric-fatwa-against-rushdie-is-still-alive-.html>.

³⁸⁷ Brendan Carlin, "Rushdie 'suicide threat' minister may visit UK," *The Telegraph*, June 21, 2007, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1555266/Rushdie-suicide-threat-minister-may-visit-UK.html>.

³⁸⁸ "Rushdie 'suicide threat' minister may visit UK," *The Telegraph*

³⁸⁹ Riazat Butt, "UK Muslims divided on Rushdie protests," *The Hindu*, June 24, 2007, <http://www.hindu.com/thehindu/holnus/003200706240339.htm>.

³⁹⁰ "UK Muslims divided on Rushdie protests," *The Hindu*

³⁹¹ "UK Muslims divided on Rushdie protests," *The Hindu*

anger and presented demands and requests to the British government. Only the Muslim Council of Britain unequivocally spoke out against the knighthood, claiming that it was a political stunt to reopen wounds among the Muslim community.³⁹² The claim of knighthood being a political stunt is easily refuted. Rushdie won the prize for best English novel of 1981 (Booker), best English novel from 1969-1993 (Booker of Bookers), and best English novel from 1969-2008 (Best of Bookers).³⁹³ PEN international (a strident defender of Rushdie since the Affair) must have missed the renewed calls for a death sentence and diplomatic actions, commending the knighthood as a “positive step in British-Asian relations.” Rather than encouraging the demonstrators, the Council exhorted aggrieved Muslims to write letters and correct the image of Muhammad presented in Rushdie’s novel.³⁹⁴

The Jewel of Medina: An Anticipated Rushdie Affair

As mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, an American professor of Middle Eastern History advised Random House that heated reactions would ensue from the publication of *The Jewel of Medina* and that the book represented soft core pornography, not a sympathetic portrayal of early Islam.³⁹⁵ Author Sherry Jones responded that any sexual relationships between the Prophet and his wives were implicit and not explicitly described.³⁹⁶ She also claimed that there was

³⁹² Muslim Council of Britain, “MCB urges Muslims to face provocation with dignity and respect,” June 22, 2007, accessed April 17, 2012, http://www.mcb.org.uk/media/presstext.php?ann_id=259.

³⁹³ John Mullan, “Where are they now?” *The Guardian*, July 11, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/jul/12/saturdayreviewsfeatres.guardianreview31>.

³⁹⁴ “MCB urges Muslims to face provocation with dignity and respect,”

³⁹⁵ “Muhammad novel publisher undeterred by fire bomb attack,” *The Guardian*

³⁹⁶ Alison Flood, “Call for compensation after shelving of Islam novel,” *The Guardian*, August 12, 2008, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2008/aug/12/islam>.

nothing in the novel to arouse negative emotions because the novel aimed to honor the Prophet and his wives.³⁹⁷ Jones also employed some specious arguments by asserting Muhammad would approve of her book because he was in favor of free speech, exemplified by his denunciation of pagan gods in the Meccan public square.³⁹⁸

Jones demanded that Random House should compensate her for dropping publication last-minute, but another British publisher, Gibson Square, agreed to publish the novel.³⁹⁹ Whereas Random House was an established publishing house that did not need negative publicity, Gibson Square was a small London-based firm with that could benefit with any publicity. Their acceptance of the book was marked by a firebombing incident by three young Muslim men.⁴⁰⁰ Gibson attempted to remain resolute, but the firebombing forced it to forgo publication and Sherry Jones was left without anyone in England to publish her novel.⁴⁰¹

Denied her first book by two publishing houses, Sherry Jones denounced British self-censorship and bemoaned a fascist victory over the freedom of speech.⁴⁰² Being that Sherry Jones was an unpublished small town journalist from the United States, it seems incredulous that she elevated herself by making it seem she was an acclaimed writer being repressed by a totalitarian society. Random

³⁹⁷ "Muhammad novel publisher undeterred by fire bomb attack," *The Guardian*

³⁹⁸ Daniel Kalder, "In search of *The Jewel of Medina* controversy," *The Guardian*, March 5, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2009/mar/05/sherry-jones-jewel-medina>.

³⁹⁹ "Call for compensation after shelving of Islam novel," *The Guardian*

⁴⁰⁰ "Muhammad novel publisher undeterred by fire bomb attack," *The Guardian*

⁴⁰¹ Alison Flood, "Muhammad child bride novel author condemns UK censorship," *The Guardian*, May 20, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/may/20/muhammad-child-bride-author-censorship>.

⁴⁰² "Muhammad child bride novel author condemns UK censorship," *The Guardian*

House was influenced by one professor's opinion not to publish and Gibson's office building was destroyed. In addition to those caveats, UK publishers refused the book because it was widely criticized as a poor book in the United States.⁴⁰³ Salman Rushdie had won a Booker Prize and *The Satanic Verses* earned a Whitbread, not to mention that he was among the established literary elite. The glowing reviews *The Satanic Verses* received contrasted sharply with the negative review *The Jewel of Medina* received in America. A *New York Times* review acknowledged that it stopped short of questioning the Koranic revelations and although it attacked the Prophet's sexual desires, it was not offensive; it was just really bad.⁴⁰⁴ Another review called the book an "anachronistic bodice ripper," so British publishers could respond by listening to putrid reviews, rather than bowing down to self-censorship.⁴⁰⁵

Sherry Jones blamed Denise Spellberg for creating a prophecy that the firebombing fulfilled. Jones might have had a point, as the book was published in every other European country without issue.⁴⁰⁶ An imam in Serbia called for a halt in publication, but the country's Grand Mufti subsequently chided him and publication was undeterred.⁴⁰⁷ Sherry Jones blamed the British media for making apocalyptic prognostications and stoking fears about the possible publication of her novel.⁴⁰⁸ The arson occurred overnight and there were no casualties, resulting

⁴⁰³ "Muhammad child bride novel author condemns UK censorship," *The Guardian*

⁴⁰⁴ "Thinly veiled," *New York Times*

⁴⁰⁵ "Muhammad child bride novel author condemns UK censorship," *The Guardian*

⁴⁰⁶ "In search of the Jewel of Medina controversy," *The Guardian*

⁴⁰⁷ "In search of the Jewel of Medina controversy," *The Guardian*

⁴⁰⁸ "In search of the Jewel of Medina controversy," *The Guardian*

in four and a half years of jail time for the three convicted Muslim men.⁴⁰⁹ In light of the lack of reaction from British Muslims towards *The Jewel of Medina*, the arson attack was out of place and more fitting of the Rushdie Affair.

Notwithstanding the firebombing, a Muslim contributor to *The Guardian* declared that British Muslims had gained thick skin since the Rushdie Affair and that there was nothing to fear from supposedly anti-Islamic books.⁴¹⁰ Muslim immigrants have been called in question for not respecting the value of free speech.

Considering it was the publishers who reacted skeptically towards the book and not British Muslims, it is possible that the supposedly incorrigible values of the immigrants were amenable to free speech. However, the reaction might also have been muted because of the caution and censorship the publishers employed.

Rather than vehemently standing behind publication and the author like Penguin did with Rushdie, Jones' publishers backed off at the first sign of trouble. Other European nations experienced their share of trouble with the Rushdie Affair, including dead Belgians and bombed Italian bookstores.⁴¹¹ Those scenarios did not recur in 2009.

⁴⁰⁹ Peter Walker, "Three jailed for arson attack over Muhammad bride novel," *The Guardian*, July 7, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jul/07/muslims-jailed-arson-book-protest>.

⁴¹⁰ Shahed Amanullah, "Muslims have nothing to fear from this book," *The Guardian*, September 9, 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/sep/09/islam.religion>.

⁴¹¹ Appignanesi and Maitland, 138

Conclusion

The Rushdie Affair had brought many issues of freedom of speech and multiculturalism to the forefront of the British political debate when it initially erupted in 1989. Opinions varied within British government, but the government protected its subjects' right to the freedom of speech and Penguin was resolute in continuing to publish and distribute *The Satanic Verses*. The contrast with similar situations in the 2000s is stark. The British media largely decided against publishing the Muhammad cartoons and the British government did not support gratuitous offense. While subject to eloquent harangues regarding free speech and being accused of abandoning liberal democratic government from writers, the British government avoided the international imbroglio that exacerbated domestic aspects of the Rushdie Affair. The Danish government was staunch in its defense of the *Jyllands-Posten* newspaper to print the Muhammad cartoons. Prime Minister Rasmussen could proudly state to Danes that he was defending liberal democratic and Danish values, but that involved international crises, such as souring relations with Muslim countries, embassy troubles, threats to lives of Danes, boycotts on Danish goods (especially butter).⁴¹² It also included international chastisement from the United States, Britain, and Kofi Annan of the United Nations.⁴¹³ Danish "soft power" suffered international damage in the East and the West.⁴¹⁴ Britain invited these problems again, in addition to domestic unrest, when it decided to knight Sir Salman Rushdie for his overall contributions to literature. Rushdie's knighthood had to be performed in some secrecy and

⁴¹² Klausen, 150

⁴¹³ Klausen, 166

⁴¹⁴ Klausen, 150

occurred despite international and diplomatic protests from Pakistan and Afghanistan. The anti-Rushdie sentiments that have been generated and maintained over the past thirty years from the publication of *Midnight's Children* have remained so strident that the publication of his memoirs in September 2012 will probably meet stiff protests and condemnation.

It should be noted that from the Rushdie Affair onward, especially during the cartoon controversy, a prevailing argument in the public debate declared that the freedom of expression in Britain was a moribund concept. Free speech is exercised slightly differently in European nations than it is in the United States, though. Freedom of expression is limited in many countries by archaic blasphemy laws that criminalize criticism of the dominant religion (The Church of England in England).⁴¹⁵ During the Rushdie Affair, British Muslims requested parliament to cover their grievances under an expanded blasphemy law, but those requests were ignored and the House of Lords abolished the blasphemy laws in 2008.⁴¹⁶ Muslim protestors had called for the blasphemy laws to be updated in 1989 for protection against *The Satanic Verses*, but the laws had not been used and had fallen into disrepute.⁴¹⁷ They had also been criticized for being discriminatory, as they only covered Christianity.⁴¹⁸ In addition, some European nations have criminalized Holocaust denial.⁴¹⁹ Free speech has never had an unrestricted character. The new language of “gratuitous offense” that pervaded the debates

⁴¹⁵ Klausen, 143

⁴¹⁶ Klausen, 143

⁴¹⁷ Martin Beckfold, “Blasphemy laws are lifted,” *The Telegraph*, May 10, 2008. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/1942668/Blasphemy-laws-are-lifted.html>.

⁴¹⁸ “Blasphemy laws are lifted,” *The Telegraph*

⁴¹⁹ Klausen, 180

over the cartoons seems to have been accepted in Britain by the media and government, as both sectors articulated adherence to avoiding it.

The population that protested *The Satanic Verses* at Hyde Park and in Bradford in 1989 was composed almost exclusively of South Asian immigrants who had settled but had difficulty assimilating in Britain. They entered a foreign country to perform unskilled and low wage work, lived in cramped and impoverished conditions, and were increasingly becoming the scapegoat for British social and economic problems. The immigrants arrived in a changing post-war society that was embracing liberal values and individual rights in a way sharply different from the collective culture of the immigrant community. Along with the Afro-Caribbean immigrants, their children suffered at the hands of police brutality in the 1970s and 1980s.⁴²⁰ Salman Rushdie's critiques of Margaret Thatcher emanated from the institutional racism practiced by the police apparatus and their targeting of minorities.⁴²¹ Their protests of Rushdie included book burnings and the threat of violence against booksellers and Rushdie.⁴²² The sustained hatred of Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses* was unique.

The motif of British Muslim protests against anything perceived as anti-Islamic reprised its role in 2005 and 2006 when the Danish Cartoon Affair became a global issue. The protestors did not injure nor commit violence on anyone, but four demonstrators were arrested for inciting hatred and violence.⁴²³

⁴²⁰ Morgan, 457

⁴²¹ Soumyajit Samanta, "The Empire Writes Back: Salman Rushdie and the Literature of Subversion," in *Salman Rushdie: Critical Essays*, ed. Mohit Ray and Rama Kundu (New Delhi: Atlantic, 2006), 174.

⁴²² Klausen, 5

⁴²³ Klausen, 146

The protests of 2005 and 2006 retained their vicious and violence-threatening nature from 1988 and 1989, even to the point of encouraging the British government to drop bombs on Denmark for offending Islam.⁴²⁴ The reason for the protests in both cases was the same: the offense to Islam. The persistence of violent protests in Britain continued despite the prominent repudiation of the cartoons by the most reputed media outlets, including *The Guardian* and *The Economist*. The cartoons were available on the internet and through visual stills on BBC until they decided to apologize. The British media and government seemingly reconciled the freedom of expression with not gratuitously offending anyone. The Rushdie Affair was an ugly and sustained experience for Britain, consisting of domestic unrest, transnational death threats, and various international crises. It was an unpleasant experience for British society and the government. The decisions of the British media and government to respond to the grievances of British Muslims by not printing gratuitously offensive material shows a dramatic shift from the Rushdie Affair. It also provides fodder for the anti-Muslim organizations that claim Muslim immigrants are incompatible with modern society and the country is capitulating to their illiberal demands.⁴²⁵

Post-war Britain was not a beacon of free speech, especially since novels that were read in other European countries were prohibited by a 19th century law permitting censorship of literature.⁴²⁶ However, part of Britain's changing society

⁴²⁴ Klausen, 118

⁴²⁵ Spike Johnson, "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*, February 22, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/02/22/inside_the_mosquebusters.

⁴²⁶ Addison, 199

in the 1950s and 1960s was an erosion of state and media censorship.⁴²⁷ The relaxation of censorship meant that the BBC could broadcast nudity and the word ‘fuck,’ as scandalous as it was. Previously banned literature flourished in sales and readership and erotic novels became popular.⁴²⁸ The boundaries of acceptability were pushed in print media, cinema, and television. The abolition of 19th century censorship created an environment that allowed for new norms of free speech, though the anachronistic blasphemy laws remained. Rushdie had just immigrated to Britain when censorship was undergoing a revolution. The content of *The Satanic Verses* might have made it impermissible to publish during the time of the Obscene Publications Act (though this is a difficult comparison because the primary offended group – Muslims – were only just arriving and the unused blasphemy laws only covered Christians). The new norms of free speech and permissible media were well-established by the time *The Satanic Verses* were published in 1988.

The South Asian Muslim population challenged the state in its standards of free speech through violent protests and demanding that provisions be made to address their grievances, either by extending the blasphemy laws or banning offensive material.⁴²⁹ Moralists of post-war Britain protested changes in censorship laws, but most of that furor had mitigated by 1988.⁴³⁰ British Muslim reactions to *The Satanic Verses* and the *Jyllands-Posten* cartoons seem to suggest an acceptance of free speech, unless that freedom is used to insult their religion.

⁴²⁷ Parkes, 108

⁴²⁸ Harrison, *Seeking a Role*, 506

⁴²⁹ Appignanesi and Maitland, 114.

⁴³⁰ Addison, 202

That engenders another debate of whether that truly is free speech or a conveniently stunted form of it. Protests against offensive material have been violent through the Rushdie Affair, Danish Cartoon Affair, and *The Jewel of Medina* controversy. The worrisome protests have included signs that call for death upon anyone who insults Islam and incitements of murder, in addition to the demands that Britain bomb Denmark.⁴³¹ The Danish cartoons and *The Jewel of Medina* present imperfect comparisons to The Satanic Verses. The cartoons were foreign and not printed in Britain and the novel was written by an unknown American journalist. The British media and the government have supported the sentiments of their Muslim population by not printing the offending material and standing by the decision not to do so. The publication of *The Jewel of Medina* after its initial delay perhaps suggests that the relationship between ordinary British Muslims and free speech is improving. It took time for the moralists of post-war Britain to accept the new standards of free speech that the abolition of the Obscene Publications Act allowed.⁴³² Margaret Thatcher hated *The Satanic Verses*, but her government stood behind the book and its author's right to publish it.⁴³³ The legacy of the Rushdie Affair has shown that media outlets are more hesitant to publish potentially offensive material, as the Random House in Britain and Yale University Press in the United States consulted with experts before making decisions not to publish material.⁴³⁴ The legacy of the Rushdie Affair

⁴³¹ Klausen, 118

⁴³² Addison, 202

⁴³³ Appignanesi and Maitland, 114.

⁴³⁴ Klausen, Foreword

could also be to introduce new norms the British government and media support on the freedom of speech to protect against gratuitous offense.

Immigration and the place of Muslims in Europe might even be more controversial in 2012 than it was when Commonwealth immigrants arrived in Britain en masse. Post-war South Asian immigrants were ascribed blame for some social issues, but they were not blamed for supporting terrorism. The element of terrorism can ascribe even more blame on Muslims for social woes. Britain's involvement in the Wars on Terror in Afghanistan and Iraq has provoked some of the largest anti-war rallies in history, but Britain remains concerned about terrorism in general.⁴³⁵ Terrorism and Islamic extremism are major issues in Britain and Europe, especially after the Madrid bombings of 2004 and the London bombings of 2005. Europeans express fears about Muslim immigrants and residents in the language of violence and terrorism.⁴³⁶ In addition to the charges that Muslim immigrants have still failed to assimilate into European societies, the fear of terrorism or home-grown terrorism exacerbates fears of European Muslims.

Anti-Immigration and Fascism in Britain

South Asian Muslim immigration was a controversial political issue in the late 1960s, as Enoch Powell, the Conservative MP from Wolverhampton, who rose to fame by decrying Muslim immigrants in Britain. Powell's speeches and warnings evoked fears over four decades ago and anti-immigration stances remain strong among the British population. Anti-immigration and anti-Muslim

⁴³⁵ Harrison, *Finding a Role*, 527

⁴³⁶ English Defense League, "Mission Statement," accessed April 24, 2012, <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us/mission-statement/>.

sentiments have found resonance as social and political movements. Many anti-immigration movements are organized, but not all of them are political parties. Anti-immigration groups in Europe and in Britain mostly convey anti-Muslim feelings, as over a million Muslims populate each France, Germany, and Britain.⁴³⁷ Controversies such as the Danish Cartoon Affair have fueled anti-immigration and anti-Muslim groups in Europe, who have perceived a decline in the freedom of speech and free society.⁴³⁸ The anti-Muslim groups believe that the British government has capitulated to the violence of Muslim protestors in suppressing free speech and has given into all of their demands.⁴³⁹ The English Defense League presents itself as a human rights group that repudiates the weakness of the British government in countering Muslim extremism within Britain, fearing that Sharia Law might be an imminent consequence if the government continues to cave into Muslim demands.⁴⁴⁰ Even in European Union countries where the Muslim immigrant population is not a substantial portion, anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant sentiments reign.⁴⁴¹ Far right movements channel the nativist sentiments into social movements and sometimes into political parties with enough influence to win parliamentary seats and join coalitions with the ruling party.⁴⁴² Unless there are percentage checks like there are in Turkey, where a party must receive ten percent of the national vote to sit in parliament, minority

⁴³⁷ Messina, 20

⁴³⁸ "Mission Statement," accessed April 24, 2012, <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us/mission-statement/>.

⁴³⁹ "Mission Statement," accessed April 24, 2012, <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us/mission-statement/>.

⁴⁴⁰ "Mission Statement," accessed April 24, 2012, <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us/mission-statement/>.

⁴⁴¹ Jytte Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 124.

⁴⁴² Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe*, 124

and fringe parties have the ability to enter politics.⁴⁴³ Right-wing anti-immigration movements are politically embedded into the election framework of France, the Netherlands, and Germany.⁴⁴⁴ National Front parties have emerged as contenders for office and have influenced incumbent Conservative Prime Ministers, such as Nicolas Sarkozy of France and Angela Merkel of Germany, to concentrate on issues they would otherwise defer, such as halal meat.⁴⁴⁵

Britain's anti-immigration party is the British National Party, which does not hold the same formidable electoral sway as similar parties in other European countries.⁴⁴⁶ The British National Party led by Nick Griffin has been electorally flaccid, but that is not a reflection of the strains of anti-immigration that permeate British society. Anti-immigration and anti-Muslim social movements in Britain have accrued prominence recently with well-attended rallies.⁴⁴⁷ The English Defense League has sister movements in other European nations and the group has made its presence felt in Britain through peaceful protests.⁴⁴⁸ It claims not to be anti-Muslim, just anti-terrorism, but the conflation of terrorist and Muslim is

⁴⁴³ Ali Carkoglu and Gamze Avci, "An Analysis of the Electorate from a Geographical Perspective," in *Politics, Parties, and Elections in Turkey*, eds. Sabri Sayari and Yilmaz Esmer (London: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 121.

⁴⁴⁴ Klausen, *The Islamic Challenge: Politics and Religion in Western Europe*, 126

⁴⁴⁵ Jonathan Laurence, "France's beef with Islam," *Foreign Policy*, March 7, 2012, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2012/03/07/frances_beef_with_islam.

⁴⁴⁶ Joshua Keating, "Change has come to the British National Party," *Foreign Policy*, October 15, 2009, http://blog.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/10/15/change_has_come_to_the_british_national_party.

⁴⁴⁷ "Change has come to the British National Party," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁴⁸ "Change has come to the British National Party," *Foreign Policy*

easily constructed.⁴⁴⁹ For all of its venomous rhetoric, the BNP has not won a single parliamentary seat.⁴⁵⁰

Mosquebusters is a legal organization that fields requests from locals where a mosque is being considered for construction or repair and steps in to block construction.⁴⁵¹ Their legal name is registered as the Law and Freedom Foundation, but their nickname encapsulates their purpose of preventing anymore mosques in Britain.⁴⁵² They advocate for a similar line as many right-wing anti-Muslim movements; one that bifurcates society into two with native values and infringing dangerous foreign values.⁴⁵³ Their duty is to protect the homeland from invading Islamic immigrants who bring values incompatible with Western societies; these usually include free speech, equality for women, tolerance, and violence.⁴⁵⁴ Mosquebusters and likeminded groups fear extreme interpretations of the Koran that commands believers to kill infidels or to take them as their slaves.⁴⁵⁵ The organization's website states that it is not affiliated with the English Defense League.⁴⁵⁶ The Mosquebusters diagnose four main problems that Britain has to solve. They are: (1) the economic breakdown, (2) the inevitable loss of the rule of law, (3) welfare dependence, and (4) the division between Islamic and non-Islamic society.⁴⁵⁷ This division especially relates to the violence of Islamic

⁴⁴⁹ "Change has come to the British National Party," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵⁰ "Change has come to the British National Party," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵¹ "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵² "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵³ "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵⁴ "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵⁵ "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁵⁶ Law and Freedom Foundation, "What is the Law and Freedom Foundation?" accessed April 16, 2012, <http://lawandfreedomfoundation.org/what-is-the-law-and-freedom-foundation-2/>.

⁴⁵⁷ "What is the Law and Freedom Foundation?" accessed April 16, 2012, <http://lawandfreedomfoundation.org/what-is-the-law-and-freedom-foundation-2/>.

doctrine.⁴⁵⁸ The Law and Freedom Foundation combats Islam and Muslim immigrants in the bureaucratic arena by offering pro-bono legal expertise to anyone disputing the construction of a mosque. The group has enjoyed early success, thwarting thirteen mosques throughout England.⁴⁵⁹ Instead of assailing the actual religion or its practices, Mosquebusters focus on technical matters to prevent mosque building, such as parking lot space, noise pollution, or building codes.⁴⁶⁰ Infuriated locals have the ability to go to the Law and Freedom Foundation website and download generic forms that starts them on their legal battle against mosque construction.⁴⁶¹ Groups such as the Mosquebusters and the English Defense League peripherally mention terrorism as a threat to Britain, but they seem more concerned with the threats that ordinary British Muslims pose to their conception of a free society.⁴⁶² Although electoral success is low, anti-Muslim immigration parties have established a foothold in British society. The tension between Muslim immigrants and European natives is likely to remain a controversial and urgent political issue.

⁴⁵⁸ "What is the Law and Freedom Foundation?" accessed, April 16, 2012, <http://lawandfreedomfoundation.org/what-is-the-law-and-freedom-foundation-2/>.

⁴⁵⁹ "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁶⁰ "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁶¹, "Mosquebusters," *Foreign Policy*

⁴⁶² "Mission Statement," <http://englishdefenceleague.org/about-us/mission-statement/>.

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Capstone Summary

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Dancing with a Literary Devil: The Rushdie Affair in Britain

European countries are faced with a social issue that they have been struggling to solve, namely immigration. The high-profile cases of massive waves of immigration are South Asians in Britain, North Africans in France, and Turks in Germany and the Netherlands. The commonality between these cases is that Europe has received millions of Muslim immigrants since World War II and these immigrants have settled into their home countries. German-Turks have entered their third generation of German residency, but *jus sanguine* citizenship laws prevent them from acquiring citizenship, whereas North Africans in France have acquired citizenship. Citizenship is only a minor detail in a larger story of Muslim immigrants in Europe. A common narrative has taken hold in Europe, claiming that Muslim immigrants have refused to assimilate into European societies. In essence, there is a fissure between millions of Europeans and their societies. This paper explores that fissure through the lenses of the Rushdie Affair and similar affairs, such as the Danish Cartoon Affair and *The Jewel of Medina* controversy in Britain. The British Muslim population is mostly composed of South Asians, many of whom migrated during the 1960s. Their sustained and vehement protests against Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* shook Britain in an unexpected way. The paper details the Rushdie Affair, the immigrant population, Britain's changed post-war society, and modern controversies that resemble the Rushdie Affair.

Chapter one discusses the history of post-WWII immigration in Britain, starting with Polish and Irish immigrants immediately following the war and moving to the South Asian wave of the 1960s. It shows how different groups of immigrants enjoyed varying degrees of success and assimilation. It also explains that British society was receptive to immigrants following the war in part because of a positive experience with Jewish immigrants during the inter-war period, but that it was opposed to immigration so vehemently in the 1960s that fascist parties and anti-immigration sentiment were fashionable. Immigrants who had arrived in Britain before the 1960s were mostly from another European country. Italians, Turks, Chinese, and Cypriots established themselves in communities as owners of small restaurants and cafes that were immensely popular in post-war Britain. Britain experienced a post-war affluence that allowed individuals to spend money on diversifying their palettes. George Orwell noted an insular and provincial proclivity among the English following the war, but they experienced internationalism through new cuisines available to them. Immigration from the Caribbean and South Asia was a process of decolonization that overwhelmed British society, especially in urban areas. Aside from ethnic riots and clashes with the police, minority immigrants were blamed for inner city crowding, drugs, and taking advantage of generous welfare. A faction of the Conservative Party rallied around anti-immigration sentiment, which carried a lot of momentum in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Immigration reform bills were passed in Parliament to stem the tide of Commonwealth immigration, but the bills enabled family reunification and more immigrants arrived in Britain.

Chapter two sets the scene of the Rushdie Affair by describing the events and responses following publication in Britain. It takes an international focus in respect to Ayatollah's Khomeini's fatwa because the death sentence transformed the situation in Britain by making it more delicate and volatile. It studies the reactions of prominent statesmen, writers, Rushdie, and ordinary South Asian Muslims. The Rushdie Affair is laden with paradoxes and ironies, one of which is that Rushdie wrote the book about the South Asian Muslim immigrant community, the community of which he belonged. The motif of *The Satanic Verses* is the travails of the immigrant experience in Britain and just how difficult it is. The book was picked up as being anti-Islamic and anger spread throughout the British Muslim community, even though the immigrants probably could not nor did not read the book. The results were book burnings, demonstrations that numbered in the thousands in Bradford and London, and calls for Rushdie's death and banning the offensive book. Ayatollah Khomeini's death sentence opened more layers to the affair, as Rushdie was sent into hiding and the book became the center of a diplomatic crisis. Reactions to *The Satanic Verses* were global, but the population that was the subject of the book provides illumination into the friction that existed between them and the rest of British society.

Chapter three attempts to show the various ways British society changed following World War II, especially in the 1960s ebbing into the 1970s and 1980s. Immigration was part of those changes, but this chapter focuses on the "permissive society" and the opening of society. Society, families, marriage, sexuality, crime, drugs, etc. changed during this time period. Secularism and the

privatization of religion into the home and upon the individual were rising and vectors of public religion, such as church attendance, were falling. This time period is also important because censorship diminished and previously banned books and media content were allowed. For example, DH Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Nabokov's *Lolita* were previously banned in Britain. To obtain them, Britons had to smuggle them from Paris. However, an archaic 19th century law was overturned and that allowed banned literature to be published if it was deemed to have artistic merit. The anti-censorship revolution spilled over into films, television, and radio, as well. The various transformations of British society defined a new society, one in which the South Asian immigrants were not well-suited for, especially given their traditional values and practices. The Thatcherite Revolution built momentum off a backlash of the "permissive society," but the actions of Margaret Thatcher's government were in the economic and not the social sphere primarily. During Thatcher's reign as prime minister, Salman Rushdie criticized Britain for treating its racial minorities as colonial subjects within an empire. Police brutality towards Commonwealth communities was a trait of the Thatcher government.

Chapter four tackles recent cases that had the potential to become like *The Satanic Verses*. These include the Danish cartoons that were not printed in British newspapers and a book entitled *The Jewel of Medina*, which delayed publication in Britain for over a year. Whereas publishers and vendors of *The Satanic Verses* remained largely steadfast, British media have redefined free speech to protect against gratuitous offense. Protests for *The Jewel of Medina* were minimal, but the

book was still censored. This chapter provides a comparative study of the Danish cartoons, *The Jewel of Medina*, and the Rushdie Affair. The Danish cartoons provoked protests and threats of violence that recalled the events of the Rushdie Affair, but it was puzzling in the sense that the British government and media had not done anything wrong in the eyes of British Muslims. Instead of advocating for publication or ruing the loss of free society, they discussed the need for not gratuitously offending their populations. The initial publishing house of *The Jewel of Medina* backed out when an American academic claimed that the book had the ability to spark Rushdie Affair-esque violence. A second publishing house dropped out when its offices were firebombed in London. Outside the firebombing, protests against the book were rather minimal. It did not come close to causing the same uproar or social unrest that the Danish cartoons or Rushdie had.

The conclusion discusses how the Rushdie Affair and similar controversies can provide insights into the problems of immigration in Britain and the European Union. There is a strongly held belief in Europe that European Muslims are unable to live up to the European label. Instead of biological inferiority, the rhetoric dismisses them as culturally inferior because they practice traditional methods instead of assimilating into European societies. Recent elections have featured far right parties whose agenda is solely anti-immigration and these parties have performed relatively well as minor parties. The Rushdie Affair was a seminal moment in British history, bringing free speech and Muslim immigrants under the microscope. It is debatable as to whether or not Rushdie's

Satanic Verses would be published in Britain today. The comparison is imperfect, but materials similar to *The Satanic Verses* in that they have offended Muslims have not been published in Britain.

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