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EVERYWHERE WAS NOW A PART OF EVERYWHERE ELSE: ENCOUNTERS OF EXTREMISM IN SALMAN RUSHDIE'S *SHALIMAR THE CLOWN*

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Abstract:

This article mainly focuses on the transformation of an innocent boy into an international terrorist in Salman Rushdie's Shalimar the Clown. It deals with the theme of the making of the terrorist, which becomes a global phenomenon and it becomes a cause of concern worldwide. This article also reminds that the relationship between the identity of a person and the nation is vital and that affinity leads to serious consequences. It changes according to their own circumstances. It also focuses on the recreating of the self during the time of conflicts.

Keywords: *Globalization, Terrorism, Revenge, Innocence, Betrayal, Emotion and New Beginning.*

Salman Rushdie is one of the most controversial and political based novelists of our recent times. The world of his fiction and non-fiction has accurately portrayed the complex and the confusing state of the postcolonial world. Almost all of his major works have the interpretation of history, myths and the social problems of an ordinary common humanity. The world has been growing smaller day by day due to technical innovations. People start to love their own selves and hate others. Revenge attitude has been growing day by day in everyone's life. They don't have enough time or enough generosity to love or show their feelings and emotions. These novels also reflect the attitude of the person who express intense love and later that love changes into revenge.

Shalimar the Clown by Salman Rushdie is a novel published in the year 2005. He makes use of two different narrative sections in the novel: one is a love story in a gorgeous Himalayan Valley, and the other is a story of brutal assassination of an American ambassador. The novel moves from California to Kashmir, France, England and back again to California. The novel is divided into five parts and each part begins with the name of an important character.

The story begins with the description of a young girl who struggles with restless sleep in Los Angeles in 1991, and the dynamic, and glamorous protagonist India Ophuls is introduced. She is 24 years old and is a proficient athlete and a brilliant student. Her "spare-time pursuits" include weekly boxing classes, training in the "close combat martial art of Wing Chun" and small arms target practice - but the arrow is her "weapon of choice". Rushdie describes,

At twenty-four the ambassador's daughter slept badly through the warm, unsurprising nights. She woke up frequently and even when sleep did come her body was rarely at rest, thrashing and flailing as if trying to break free of dreadful invisible manacles. At times she cried out in a language she did not speak. (01)

This novel is about a beautiful story of a small fictional village named Pachigam, in Kashmir situated beside the river Muskadoon, and it is the story of an innocent Kashmiri boy Noman Sher Noman, who is the best performer among his troupe of dancers who could catwalk the rope.

This story of love, betrayal, hatred and revenge surrounds the four major characters. The novel also

reveals some harsh pictures of globalization and terrorism. The novel begins at the base of Kashmir where the small village Pachigam exists. The story revolves around four characters Shalimar (Noman), Boonyi (Bhoomi), Maximilian Ophuls (Flying Jew) and India (Kashmira). It is unexpected that each character carries double names reflecting that their fates and their identities are reformed in the story. Salman Rushdie shows different locations and the flight of thoughts to various places beyond the imaginative grounds signifies the varied politics of the diverse countries.

The main protagonist of *Shalimar the clown* is Noman Sher, a Kashmiri Muslim boy. Pachigam is a village popular for actors of Bhand Pather, the traditional plays of the valley. Shalimar is an acrobatic clown. He is in love with a Pandit's daughter, a Kashmiri Hindu girl named Boonyi.

Bhoomi signifies the 'mother earth' and Boonyi is the local name of Kashmiri China tree. Both, Noman and Boonyi are love birds. Bhoomi never liked her name, she says: "My name is mud", she said, "Its mud and dirt and stone and I don't want it," and asked him to call her "Boonyi instead". (72)

The first story describes Kashmir as a paradise with multi-cultural groups, multiple faiths living in tolerance and undisturbed harmony. As Rushdie points out, "... the word *Hindu* and *Muslim* had no place in their story, he told himself. In the valley, these words were merely descriptions, not divisions" (57). Shalimar the Clown, a young female protagonist Boonyi's beloved, is a performer and tightrope walker whose father is the Muslim headman. They enjoy the bliss of co-existence, the lovers get married, receiving the approval and the blessing from both the Hindu and Muslim societies:

We are all brothers and sisters here," said Abdullah. "There is no Hindu-Muslim issue. Two Kashmiri-two Pachigami- youngsters wish to marry, that's all. A love match is acceptable to both families and so a marriage there will be; both Hindu and Muslim customs will be observed. (110)

The love between Noman and Boonyi goes smoothly until the entry of an American ambassador, Maximilian Ophuls. The American ambassador, Mr. Maximilian Ophuls visits Kashmir. He is a scholarly gentleman who has strong interest in all the aspects of Kashmiri culture. He and his entourage stay at the government guest house at Pachigam. When Boonyi meets Maximilian Ophuls, she completely surrenders herself to the American ambassador. Rushdie narrates,

When Boonyi met Maximilian Ophuls's eyes for the first time he was applauding wildly and looking piercingly at her while she took her bow, as if he wanted to see right into her soul. At that moment she knew she had found what she had been waiting for. I swore I'd grab my chance when it showed up, she told herself, and here it is, staring me in the face and banging its hands together like a fool. (133)

The Pandit's wife's name is Pamposh Kaul which means a lotus flower but she prefers her nickname 'Giri' (a walnut kernel). Abdullah Sher Noman's wife is Firdaus Butt and she prefers 'Bhat' as her nickname. One fine day Pamosh Kaul reveals her hidden secrets to Firdaus which burns her ears and shatters her soul. Firdaus finds Pamposh to be discontented with her marriage. But Boonyi is far from being happy. Claustrophobia grips her, and she realizes rather too late that she wants to escape. For Boonyi, Kaul and Shalimar's beloved, changing her choice of her man stands for the possibility of finding her identity far from her. Noman and Boonyi are in love and ready for the nuptial knot. Shalimar is portrayed as a mad and passionate lover. He reveals his would be reactions of her betrayal if it ever happens in his life:

Don't leave me, he said, rolling over onto his back and panting for joy. "Don't leave me now or I'll never forgive you, and I'll have my revenge, I'll kill you and if you have any children by another man I'll kill the children also. (98)

Noman remains unaware and has never tried to explore the hidden layers of Boonyi's desires. He becomes a true victim of her betrayal later. Boonyi finds in Max an opportunity to escape from Pachigam and explore something different. She seduces Max and paves her way to Delhi to become his mistress.

Shalimar is unable to bear this personal loss, and he swears to kill his wife and her love. Boonyi after forsaking her husband finds herself polluted and lost.

Boonyi is pregnant with Max's child. This defames Max's position and the nation that he represents. Boonyi gives birth to a girl child and names her "Kashmira" (A hybrid of Jewish and Kashmiri blood). Max's angry wife snatches Boonyi's daughter, Kashmira who later becomes India Ophuls. Boonyi grows fat and she is thrown back to Kashmir as a waste trash to her village. Now her village has no place for her as they have all declared her dead after her betrayal. She lives the life of a dead person.

This event changes an innocent boy into an extremist and international terrorist. For 15 years, he takes up training as a terrorist. This shy, romantic boy enraptured by love and trust becomes a cold-blooded warrior with a heart full of vengeance. Boonyi makes Shalimar a rage - filled jihadist. He gives vent to his emotions of vengeance by joining the terrorist group in Afghanistan. Rushdie discusses the political turmoil in the different countries:

The Afghans had freedom fighters of their own, and the United States decided to support these fighters against its own great enemy, which had occupied their country. U.S. operatives in the field-CIA, Counter-Terrorism and Special Units personnel-took to referring to these fighters as the Muj, which sounded mysterious and exciting and concealed the fact that the word *mujahid* meant the same thing as the word *jihadi*, "holy warrior." (270-271)

Meanwhile, there was a rising communal war of Muslims against the Pandits and this leads to a reassessment that the syncretistic Kashmiriness is an illusion found underneath forced conversions, temple-smashing and persecution. At the end of the 1971 during the war at Bangladesh, Shalimar resolves to seek and assassinate Max Ophuls. He seeks "The invisible enemy in the invisible room in the foreign country far away: that's the one I want to face" (249).

Shalimar comes back to Pachigam and murders Boonyi in the hills. She meets with a tragic end, after giving birth to the illegitimate child of Max. Boonyi seeks her identity through Ophuls but ends up losing her identity, her home, her village and name. Boonyi or Bhoomi ultimately goes into Bhoomi (The mother earth) as a victim of the extremist tendency of Shalimar. Then Shalimar moves to Philippines and with the help of Abu Sayyaf, he reaches United States. There he ingratiates himself to Max as a driver. Rushdie connects the personal life of Shalimar with the political events. The former US ambassador to India and subsequently America's counter-terrorism chief is knifed to death in broad day light on the door steps of India's apartment. Max's murder, at first appears to be a political assassination of a Jewish American by a Muslim-Kashmiri fundamentalist and later turns out to be passionately personal. The culprit is his Kashmiri driver, the man called Shalimar.

India Ophuls longs for the hidden truth about her lost Kashmiri mother, of whom she is forbidden to speak. "The ambassador had entombed her memory under a pyramid of silence" (18). Shalimar is arrested and sentenced in Los Angeles. Now the focus is on the conflicts between Shalimar and India Ophuls. India Ophuls crafts a psychological torture for the killer of her parents through an avalanche of hostile accusatory letters. But Shalimar senses that "A female demon was occupying his head, jabbing hot shafts into his brain" (375).

India's life has been shaped out from her passion for revenge on Shalimar. India's letters again disturb Shalimar as his revenge remains unfulfilled and his enemies are alive again. Alive for six years on death row, Shalimar escapes from the prison in a jail-break and heads straight to quench his thirst for India's blood. In the final frame of drama, India, reincarnated with her mother's given name, Kashmira, shoots Shalimar down with an arrow from her golden bow before he can plunge another knife into his prey. *Shalimar the Clown* engages with the refrainment and exclusions, exemplified in the continuing struggle between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. By discussing "terror" and "terrorism", Rushdie subverts these terms in relation to identity, violence and "borderless economy" (3). The effects on the individual reroutes

postcolonial paradigms by examining transnational terror networks, and their regional and international impact on politics, cultures and identities. Jenkins uses the term “war on terror”, which will suit Rushdie in this novel (11).

The world has turned out to be borderless as a result of globalization and its progressions are described in *Shalimar the Clown*. Salman Rushdie voices this concept of a borderless world and its implications:

Everywhere was now a part of everywhere else. Russia, America, London, Kashmir. Our lives, our stories, flowed into one another's, were no longer our own, individual, discrete. This unsettled people. There were collisions and explosions. The world was no longer calm. (61)

In the novel, every character is disturbed and their psyche is wounded. This novel is full of discoveries, surprises, cultural collisions marked by bewilderment, a sense of shock, withdrawal or adaptation. Max's murder breaks her into pieces but her identity gets demolished when she visits Pachigam. India visits India to enquire about her mother Boonyi's struggle filled life. India finds her mother murdered, killed and she has been attached metaphorically many times to all whom she has loved. Boonyi's identities have been magnified here. India feels broken after hearing her mother's story.

This novel focuses on Kashmir and international terrorism reframes Rushdie's earlier arguments. The identity of a man is changed according to the situation, and an innocent boy (Noman Sher Noman) has changed into a deadly terrorist (Shalimar the Clown). Finally, India takes her revenge on Shalimar. She is in a hotel room, waiting to kill Shalimar. There will not be a second chance to kill him. India does not feel like fire but like an ice cube. She attempts to overpower the forces of violence on her:

He came toward the dressing room. She was ready for him. She was not fire but ice. The golden bow was drawn back as far as it would go. She felt the taut bowstring pressing against her parted lips, felt the foot of the arrow's shaft against her gritted teeth, allowed the last seconds to tick away, exhaled and let fly. There was no possibility that she would miss. There was no second chance. There was no India. There was only Kashmira, and Shalimar the clown. (398)

Salman Rushdie obviously states that Shalimar is the representative of the extremist that survive all around the world and portrays the political conflicts in the other nations, operated by politicians in some of the countries like India, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Terrorism has received a considerable attention in world politics, since the attack on World Trade Centre on 11 September 2001. The novel illustrates how terrorism can be understood as a repercussion or outgrowth of the repressive political and economic force of globalization or cosmopolitanism of the nation state. Jani describes,

Cosmopolitanism, signifies the cultural identity of middle class intellectuals and writers whose ways of looking towards “the world” are explicitly centred on “the home,” constructing the nation as their space of engagement. “Post national cosmopolitanism” is also complex in its negotiations of home and the world but its explicit orientation is the look away from the nation as an emancipatory space. . . . Writing in a different moment, most of Indian English novels of the past three decades portray nationalisms as being inherently fanatical and violent. Historiography is important here, but reflections on the politics of history writing are raised in opposition to the understanding of history itself as dynamic, as the product of contending human and structural forces. Characterization, voice, plot, and theme are fashioned in the ways that represent, for instance, anticolonial nationalism. (49-50)

In this novel, the author links the momentous forces of the postmillennial period globalization and terror are shown brilliantly. Rushdie gives a shocking description of the global consequences of human emotions such as love, betrayal and revenge. We are able to discern the author's own mixed feelings and we

perceive that Rushdie inevitably continues to work within the precincts of the western metropolis, while at the same time, retaining the thematic and political connections with a national background. Even though he bears all the attractions of the exotic, the magical and the other, Rushdie also participates in an aesthetic language familiar to Anglo-American literature.

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