

Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* a Postcolonial Representation of the Past India

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Abstract

Salman Rushdie is one of the most important postcolonial writers in English literature. Through his literary contributions, he ushers in a new era of postcolonial literature. Rushdie is a world-renowned novelist whose outstanding works have garnered him accolades, thrills, and controversy throughout his illustrious career. Several Indian authors, including Amitav Ghose and Rohinton Mistry, have been greatly influenced by his unquestionable creativity. As one of the world's most controversial and provocative contemporary novelists, Salman Rushdie stands out. Postcolonial and postmodern writers like Gabriel Garca Márquez, Günther Grass, Milan Kundera, and Jorge Luis Borges were considered to be among his contemporaries during the 1980s and 1990s. Allegory, multiculturalism, magic realism and other postcolonial techniques are used in Rushdie's works to create alternative views of the colonial situation in a postcolonial context.

Keywords: Historical Allegory, Patriotism, Extremism, Self-Destruction.

Postcolonial literature has been greatly enriched by Rushdie's novelist's use of creative devices, such as a brilliant fusion of oral narratives and history with fiction, non-fiction, and journalism as well as snatches from Hindi film songs and fantasy, surrealism,

magical realism, which has made him a remarkable figure in postcolonial literature. A wide range of topics are addressed in Rushdie's novel: historical, political, moral, social, racial, communal, cultural, and religious issues, as well as contemporary issues like terrorism and corruption. In his novels, these themes can be found. In his work, Rushdie depicts a political situation, making him one of the postcolonial writers of this kind. All of Rushdie's novels, as a postcolonial author, have brilliantly depicted the politics of both the East and the West. The post-colonial politics of India and Pakistan are depicted in *Midnight's Children* and *Shame*; in *The Moor's Last Sigh*, he emphasises conflict between the East and the West; in *The Ground Beneath Her Feet* and *Fury*, he broadens his narrative and focuses on Western politics while making sporadic references to the East. In his subsequent novels, he continues to expand his narrative and emphasise Western politics while making sporadic references to the East.

In most of Rushdie's works, the past of India is emphasised, and his complete works sometimes present a historical allegory. A historical novel rather than a story, *Shalimar the Clown* is considered to be *Shalimar the Clown*. Many allegories are woven throughout the tale of India's modern history, even in the short novella "Midnight Children." In all of his books, Kashmir serves as a backdrop, and many of the allegories he uses refer to the location. It is his intention to entertain the reader, and the reader will find it intriguing to discover many historical allegories that he has employed in his work.

Rushdie depicts Kashmir in this *Shalimar the Clown* as a place where history and the passion play of those who can't endure it meet. Gurnah writes: "Rushdie returned to writing about India's subcontinent with *Shalimar the Clown*'s focus on Kashmir as a significant political event. It was an important step for Rushdie's career." (07) History of Kashmir has been shown in the book, where Kashmir has been described as the state that grew up between the East and the West, surviving as India or more particularly Kashmira. *Shalimar the Clown*

is a representation of the infidel who thinks the world belongs to him. Shalimar the Clown is mostly rooted in Kashmir, although it starts and concludes in Los Angeles. Three primary characters' stories are told by Rushdie: the lovely teenage dancer Boonyi, the Muslim tightrope walker and clown Shalimar Noman, and the European elderly Jew Max Ophuls.

Both Shalimar and Boonyi grow in two Kashmiri villages, Pachigam and Shirmal. Noman Sher Noman also known as Shalimar the Clown,

the most beautiful boy in the world” is a performer and tight-rope walker. Shalimar marries his childhood friend Boonyi, a Hindu Brahmin girl. Noman declares to Boonyi “Don't you 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” (SC 61).

Maximilian Ophuls, the American ambassador to India, once encountered a young woman named Bhoomi or Boonyi. They had an extramarital affair, and she gave birth to a daughter they called Kashmirira. Then he brought Kashmirira, renamed India, to the United States. It is apparent that Bhoomi symbolises the country of India and when a foreigner comes to our territory and attempts to be nice and eventually deceives us and takes away our property, what is his destiny is further depicted in this context. In the wake of learning about what had been happening behind Boonyi's back, Shalimar the Clown, Boonyi's husband, flew to the United States and shot Max Ophuls in the head. Shalimar turns to terrorism and assassination as a means of exacting vengeance on Max Ophuls and Boonyi, his wife, for their deception of him by having an affair with the former. A true patriot like Shalimar is willing to do everything for his nation. Shaheed Udham Singh flew to London after the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre in Amritsar in order to kill General O'Dwyer. Rushdie mentions this occurrence in his novel. To avenge General Dwyer, Shaheed Udham Singh pursued him to England where he had to wait for six long years before taking his chance at retribution by killing the general in public. Shaheed Udham Singh is shown as Shalimar the clown, a real

patriot who is willing to sacrifice his own life for the sake of his country's future. He assassinates Boonyi and Max Ophuls, telling the audience that he is a loyal patriot willing to do everything for his nation. Zoon, a friend of Boonyi's, gets seduced by the three Gegroo Brothers, who seek refuge in a mosque surrounded by Big Man Mistri, Zoon's father, the police, and the inhabitants of Shirmali for twenty-five days until they emerge. Throughout the story, both this occurrence and the Indo-Pak conflict are intertwined. After twenty-five days, Big Man Misri passes over the key to the police and locks the mosque's door, which has only one door and no windows. He does this in the hopes that the three brothers will not have lived this long without food if the mosque's door is locked from the outside. This episode is once again a metaphor for what a genuine patriot would do to anybody who deceives us or our country. At the conclusion of the story, Kashmira returns to India, her birthplace, after having been abducted by American ambassador Maximilian Ophuls shortly after. This shows that Kashmir, the Earth's Paradise, is constantly on the minds of people, and they're always ready to take the chance to get their hands on it. However, no matter how hard they try or how much work they put in, they will have to liberate Kashmir, the earthly paradise that belongs to India. Shalimar, the daughter born as a consequence of Max and Boonyi's illicit connection, is slain by an arrow thrown by India. Shalimar's actions show that India will not accept terrorism since it is endangering the peace of the nation for personal gain.

The fall of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden reminds Rushdie of Paradise, but when one study Kashmir, the heaven of the Earth, we see that paradise itself is crumbling as it is being converted into a living hell. An Indian Muslim's patriotism is vividly captured by Rushdie. When someone attempts to injure or hurt their nation, they establish they are Indians first and Kashmiris second, he argues. He demonstrates his point by stating: "I started off as a Kashmiri and not much of a Muslim. Then I got a bruise on the chest that turned me into an Indian." (SC 40)

According to Rushdie, India may become the most developed country in the world if it focuses on its growth and development more seriously. This would allow it to overcome its inferiority mentality, which stems from the fact that it is still one of the world's developing nations. Our nation's political system is rife with corruption, and violence and terrorism only contribute to the societal instability caused by this. Today, not just in India, but all around the globe, man is murdering man. Something has happened to the world's tranquilly. People are more conscious of the dangers of terrorism since nuclear weapons are being built in India and Pakistan at the same time. Terrorism in India has its roots in the conflict in Kashmir, which has transformed many otherwise good people into terrorists. In spite of the fact that they are not directly participating in terrorist actions, their employment requires them to engage in such activities, resulting in a terrible conscience for many innocent terrorists:

... a parallel explosion of vomit-taught him two lessons he never forgot: that terrorism was thrilling and that no matter how profoundly justifies its cause, he personally could not get over the moral hurdles required to perform such acts on a regular basis. (SC 162)

To show that Kashmir has always been the target of individuals like terrorists and invaders, he has used this story to show that they keep on entering the nation and are eventually hauled away since Kashmir is a part of India and so, no one can hurt it or refuse it. Rushdie mourns the loss of the notion of tolerance and secular pluralism in Kashmir and the Muslim world as a whole (Cowley 27).

Rushdie portrays the rise of extremism as a result of religious fundamentalism. Shalimar the Clown is transformed into Shalimar the assassin in this episode. The American ambassador to India, Max Ophuls, convinces Boonyi to leave her husband Shalimar the Clown. India or Kashmir, his illegitimate daughter, whom he abducted from her birth mother Boonyi, is the reason he files for divorce from his wife. India Ophuls is a heroin addict because she dislikes her foster mother. Max, Kashmir's father, comes to her rescue. Archery,

shooting, boxing, and martial arts are among the sports she excels in. She informs him that he is the female and she is the masculine in their relationship. Upon learning that Shalimar had slain her parents, she takes the name Kashmira Noman and sets out to assassinate him. She sends him poisoned hate letters and chases him with her bow and arrow like Diana, the goddess of war.

Shalimar, who says he would murder Boonyi, her boyfriend, and their kid if she is disloyal at the fulfilment of his love for her. He dismembers his wife and then slits off her head to end her life. Max Ophuls, her boyfriend, is also killed by him, his neck being cut. Once he has Kashmira in his sights, he goes for the kill. Scenes of rape, murder, and devastation of Pachigam and Shirmal's communities are intense in the novel's narrative. Rushdie depicts Kashmir's rural idyll as a bucolic idyll, but he also incorporates prophecies from the forest witch. Beautiful Kashmir is shown by him. Rival towns use humour and moderation to resolve their differences.

The heroine of the novel, Boonyi turns out to be anti-heroine as she progresses from a simple village girl to a popular dancer as it feels a "false, a fantasy, an attraction to tempt her to sin, which she ... like Eve, is easily tempted and eagerly accepts the Ambassador's offer of a change ..." (Mathur 92) Using mythological reference, Rushdie makes his point. Ravan, the demon king, magically 'abducts' Sita in the Ramayana. Rushdie is an amazing storyteller. When Boonyi gives up her virginity to Shalimar Noman, it has epic significance. She smokes charas to boost her confidence. She is likened to Sita in comparison. Shalimar carries with him the snake-witchcraft of his mother Firdaus Begum as well as the sky-dragons of his father Rahu and Ketu. Shalimar's tightrope walking has a magical quality to it. Rumor, myth, and folklore are all referenced by Rushdie in his book. As a result, in this novel The novelist has indeed designed a blot of sorts each for all the women characters, not with an ulterior motive to lend them an aura of being only flesh and blood, but to either demean or

stigmatize them: Padma is like a plaything for Saleem; Reverend mother is conventional to a fault; Alia is vindictive; Emerald has no love for her sisters; Amina Sinai, Pia and Lila Sabarmati are tarred with the brush of infidelity; Elvyn and Brass Monkey embody both wildness and violence; Parvati's life ends on a very sordid note and the historical personality Indira Gandhi is depicted as a demon in the form of a woman.(Singh 55)

Salimar the Clown, by Salman Rushdie, is a postcolonialist portrait of the corrupted human and terrorist. When a few personalities like Boonyi and Salimar express their thoughts in a sensitive way, the history of India and its essence are distorted. Salman Rushdie's depiction of Kashmir as a place of horror and self-destruction has turned the region into a cesspool. The postcolonial era is characterised by the advent of violence.

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