

## THEME OF LOVE IN SHALIMAR THE CLOWN

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**Abstract:** *Shalimar the clown is a famous novel written by famous writer Salman Rushdie. Love is an important theme among other themes taken by Salman Rushdie in his novels. He describes many types of love in his novels. First of all, it is important to discuss about love as what it is. Laurence Lerner writes about love 'What is Love ? And what can we know about it?' 'In a yet unpublished monograph, ' writes a sociologist, ' the writer has developed a theory of intersexual attraction and love which holds that love is an affectionate response to one who is instrumental in the gratification of an individual's needs.*

*One more philosopher Walter Dias also defines love as it is popularly asserted glibly that love is a euphemism or euphuism for the magnetic sexual attraction, or lust-ridden infatuation, generated by the sex-urge seeking satisfaction of the desires of the flesh.*

*We can define the categories of love as - sexual love, parental (and filial) love, friendship, spiritual (and divine) love. Salman Rushdie also involves various types of love in his novels. This is a novel about love and revenge. In his novel Shalimar The Clown, hero Noman Sher Noman wants to take revenge upon his beloved wife Boonyi Kaul and Max ophuls. Shalimar is a Muslim while his beloved Boonyi Kaul is related to Pandit's family. This paper contains the study of love between a lover and beloved; love between a wife and a husband; love between a daughter and a father; love of villagers for the heroine of the novel. This paper also focuses on the thing, how a angry husband and a angry daughter take their revenge.*

**Key Words:** *love, types of love , revenge.*

Love is an important theme among other themes taken by Salman Rushdie in his novels. He describes many types of love in his novels. Such as in his first novel Grimus, he shows the love between brother and sister; in his Midnight's Children he shows love between lovers; in Shame, love among three sisters and further Omar's love for his wife; in Haroun and the Sea of Stories, he shows love between father and son; in The Ground Beneath Her Feet he describes the love between two lovers – Vina and Ormus. So in such a manner he presents the theme of love variously in his novels.

First of all, it is important to discuss about love as what it is. Laurence Lerner writes about love :

“What is Love ? And what can we know about it? 'In a yet unpublished monograph, ' writes a sociologist, ' the writer has developed a theory of intersexual attraction and love which holds that love is an affectionate response to one who is instrumental in the gratification of an individual's needs”(1).

Further he writes about this topic and he also recalls Shakespeare in his book by saying :

“Tis not hereafter, sing the drunken old men in ' Twelfth Night': present mirth hath present laughter. It is a prick, it is a sting, suggests George Peele : it is pretty pretty thing; it is a fire, it is coal. And how many other things too, pretty or stinging : a red red rose, an ever-fixed mark, a sickness full of woes; it is of God and passes human wit, but it has pitched its mansion in the place of excrement. It is begotten by despair upon impossibility. And so on and so on : the poets never tire of this senior-junior giant dwarf Dan Cupid” (2).

Walter Dias also writes about romantic love in such a way :

“Romantic love draws its operative virtue from man's nature, the quintessence of which is the greatest, gift of overall freedom. But in its very nature, then, it is an iconoclast. It lives by its own laws. Whatever tends to stunt the free growth of life, it must break. The key to human progress, therefore, is the spirit of modernity that keeps men and women on the path of sanity and progress with freedom of the choice of the partner and a willing participation in the life of two as one. Life, at bottom, is a joint-venture and it must, therefore, take two to make complete, natural, and abundant living” (3).

He also defines love as it is popularly asserted glibly that love is a euphemism or euphuism for the magnetic sexual attraction, or lust-ridden infatuation, generated by the sex-urge seeking satisfaction of the desires of the flesh.

In the preface of his book Laurence Lerner tells many kinds of love and he writes :

“If we ask what relationships are described by the word, the answer will be a list of perhaps four or five – sexual love, parental (and filial) love, friendship, spiritual (and divine) love, Damon loves Chloe and Robert Browing loved Elizabeth Barrett; a mother loves her child, a man loves his mother; the love of David and Jonathan surpassed the love of women; the mystic loves God, and God too loved the world so that He gave his only begotten son. The distinctions are important, but they will not sort out the babel for us, for it is almost entirely concerned with the first : there are poems about the love of God, but on the whole when the poets say ‘Love’ without qualification they mean Cupid – that is, sexual love. That is what the arguments are about, and that is what this book is about “ (4). So, in this way Salman Rushdie also involves various types of love in his novels.

His novel *Shalimar the Clown* is about love and revenge. In this novel *Shalimar the Clown* (2005), he describes India. The hero of the novel Noman Sher Noman wants to take revenge upon his beloved wife Boonyi Kaul and Max ophuls.

Shalimar is a Muslim while his beloved Boonyi Kaul is related to Pandit's family. Her real name was Bhoomi means the earth, but she dislikes her name and asked Noman to call her 'Boonyi'. Noman loves her very much and Rushdie narrates first love scene between them. 'Boonyi', he murmured also to the hoopoes in the high flower-strewn meadow of khelmarg, where he first kissed her. “Boonyi”, the birds and monkeys solemnly replied, honouring his love.”(5) Shalimar's father once calls him lucky charm. Once Shalimar tells Boonyi – “Don't leave me,” he said, rolling over onto his back and panting for joy. ‘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 also.”(6)

Rushdie, further writes that at the time of partition, Abdullah Noman ran to be with his wife and sons. He found Pyarelal was singing a hymn softly. Then Abdullah realised that he was the sarpanch and he must protect his people if they are in danger. Tears fell from his eyes – “He knew they were tears of shame.”(7)

Further, Rushdie hints at another man, who was also madly in love with Boonyi before her marriage with Shalimar. He was Colonel Kachhwaha, an India army's officer, who called himself a Rajput of the old school. But Boonyi declined of his advances towards her.

Boonyi saw sometimes the ghost of her mother. But she didn't tell this to her father, because her father gave her the love of both, mother as well the love of father. So she didn't want to hurt that man. But one day she says to her father in full anger – “If teaching isn't that important too you,” she burst out at miserable Pyarelal, then learning isn't that important to me. If my father the great philosopher wants to turn into a tandoori cook, then may be I'll find something to turn into as well. Who wants to be your daughter ? I'd rather be somebody's wife.”(8) But after looking her father's face she felt shame and regretted that she had hurt the man who had loved her most ever since the day of her birth and she felt more shame and she regretted that she insulted her father in the presence of a stranger, her father's cousin Gopinath.

One day Boonyi come to know that Gopinath followed Shalimar and Boonyi. He also took some photographs and made a movie film of them. But they had never suspected his presence. Gopinath also loved Boonyi and so he proposed her for marriage. He called her a fallen woman. Villagers came to know about the affair between a Hindu girl and Muslim boy. The people gathered outside the Noman residence where the panchayat was meeting. In the meeting it was decided that love match was acceptable to both families and so their marriage will be observed.

Rushdie once again tells the story of love between Shalimar and Boonyi and writes that when they first fell in love they felt – “They could see each other with their eyes closed, touch each other without making physical contact, hear each other's endearments even when no word was spoken aloud, and each would always know what the other was doing and feeling.”(9)

But later they developed physical relations between them. And it was the reason that Gopinath blackmailed Boonyi. But everything was clear after their marriage. Rushdie defends his hero and heroine by saying that the action done by them was just a weakness of love and Gods also loved but that was a love of action.

After his marriage Max came to India with his wife and in Kashmir he met Boonyi, Boonyi left Pachigam without her husband, because the American had only asked Abdullah Noman for a dance act by Boonyi when she said good bye to her husband, she knew it was an ending. But Rushdie writes about Shalimar's love – “He loved her too much to suspect her of having a traitorous soul. But he was just a clown, and his love led nowhere, would change nothing, would not take her where it was her destiny to go.”(10)

On the other hand Max felt in love with her. While he knew to love her means, to call the troubles. Boonyi was also involved in this shameful act. But in her heart she loved her husband – “In short, she could not get her cuckolded husband out of her mind, and because it was impossible to talk to her American lover about anything important she spoke heatedly of ‘Kashmir’ instead. Whenever she said ‘Kashmir’ she secretly meant her husband, and this ruse allowed her to declare her love for the man she had betrayed to the man with whom she had committed the act of treason.”(11)

Once she clearly said to Max that she even loved her husband. She also said that only her body was serving Max while her heart was serving only her husband Shalimar. Max became angry to listen this and after one week Boonyi come to know that she was pregnant. The baby inside her was Max's baby. The news of their affair also reached to her husband because Max was an ambassador and so this was the hot news for media. So her husband also became angry with her. Boonyi gave birth to a baby girl who was adopted by Peggy & baptized as India. After that Boonyi returned to Pachigam. Everthing had been changed there and Zoon Mistri says her– “‘They killed you; Zoon Mistri told Boonyi in the snowstorm.’ They killed you because they loved you and you were gone.”(12)

Rushdie introduces us to a lady named Grey Rat who was the first wife of Max. Her real name is Margaret “Peggy” Rhodes. About the return of Rat, Rushdie writes that Max wanted to beg her to stay, but remained silent and she was allowed to return. Rushdie narrates these words after her departure – “If we live through this, Ratty, I'll never betray you; he swore aloud in his lonely room. But he did, of course. He didn't kill her but he spent his life sticking the knives of his infidelities in her heart. And then came Boonyi Kaul.”(13)

About her he tells another difficult truth that she was a lousy lover. She insisted, however, that she loved him. One day he proposed her for marriage and she said that she was ready for marriage. Then they married.

At one place in the novel Max imagined about his daughter and his sexual partner Zaimab Azam. He thought that she could only have been two or three years older than India. He imagines- “Max ophuls found himself imagining in an idle moment that the two young women, his daughter and his sexual partner, might meet and become friends, but that was a possibility he discarded with a swift shudder of revulsion.”(14)

In India and for Indians it is a very shameful task, but in America and other countries of West, it is a normal thing. Max's last lover Zainab Azam told him nothing about herself but he loved her. In the novel, Shalimar was a clown of small village of Kashmir. But again Rushdie tells about shameful and horrible deeds of Pakistan. How they turned Kashmiris into the terrorists and Shalimar is also one of them. In the fire of revenge, he also turned into a terrorist. Uma Parameswaran wrote- “The triangle that Indo-English writers seem to be obsessed with is front, back and centre- Shalimar is a Muslim; he is in love with Boonyi, a Hindu, and his rival is Jewish Max ophuls, who instead of being the usual Brit as in *Midnight's Children*, is the American ambassador to India.”(15) Max plays important role in the terrorist activities of Shalimar, the clown.

The novel starts with India Ophuls, who is the daughter of Max and Boonyi. On her twenty fourth birthday Max, the ambassador comes at the door of India ophuls. Rushdie, here, shows the love between father and daughter. He writes- “Holding flowers, yet. 'people will think you're my lover,' India shouted down to Max, my cradle-snatching valentine. She loved the ambassador when he was embarrassed.... She saw him fracture into rainbow colours through the prism of her love.”(16)

In this novel also, he writes about sex. When India sees the new driver, Noman Sher Noman, who is also known as Shalimar, the clown, she feels that he wants to touch her and at that moment Rushdie expresses her thoughts- “Touch me, she wanted to say to his uncomprehending smile. I'll be your conduit, your crystal ball. We can have sex in elevators and never mention it. Sex in transit zones, in places like elevators that are between one place and the next. Sex in cars. The transit zones traditionally associated with sex.”(17) At that time she didn't know that he was the ex-lover of her mother and she thought that he must forget it that he was her father's employee.

She was shocked to listen that her father's killer was her mother's ex-husband. First it was taken as a political matter but it was just a revenge of a husband, who was cheated by his wife in love. At the end of the novel she feels shame and apologies to all her friends – “She telephoned her friends and apologies to them for her behavior, she threw a party on Mulholland Drive to prove she wasn't crazy any more, she called up her old film crew and said, “Let's go to work.”(18)

Shalimar's love towards his wife, his statement to his wife that he will kill the man who enters the life of his wife, is proved by his deed when he murders Max his wife's lover at a later stage. All these facts show that the novel ‘Shalimar the Clown’ is full of the theme of love.

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