



**WOMEN AS PRESERVER AND DESTROYER- STUDY OF SALMAN RUSHDIE'S  
NOVEL SHALIMAR THE CLOWN**

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**INTRODUCTION-**

The purpose of the present paper entitled, "**WOMEN AS PRESERVER AND DESTROYER- STUDY OF SALMAN RUSHDIE'S NOVEL SHALIMAR THE CLOWN**" is to study in detail the *theme of women as preserver and destroyer* in Shalimar the Clown written by Salman Rushdie with a view to form an estimation of his outstanding contribution to Indo-English literature and English Literature as a whole. "When a novel first reached India in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century it must have seemed quite strange, even to those few educated Indians who could read English. The strength and maturity of much of Indian writing in English are beyond dispute and it ought not to be necessary at this stage to ask such questions whether an Indian can write in English. But amidst much bold creativity, there still lingers a sterile tradition which brightens even major talents...The tradition refers to is that of Indianness. It is still frequently assumed that a novel in English by an Indian author can only be intensified if it is Indian in some peculiar and essential fashion. Thus novels come to be valued not so much upon their power as fiction, as upon their content of this national quintessence"

Rushdie is compared with writers like Kamala Das, Shobha De, and Taslima Nasreen as they are controversial too. He makes harsh and satirical remarks on the politics and politicians. He condemns the partition of India and Pakistan. In *Midnight's Children* he remarks that the Indian states are divided not on the basis of their natural boundaries but merely on linguistic base. He redefines history and religion in his fictions. While fictionalizing the facts he makes use of his craftsmanship with its intricacies. He masterfully blends irony into sarcasm, allegory and mockery. He dares to write what he thinks and feels. He is thorn in the eyes of many conservative class people. However, there are many who have praise for his inimitable style of writing. V. S. Prichett opines, "In Salman Rushdie, India has produced a glittering novelist, one with startling imaginative and intellectual resources, a master of perpetual storytelling"

The present study views those novels of Salman Rushdie, which depicts women as preserver and destroyer in Salman Rushdie's Shalimar the Clown. He is one of the greatest commonwealth writers. Many critics have made a study on Salman Rushdie. They have either praised him for his superb imaginative intellect or blamed for his remarks against Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. It is very essential to see the novels of Rushdie from the above said

perspective. K. R. Srinivas Iyengar in his book makes only a passing reference to Rushdie and his two novels.

Salman Rushdie was born in Bombay in June 1947. He lived there until age of 17 and completed his schooling at Cathedral School. He was born to a middle-class Moslem family. His paternal grandfather was an Urdu poet, and his father a Cambridge-educated businessperson. At the age of fourteen, Rushdie was sent to Rugby School in England. In 1964 Rushdie's parents moved to Karachi, Pakistan, joining reluctantly the Muslim exodus - during these years there was a war between India and Pakistan, and the choosing of sides and divided loyalties burdened Rushdie heavily. His residence was situated at Warden Road.

He was the only son of Anis Ahmed Rushdie, a Cambridge University-educated lawyer turned businessman, and Negin Butt, a teacher. He worked for two advertising agencies (Ogilvy & Mather and Ayer Barker) before becoming a full-time writer.

Rushdie has been married four times. His first wife Clarissa Luard (1976 to 1987) and fathered a son, Zafar. His second wife was the American novelist Marianne Wiggins; they were married in 1988 and divorced in 1993. His third wife, from 1997 to 2004, was Elizabeth West; they have a son, Milan. In 2004, he married the Indian actress and model Padma Lakshmi, the host of the American reality-television show *Top Chef*, and that marriage ended on 2 July 2007 with Rushdie indicating that it was her desire to end the marriage.

The term „Colonial historiography’ applies to the histories of the countries colonized during the colonial rule of the West and also to the ideas and approaches commonly associated with the historians who were, or are characterized by a colonialist ideology. In essence, colonial historiography was part of an ideological effort to denigrate and appropriate history of the colonized peoples as a means of establishing cultural hegemony and legitimizing colonial rule. For example, as a part of this schematic denigration and appropriation, the continent of Africa was labeled as the „Dark Continent’ in the traditional western historiography and the native Africans described as uncivilized, barbarian, savage and primitive. The German philosopher Hegel, in his famous book *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* proclaims:

Africa proper, as far as history goes back, has remained shut up...The negro (sic) as already observed exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thoughts of reverence and morality- all that we call feeling- if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character<sup>59</sup>. Hegel goes to the extent of saying that before the advent of the colonizers, Africa had virtually no history.

The *Lost Eden* Spanning the globe and darting through history, Salman Rushdie’s *Shalimar the Clown* published in 2005 is an extensive study of Kashmir. Before this novel, the valley of Kashmir has also figured in his *Haroon and the Sea of Stories* (1990), where the Vale of K is a reminiscent of Kashmir. Before *Haroon and the Sea of Stories*, Kashmir is particularly, although briefly, mentioned in his much talked about novel *Midnight’s Children* (1982), where Kashmir is the paradise from which Adam Aziz is cast out at the very beginning. In *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie’s concern about Kashmir is further aggravated through the queer boatman Tai who considers himself more a Kashmiri than an Indian and is killed by the opposing forces of India and Pakistan in Chhumb in 1947, the year of partition. In the concluding paragraph of the first chapter of *Midnight’s Children*, Rushdie writes: So let me conclude with the uncorroborated rumour that the boatman Tai who recovered from his scrofulous infection soon after my

grandfather left Kashmir, did not die until 1947, when (the story goes) he was infuriated by India and Pakistan's struggle over his valley, and walked to Chhumb with the express purpose of standing between the opposing forces and giving them a piece of his mind. Kashmiri for Kashmiri: that was his line. Naturally they shot him<sup>99</sup>. While the boatman Tai dies at the time of partition in 1947, Saleem Sinai, the protagonist is born on 15th of August, at midnight's stroke, and throughout the novel becomes a mirror of post-partition India, a living/literal metaphor for what happens to India after partition. In a similar vein, the two main protagonists of *Shalimar the Clown*, Noman Sher Noman a.k.a Shalimar the Clown and Bhoomi a.k.a Boonyi Kaul Noman , are born in the last night of Kashmir under the Maharaja rule. Their birth is recounted as: Two women gave snowbound birth behind the bushes, attended by a well-known local doctor and Sufistic philosopher, Khwaja Abdul Hakim, master of medicine both herbal and chemical, traditional and modern, Eastern and Western.[...] One boy child, one girl child, one trouble-free birth, one fatality<sup>100</sup>. The night of their birth coincides with a turbulent event of the Kashmir history. On the night of Boonyi and Shalimar's birth, their families are performing at a banquet laden with tradition and magic-an event that represents the high point of Kashmir's syncretic cooperation.

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