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Ethical and Political Critique of Violence in Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown*

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Abstract

This paper analyses how a benevolent person, who even stands above the petty religious rivalries, becomes ferocious, and cheerfully murders the other due to the unacceptability of otherness of other in the novel Shalimar the Clown by Salman Rushdie. Literature offers insights into death, violence, and mourning in multiple ways. Death is not simply an individual loss; it can widely be understood as a social issue leading to revenge. As a source of revenge, violence appears in terrifying ways. The way death takes place in today's society helps to blur the notion of what is vulnerability and invulnerability. The risk of being dehumanized in terms of culture, society, religion, and so on emerges against the backdrop of the local and global politics that function through the discourse and powers. The loss of somebody in the life results into aggressive action that appears in violent ways damaging self and other. In the novel, the death of Max Ophuls is planned, designed and performed. It is celebratory for Shalimar where as it counts as grief for India (Daughter) and the world. Drawing on the Butler's idea of 'Precarious life' as well as Care of the Self and Levinas's idea of Care of the Other, I argue that motive for violence of Shalimar is based on what Butler calls 'Giving Account to Oneself.' As this is a qualitative research, I

have analyzed the lines extracting them from the primary text, *Shalimar the Clown*. In the paper, I conclude how person needs to account himself or herself first if the otherness of other (ethics) is not acknowledged.

Keywords: Death, ethics, precariousness, vengeance, violence, vulnerability

Introduction

Shalimar the Clown critiques the globalization showing its dark side as it has been used as strategic tool to fulfill the vested interest of dominant groups or country. As shown in the novel, US ambassador to India, Max Ophuls comes to India as scholarly gentleman, but shows his imperial masculine motive by impregnating Boonyi, the wife of Shalimar the Clown, the Muslim man. Moreover, Max Ophuls has a vested interest to Kashmiri issue as well. The darker side is intensified from the very beginning of the novel as the Europe born American ambassador (Max Ophuls) is assassinated by Shalimar in the disguised form of Chaffeur.

The ethical concern for Shalimar is distracted due to the humiliating activities of Max Ophuls who sleeps with Shalimar's wife and this issue becomes political and global phenomenon. The conflict between Max Ophuls and Shalimar is political one because it is the conflict between Muslim (East) representing the Margin and American mainstream culture of Max. So, the root cause of this murderous violence lies in the entry point of Ophuls in the love affair between Shalimar and Boonyi; a Muslim boy and a Hindu girl respectively. The focus of the paper is not to show the darker side of globalization, rather it attempts to show how a clown who is innocent and humble man (the novel is entitled as *Shalimar the Clown*), becomes a Shalimar-the-Violent. While doing so, the paper brings the concepts of violence, ethics, respect to otherness of other, precarious life from the theorists like Butler and Levinas.

The paper has been divided into five parts. The first part deals with the introduction of subject matter. The second part is literature review. The third part is about methodology. In the same way, the fourth part talks about peace, violence, vulnerability, otherness of other and precarious life applying these concepts to the novel. Finally, by reflecting on the ideas related to violence, self and other, the paper concludes that if otherness of other is not acknowledged, the violence moves in circle as one needs to account on himself/herself as suggested by Butler.

Literature Review

The novel *Shalimar the Clown* is a perfect combination of love and hate. It is because the protagonist goes on killing the person he loved most. The Muslim clown known as Shalimar married a Hindu girl, Boonyi despite the cultural disparity. Talking about the affair, Alan Cheuse asserts, "The love affair nicely shapes the novel. From village politics to regional politics to national politics to world politics, the novel's lens widens even as it sharpens the focus on the major characters and on many minor figures: village louts, Indian generals, American presidents, and Pakistani dictators populate this satirical fictional opera with a deep heart" (23). The love affair after turning into violent issue

causes Shalimar travel the world to take revenge. The violence is further discussed by Debjani Ganguly as a part of globalization.

Debjani Ganguly talks about the desire and responsibility to bring together global networks of world, war, and witness in the novel of Salman Rushdie. Ganguly writes, "Rushdie's transition from a postcolonial to a global author in his shift to a 'world perspective' of history's relationship to the present" (385). The quote mentions about the inescapability of violence that comes and moves in circle. His novel is set up at the backdrop of globalization. The violence after 9/11 event (violent attack on Twin Tower in New York), spreaded in all over the world causing literary writers write on these issues. Similarly, John N. Duvall and Robert P. Marzec discuss how one event in one part of the world can affect the world. They write about *Shalimar the Clown* as:

Salman Rushdie's *Shalimar the Clown* is another curiously absent text in the slowly growing canon of post-9/11 fiction. *Shalimar* refers to 9/11 obliquely, but the book's analysis of terrorism and counter-terrorism in the late twentieth- and early twenty-first century makes the novel not only a direct response to 9/11, but a work that addresses the much broader issue of the historical and geopolitical ground that informs the indissolubly related planetary network of terrorism, techno-military expansion, western nationalist ascendancy, global capitalism. (388-389)

Shalimar the Clown shows the effects of 9/11 event. The book's focus on terrorism, violence and hate makes the novel a response to both 9/11 event and geopolitics. They further write, "He begins his life as an entertainer, a tightrope walker in the small Kashmiri village of Pachigam – Pachigam is situated in the heart of Kashmir, which will eventually be torn apart by Hindu-Muslim fundamentalism in the Indo-Pakistani war of 1965" (390). He becomes a violent person worldwide.

The issue of transformation of simple Clown into ferocious terrorist is raised by another critic Patricia Fernandez-Kelly in the article, "On *Shalimar the Clown*". He discusses it as the novel of love and betrayal, "In *Shalimar the Clown*, a novel of love, betrayal and the agonizing struggle over the contested Himalayan region of Kashmir, Salman Rushdie reveals a deep thread of pessimism—perhaps even despair—that is new to his work" (257). The novel ends in pessimism. Fernandez Kelly further explores, "These images of peaceful coexistence give Rushdie's description of the bloody and brutal obliteration of this society and its individual members over the decades that follow particular force" (258). The novel's conclusion of possible peace through the daughter India is fragile because she is illegitimate daughter of Max Ophuls and Boonyi. So, violence is not yet solved. Another critic, Annabella Pitkin, sheds light on geopolitics, terrorism and adultery. He discusses the novel as the literary text raising the issues of love, betrayal and the agonizing struggle over the body of Boonyi. Pitkin observes, "This is most true when Rushdie describes the fanatical Islamist fighters, the jihadi trainees and the mullahs who mobilize them in the training camps where *Shalimar the Clown* seeks refuge and the tools of revenge" (261). The Clown has become a fighter who joined the terrorism to take revenge to the Western power represented by Max.

These issues raised by the above mentioned scholars talk about how a person becomes a ferocious and goes on killing all the enemies if possible. They have talked about violence that operates both in local and global level. What is intended to do here is to critique the violence from ethical and political point of view. The ethical considerations and grounds on which humans need to give an account before they act are often crisscrossed as their voices go ignored and unheard. I explore if one needs to be politically violent when he or she realizes that the ethical ground is dead due to the difficulty of accepting otherness of other.

Methodology

The research design in this paper follows qualitative interpretative methods to analyze data collected from the primary text, *Shalimar the Clown* by applying ethical and political perspective. The crisis due to the violence which is often the murder, has been an important topic in literary scholarship as suggested by Judith Butler and Emmanuel Levinas to address the problem of violence. Levinas's idea of ethics as the first principle accepts the otherness of other whereas Butler's ethics is politics-oriented giving an account to oneself. Amidst such context, I have selected Salman Rushdie's novel in my paper. I have selected *Shalimar the Clown* as my primary text because of two reasons; the novel was published after 9/11 event and it deals with violence committed through words (Boonyi's desertion of Shalimar due to Max's lovely words) and weapons (Max's Murder by Shalimar) affecting the world. The theoretical concerns in ethical and political dimensions are the streamlining tools for the discussion and analysis of the primary text. The philosophy involved in the research is interpretivism.

Peace, Violence and Vulnerability in *Shalimar the Clown*

Shalimar's benevolent attitude and his respect to other, as shown in the title itself 'the clown', is his 'self' that acknowledges 'other self'. As the title suggests, he is innocent, humble and honest. His involvement in playing tightrope, social activities and his love to Boonyi support the nature of humanity as constituted by interpersonal relations. Thus, the narrator, in the novel, regards him as a sweet Noman, "He was sweet Noman, who called himself Shalimar the clown" (50). Boonyi finds him loving and generous, "She loved him because he would not—he could not!—hurt any living soul. How could he cause her harm when he would not harm a fly?" (50). Boonyi's observation of him is that he is a man having kind nature who does not hurt anyone.

Their love is validated by the society. Shalimar recounts, "The words Hindu and Muslim had no place in their story, he told himself" (57). Boonyi falls in love with him as she finds him loving and benevolent. However, twist comes when Boonyi falls in love again with Max Opuls to be deserted. Max Ophuls deserts Boonyi, and she is no more valuable for him. His wife snatches the baby- India from Boonyi's lap. Metaphorically, how western treats east is shown. The East has been dominated and humiliated by West. Western self is represented by Max Ophuls and Eastern self is represented by Shalimar. Max never acknowledges otherness of Shalimar and goes on developing romance with other's wife. The attack to dignity of Boonyi (Bhoomi / mother), is beyond forgiveness for

Shalimar. Thus, he cannot bear such humiliation and betrayal and joins an Islamist terrorist group which results in murdering Boonyi, Max Ophuls and creating violence in global level.

Pramod Kumar Nayer highlights how nation states form different strategies to face the neo-colonial influence due to globalization. He writes, "Thus the advent of cultural nationalism, religious fundamentalism, tribalism, and regionalisms in Asian/African nation-states constitute social strategies in the face of globalization" (8). There is the relationship of unevenness and asymmetry between the West and East because of neocolonialism along with the globalization. In this context, Radhakrishna sees a problematic relationship of "uneven and asymmetry" (315) prevailing in the world. Rushdie, in the novel, writes, "A Kashmiri girl ruined and destroyed by a powerful American gave the Indian government an opportunity to look like it would stand up and defend Kashmiris against Marauders of all types" (399). Shalimar, victimized by neocolonial impact of globalization, is not acknowledged as a self by the West or Max. He is determined to take revenge by crossing national boundaries since Max Ophuls has already resigned from his post to go to US for safe landing. Shalimar, as previously promised to kill the man who could marry Boonyi, joins insurgent group to kill Max Ophuls. In this regard, Saroj Sharma Ghimire mentions, "As a way of revenging the wrongs, some disillusioned men such as Shalimar crosses the local and national borders and get involved in violent activities such as assassination, bombing, murder, and among other, to produce violence in global scale that encompasses both the national and local spheres" (234). Ghimire means to say that the main character of the novel—Shalimar once disillusioned due to the West's tricky behavior as represented by Max Ophuls, goes on spreading violence in global scale as a tool for the revenge.

Shalimar, once living in the Kashmiri village of Pachigam, full of love, affection and laughter, became a violent murderer in global level. In his youth, he was limited to a local community by performing his skill on the tightrope in the village's traditional theatrical troupe, but now since his gullibility is teased, mocked and insulted, he starts giving an account to himself. The result is that he killed the Western 'self' represented by Max. The ambassador who was slaughtered in Los Angeles is a result of his misbehavior in Kashmiri village. Rushdie writes, "Then the ambassador was slaughtered . . . bleeding to death from a deep neck wound caused by a single slash of the assassin's blade" (5). Shalimar, being disillusioned of neocolonialism of America, understands that his people have been intentionally thought to be inferior by the West. He cannot bear such humiliation. To protect the dignity of his community, he kills his wife Boonyi and Max Ophuls, a representative of the neocolonial force. He is dehumanized by Max Ophuls in Butler's term. In *Prekarious Life*, Butler again writes:

It is one thing to argue that first, on the level of discourse, certain lives are not considered lives at all, they cannot be humanized, that they fit no dominant frame for the human, and that their dehumanization occurs first, at this level, and that this

level then gives rise to a physical violence that in some sense delivers the message of dehumanization that is already at work in the culture. (34)

It is power and discourse that determine which lives are grievable and not-grievable. A discourse on dehumanization produces knowledge that legitimizes violence. Violence against those who are not quite living leaves a mark that is not a mark or identity yet all. Thus, she says, "Dehumanization's relation to discourse is complex" (36). Who is precarious, livable and vulnerable is full of fluidity. She also brings concept of Emmanuel Levinas's concept of face to talk about moral responsibility that other demands with us, "I would like to consider the "face," the notion introduced by Emmanuel Levinas, to explain how it is that others make moral claims upon us, address moral demands to us, ones that we do not ask for, ones that we are not free to refuse" (131). Levinas gives a focus to the interpersonal relation between 'I' and 'You', thus one is not free to refuse the otherness of other.

Butler's idea of politics in violence, death and mourning comes as a reaction to hierarchical dichotomy created by masculine Western tradition. The globalization further intensifies such gap and creates the terror in global scale. The harmonious relation between the characters in the novel based on peaceful land of Kashmira does not long last as the globalization brought to the fore the different global networks that support the vested interest of people in power. Rushdie's observation of globalization takes the novel towards a different turn. The narrator claims, "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" (61). Since, everywhere is a part of everywhere else, the questions like, who is vulnerable, precarious, livable and violent, move in circle without a distinct answer. It paves the way for violence. The peaceful environment is disturbed due to the impact of globalization.

Judith Butler highlights on violence, mourning and politics as interrelated issues. She talks about a political life that deals with the exposure to violence, vulnerability to loss, and mourning that follows the violence. People are often afraid to lose the loved ones, ". . . at risk of violence by virtue of that exposure" (20). She talks about violence at the exposure in global scale. In the preface of the book, she writes, "One insight that injury affords is that there are others out there on whom my life depends, people I do not know and may never know" (xi). Since people in the global world depend on other that they even do not know, violence appears in easy form. Murder is an outcome of violence. Since death is planned and acted out, everybody is insecure. When it takes place, it is power politics determines whether it is grievable. It is the politics that makes life precarious or honored. In the novel, the death of Max Ophuls is mourned worldwide whereas the death of Boonyi went unnoticed. Boonyi's life is not grievable and important due to the power politics whereas the power monger, violent person's life is meaningful. For Max Ophuls, Shalimar and Boonyi are "Human and not wholly human" (Bhaba 171). Butler again talks about a tenuous life:

The body implies mortality, vulnerability, and agency: the skin and the flesh expose us to the gaze of others, but also to touch, and to violence, and bodies put us at risk of becoming the agency and instrument of all these as well. Although we struggle for rights over our own bodies, the very bodies for which we struggle are not quite ever only our own. The body has its invariably public dimension. Constituted as a social phenomenon in the public sphere, my body is and is not mine. (26)

It is the body that is first exposed to the public. It is also a subject to death and vulnerability. The bodies in global world are not purely individual bodies alone. They are also socially constructed or constituted bodies. Then, they are prone to violence. Butler opines, "I propose to consider a dimension of political life that has to do with our exposure to violence and our complicity in it, with our vulnerability to loss and the task of mourning that follows, and with finding a basis for community in these conditions" (19). The violence involves complicity where an individual goes on doing things that are complicit in nature, i.e., to involve in something that is morally wrong.

For Butler, the individual 'self' does not exist independently. It has a network of relation. Sense of 'I' as subject is dependent on the loved one—"You", one is afraid to lose the loved one. Butler further writes, "It is not as if an "I" exists independently over here and then simply loses a "you" over there, especially if the attachment to "you" is part of what composes who "I" am. If I lose you, under these conditions, then I not only mourn the loss, but I become inscrutable to myself" (22). Due to mourning and the loss, the 'self' becomes inscrutable, difficult to understand. Precariousness means to live in a place with a fears that one's life is always in some sense in the hands of the other. Butler shares that one is open to injury, violence and, ultimately leading to death. Butler writes, "To the extent that we commit violence, we are acting on another, putting the other at risk, causing the other damage, threatening to expunge the other" (29). Butler says the precariousness is dwelling everywhere, "Mourning, fear, anxiety, rage. In the United States, we have been surrounded with violence, having perpetrated it and perpetrating it still, having suffered it, living in fear of it, planning more of it" (28). Thus, America, as shown in the novel, is both a source to exercise power, and a victim of power as well; it is precarious and makes other precarious as well.

Shalimar exists dependently with Boonyi. He loves her deeply and never wants to lose her. He is rather afraid to lose her since their marriage. Thus, after marrying Boonyi, Shalimar urges her not to leave her, and he further warns her that he will act violently if she deserts him, "Do not leave me, 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 you have" (61). Though Boonyi does not take it seriously, fear of abandonment for Shalimar is visible, "Crisis brings into the spotlight wounds, fears, guilty desires, or unresolved conflicts" (Tyson 21). Fear of abandonment means the unshakable belief that loved ones are going to desert us physically as well as emotionally. Tyson writes, "Fear of abandonment also plays a role when we fear the death of others. When children lose a parent, when adults lose a spouse, the overwhelming feeling of loss is often a feeling of abandonment" (23). The

feeling of abandonment is psychological and it waits violent ways to be recovered. Whether Shalimar consciously or unconsciously speaks of revenge motive earlier, he goes on killing Max Ophuls and Boonyi herself. Max Ophuls destroys the life of Boonyi as he went to the United States deserting her. The vulnerability of Max Ophuls is realized, though he was an ambassador, in the act of his assassination by Shalimar the Clown using the knife once Max Opuls gave to Shalimar. But before he finally murders Max, Shalimar thinks well if there is any other way to take revenge and realizes nothing else than the violent murder for revenge, "Shalimar decided that he had to murder the American ambassador at some point" (242). At this point, Max Ophuls's vulnerability is exposed.

Shalimar's acknowledgement of Max Ophuls as 'only perpetrator' stands in sharp contrast with what Levinas calls ethics as first philosophy. Western philosophy has been trying to totalize the problem of self and other. The totalization is to eliminate the other. According to him, in the relation between self and other, western philosophy centralizes and totalizes the self, "The incomprehensible nature of the presence of the Other, which we spoke of above, is not to be described negatively" (Levinas 195). The quote implies that the otherness of other should not be taken negatively. Since, Max Ophuls takes Shalimar as other lacking consciousness, Shalimar reacts badly. He sends letter to India and pours his feelings, "Everything I am your mother makes me. Every blow I suffer your father deals. Your father deserves to die" (392). Here, Shalimar accuses Boonyi and Max Ophuls for making him violent. Thus, Shalimar claims that Max deserves to die.

By killing Max Ophuls and Boonyi, Shalimar the clown fulfills his mission to some extent because he has yet to kill the illegitimate daughter, India. Max Ophuls is knifed to death on the doorstep of his illegitimate daughter India by his Kashmiri driver. For Shalimar, at this moment, his self was of prime importance. He gives an account to himself. If we agree with Judith Butler's idea of giving an account to oneself, one can be recognizable and understandable, "If I try to give an account of myself, if I try to make myself recognizable and understandable, then I might begin with a narrative account of my life" (37). Butler claims that everyone tries to give positive value to one. Shalimar's attempt to take revenge shows his anger, aggression, frustration and anxiety. One becomes partially blind to himself at this moment as Butler says, "It would be, perhaps, an ethics based on our shared, invariable, and partial blindness about ourselves" (41). Ethics that Butler talks about is the ethics based on self that first functions through the shared ideas and the self expects same thing from other, "We cannot reasonably expect anything different from the other" (42). Due to Shalimar's innocent and kind nature, he did not think anyone could do any harm to him, he acknowledged every self that comes into his contact. But when he realized his identity is crisscrossed due to neocolonialism, he could no longer bear such humiliation. He could not suspend his self-identity, "A certain patience with others that would suspend the demand that they be self- same at every moment. Suspending the demand for self-identity or, more particularly, for complete coherence seems to me to counter a certain ethical violence, which demands that we manifest and maintain self-

identity at all times and require that others do the same" (42). Shalimar thinks less about his self alone when everything was almost ideal in Kashmira.

Levinas argues that totalization deals with the elimination of the other in relation to the concept of self. Self is dependent on other. As opposed to totalizing, he calls for welcoming approach to include the other. His idea of moral consciousness is practiced by Shalimar the Clown before Max weds his wife. However, the respect to otherness of other for Max Ophuls is zero, and this is the root cause of violence. Levinas wants to disorient the self towards the state where acknowledging other becomes essential. It needs to be reformulated by encountering with the other with moral consciousness which is the pathway for the revelation of self. It destroys the totalization that only centralizes the self. According to him, the other is not the opposite of self; it is also a subject not object. Negation of other should be replaced by love and affection following the ethics principle. He argues, "And yet the other does not purely and simply negate the 'I'; total negation, of which murder is the temptation and the attempt, refers to an antecedent relation" (194). His point is that since the other respects the self, the self 'I' should also respect and acknowledge the other. The total negation towards other leads him or her murder people who totally negate him or her.

Shalimar is totally negated. His wife betrays him as she saw new possibilities in her life with Max Ophuls. He works as a driver for Max but his intension was to kill him brutally, "He was more than a driver . . . he wanted to draw the ambassador as close as lover . . . to know as intimately as possible the life he planned to terminate with maximum brutality. There was no hurry. There was time" (322). He planned to murder Max Ophuls because his 'self' as 'other' has never been acknowledged by Max. In this context, *Cambridge Introduction to Levinas* highlights the 'I and Other' relation, "The Other is, for example, the weak, the poor, 'the widow and the orphan,' whereas I am the rich or the powerful. You are exterior, other, and outside, and your sheer otherness is not a function of or constituted by spatial difference, nonidentity of features or properties, or any other such things" (60). The interpersonal relation between I and other in the case of Shalimar, and Boonyi is rejected and ignored. Even for India, it applies as she is also a next target for Shalimar.

India is vulnerable as she is the next target of Shalimar the clown. Her hybrid life form which Shalimar finds in blue eyes and language she used to talk with her father's driver make her more precarious. As Veena Das observes, "But to be vulnerable is not the same as to be a victim" (63). Though she is not yet attacked physically, she suffers a lot due to her feelings of dislocation as the narrator observes her, "She was conceived in the East—conceived out of wedlock and born in the midst of the firestorm of outrage that destroyed her father marriage" (5) and ruined his diplomatic career. Her conception is a mark of humiliation for Shalimar whose gullibility is betrayed by his wife due to the treacherous presence and persuasion of Max Ophuls. The Kashmiri issue which was not settled and it was more problematized due to neo-colonial force represented by Max Ophuls. The violence is severe in the partition which is horrific, "We are then invited to consider how

human beings could have been capable of such horrific acts on such large scales, as in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia. As we saw, the violence of the partition provides a similar trope of horror in the historiography of India” (79). The union between Shalimar’s people and Boonyi’s people is distracted due to entry of Max Ophuls.

Boonyi realizes how she is deceived by Max Ophuls. She is disillusioned by his tricky nature. She thinks that her previous life with her father and Shalimar was full of freedom. She ponders on, “My old life like a prison, she told herself savagely, but her heart called her a fool. She had it all upside down and backward, her heart scolded her. What she thought of as her former imprisonment had been freedom, while this so-called liberation was no more than a gilded cage” (195). She realized that the days she passed with Max were caged days. As he first saw Boonyi while she was dancing, he was impressed with her. He developed his sexist attitude towards her as he “was applauding wildly and looking piercingly at her while she took her bow as if he wanted to see right into her soul” (133). This is his sexist ideology. The narrator mentions, “She was a rich American’s toy, and he despised her for that; somewhat he despised himself for taking the Yankee dollars and becoming party to the arrangement, and this, too, he held against her” (199). She was a tool for Max who used her as used value and fulfilled his vested desire. Her subjectivity was never acknowledged by Max. Thus, Max remarks, “I am a man for a challenge . . . but this girl is not for me. Hers is not the high calling, but the low” (200). If she was lower in level, his initial and self-directed infatuation to her is his masculine cum colonial mindset. The narrator writes, “For a long time he refused to acknowledge the change in himself. He stayed away from Boonyi for longer periods” (199). When Boonyi meets him again with the feeling of abandoned, she makes harsh remarks:

Look at me, she was saying. I am your handiwork made flesh. You took beauty and created hideousness, and out of this monstrosity your child will be born. Look at me. I am the meaning of your deeds. I am the meaning of your so-called love, your destructive, selfish, wanton love. Look at me. Your love looks just like hatred. I never spoke of love, she was saying. I was honest and you have turned me into your lie. This is not me. This is not me. This is you. (205)

These lines of disillusionment talk about resistance of Boonyi towards Max Ophuls. Her otherness is humiliated and exploited by Max. Emmanuel Levinas advocates for “alterity ethics” (acknowledgement of the otherness of the other). By ethics Levinas means infinite responsibility towards the other. In this regards, Levinas argues how one should respond and respect other by talking about apology as it “does not blindly affirm the self but appeals to the other” (Levinas 252). But Max lacks the responsibility towards Boonyi and she regrets.

The violence is severe in the partition which is horrific. Max Ophuls sent Shalimar up to his daughter’s apartment with flowers because it was her 24th birthday. It was an appropriate time to murder her if he wishes. He saw into her eyes continuously with a sense of revenge until she saw him staring. He toes on thinking, “all he could think was, she is alive. He did not know what he wanted” (323). He is confused how he can kill her the way

he killed Max Ophuls. Hybridity of India makes her feel dislocated. In the novel she says, "I live today neither in this world nor the last, neither in America nor Artrakhan. Also I would add neither in this world nor the next. A woman like me, she lives someplace in-between" (13). She finds her identity missing as she belongs to both east and west. India, the baby, despite being in Los Angeles, can't be satisfied and goes to India in search of her Identity. Rushdie writes, "She wanted her lost story to be found" (19). Meanwhile, she undergoes suffering, anxiety and dislocation. The offspring of Max Ophuls and Boonyi, becomes violent to some extent to take revenge of her father's murderer, "She wanted dark superheroes, hard men who wouldn't meekly hand the killer over to authorities, who would gladly kill the bastard, who would shoot him down" (331). This feeling of revenge moves in circle as an unsettled issue as she imagines finding superheroes who could kill the murder. Yet she was not sure what she was doing, "She did not know what she wanted. She was full of thoughts" (331). Her dilemma regarding what she has to do, gets distracted when she receives letter from Shalimar.

By showing Boonyi having no agency and power, Rushdie shows the impact of neocolonialism represented by Max Ophuls again who treats Boonyi as a resource. Because of Western influence, Boonyi is infatuated and tempted to marry Ophuls and becomes pregnant. Her vulnerability is there before she is the victim. She elopes with Ophuls but he deserts her and can't take her to west as his wife. Sexual exploitation and betrayal of Boonyi by Max Ophuls indicates American intervention on India. In this context, Pramod K. Nayar writes, "This form of control has been called neocolonialism, used especially to describe the American control over the rest of the world" (5). Though direct political control by west from India has been moved but economical as well as neo-colonial control has still been pervasive. Nayar, in this context, further writes, "Neocolonialism is the continuing economic exploitation of Asian and African nation-states by European and American powers" (5). Boonyi's strong life has turned into the precarious life as a result of politics that was done from the side of Max Ophuls. Talking about precarious life, Butler brings the issue of livability and greivablity, "Livability is a term used by Butler in Precarious Body. Shalimar finds his life not livable and valuable without murdering Max. Butler also discusses about grievability and how one can be more viable and livable strikes her and says that it depend on the power again. Thus, Max Ophuls death is mourned worldwide. Rushdie writes, "The murder of Ambassador was being mourned worldwide" (334). The death of Max as the quote indicates has been mourned worldwide.

The novel ends with this final remark, "There was no India. There was only Kashmira and Shalimar the clown" (398). The daughter of Max and Boonyi – India comes to Kashmira to search her blood identity associated with her mother and Max Ophuls as Kashmira. From the letter of Max Ophus, she learns that the marriage of Shalimar and Boonyi is ruined as the Europe-born American ambassador— Max Ophuls (her father) enters into Kashmira village. Though he comes in the form of civilized scholarly gentleman, his inability to acknowledge otherness of other is the root cause of violence,

and his arrival in India is political in nature because he 'took strong interest in the culture of Kashmir.''

Conclusion

The seed of violence coming from the West makes inroads into the East by ignoring otherness, ignorance and innocence of people like Shalimar and Boonyi. After the crime done by Max, Shalimar becomes a ferocious criminal, and vows to take revenge targeting Max Ophuls, Boonyi, and their offspring. Shalimar is frustrated due to the Western influence on the one hand and Hindu mainstream politics on the other. Thus, his identity is under crisis not only from West but from East as well. In either case, his otherness is not acknowledged. Thus, he kills Max and seeks Boonyi and India to kill. Precariousness, violence, and murder move in the cyclic form. These issues involve a politics. Despite deserting Boonyi and Shalimar, Max Ophuls's death is mourned at global level. In the same way, Kashmir (India)'s changed attitude towards Shalimar is the key to the solution. It is because her dilemma regarding Max which can be taken as a clue that she has started to respect the Otherness of other. If otherness of other is not respected, the way Shalimar the Clown became the Shalimar the violent, the violence continues in its cyclic form spreading terror and violence in global level. So, violence can be minimized if the otherness of other is accepted.

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