

valley to preach resistance and revenge, were saints of an entirely new kind. They were the iron mullahs” (115). The tentacles of the brutal mullahs such as Bulbul Fakh caught hold of the Kashmir valley that pulsated with love, amity, peace and joy. These monstrous, “stinky” mullahs forced women to wear burqas (veils) thereby segregating Muslims from Hindus and subverting the very core of Kashmiriyat. The actions of the militants such as Bulbul Fakh (who were spreading hatred in the name of God) were dealt with rather severely by the Indian army under General Hammirdev Suryavans Kachhwaha. Many villages were razed to the ground under the suspicion that people were harboring terrorists in them. Rushdie denounces both—the iron mullahs as well as the Indian army—for wreaking havoc on the innocent Kashmiris living in the valley. The forced exodus of Kashmiri Pandits fills Rushdie with rage for the perpetrators of violence along with those who behaved in an apathetic manner despite being at the helm. With empathy and concern combined with considerable rage, the author questions as to why “[...] the Pandits of Kashmir were left to rot in their slum camps while the army and the insurgency fought over the bloodied and broken valley, to dream of return, to die while dreaming of return, to die after the dream of return died so that they could not even die dreaming of it, why was that [...]” (297). Filled with vindictiveness, Shalimar the Clown is intently focused at killing not only his unfaithful wife, but her lover, Maximilian Ophuls too. He becomes an easy prey to the iron mullah's fraudulent teachings. Once Shalimar the clown's indoctrination with the ideas of violence, bloodshed and hatred is complete, none can stop him from slitting the throat of his beloved wife, Boonyi and later of Max Ophuls in New York in a cold-blooded manner. Shalimar, even though having complete knowledge in regard to jihaad and jihaadis, did not belong to them technically. Like for a jihaadi, for Shalimar too “The visible world, the world of space and time and sensation and perception [...] was a lie” (266). Nevertheless, Shalimar's focus is sharper, as he himself states: “Everything I do prepares me for you [Boonyi, his wife] and for him [Maximilian Ophuls, her lover]. Every blow I strike, strikes you or him. The people leading us up here are fighting for God or for Pakistan but I am killing because it is what I have become. I have become death” (298). For the profoundly hurt lover in Shalimar the Clown revenge becomes be-all and end-all of life. He gets completely deranged towards the end; his memory starts giving in, but he has no regrets. Howsoever cleverly Rushdie works out the Shalimar's personal revenge on Max and Boonyi, the point of focus obliquely remains terrorism which defies locale-specificity thereby acquiring a global character. In fact, Shalimar's turning into a cold-blooded villain enables him to move across continents with relative ease. His focus is lethally pointed and so are his moves. Shalimar's hatred for Max interestingly coincides with a Filipino Muslim from Basilan, Mindanao who like Bulbul Fakh is yet another preacher of hatred and is trained in Saudi Arab, Libya and Afghanistan. He has fought with Afghans and al-Qaeda against the Soviet Union. He hates the American ambassador not because the latter supplied weapons to fight and kill Russians but because the U.S. soldiers had encouraged

the settlement of Catholics in Mindanao against the wishes of local Muslims. Shalimar during his training visits places such as Tajikistan, Algeria, Egypt and Palestine on various missions. He is completely transformed and embodies "a murderous desire" (273). On the contrary, Max's vulnerability signifies the susceptibility of the present day world to danger and violence. His ghastly murder evokes awe as well as sympathy despite Rushdie's careful and clinical portrayal of him. Brought up in Nazi-occupied Strasbourg, Max married in England and during his tenure as American ambassador, ruined Boonyi's life in Delhi. Rushdie's depiction of Max could also be viewed as a device to subvert multiculturalism. His ghastly murder may have a solid personal basis from the viewpoint of a betrayed lover in Shalimar the Clown, but its political implications cannot be ignored. Through Shalimar's revenge against Max, which technically has nothing to do with jihad, Rushdie underscores the need to distinguish personal hostility from ideological war. The common factor in both cases, however, is bloodshed and violence.

After India Ophuls comes to know about her actual name and the reality of her life, she decides to be her mother's (Boonyi's) child who was named Kashmira Noman. However, upon knowing that the "man who killed her father had killed her mother too" and that the "man who killed her father had been her mother's husband," Kashmira returns to Los Angeles where she comes to know that Shalimar the Clown identified as Noman Sher Noman, has been arrested. She sends him letters as "poisoned arrows" to disturb him mentally. Kashmira condemns his act of murdering her mother and father out of sheer egotism and a stupid sense of "honour" that can never be higher than human life. She jeers at him by calling him "mister joker" and "mister killer." Kashmira vindicates her stance by asserting that Maximilian Ophuls and Boonyi Kaul Noman (her father and mother) cannot die as she says: "They live on in me." She minimizes the possibilities of the successful defense of Shalimar the Clown by his attorney after death sentence is pronounced upon him. She reveals that Shalimar hid from his attorney the fact of how her mother died: "My mother died because that man, who also killed my father, cut off her beautiful head" (386). Later on there is a jailbreak in which Shalimar the Clown escapes to kill Boonyi's daughter who looks like his beloved wife. He manages to reach her house to kill her. But it is not Boonyi Kaul Noman, the mother; it is her daughter, Kashmira Noman, a trained archer who was skilled enough to give a fatal blow to her mother's husband and her father's assassin, Shalimar the Clown. As such, we see that most of the characters in Shalimar the Clown remain mobile. Their mobility imparts raciness to the narrative which mainly oscillates between Kashmir and California. Rushdie's use of magic realism in the portrayal of Shalimar the Clown (especially his tightrope-walking and later his easy and elusive intercontinental mobility to eventually reach Max) synchronize well with the fluidity of locale which he has employed to underscore his awareness regarding the interconnectedness of the world today. His perception of 'anywhere' as 'everywhere' and 'anyone' representing 'everyone else' derives its force from the present global crisis.

In an interview with Bill Moyers, Rushdie states that “everywhere is dangerous now. You know the world is not a safe place; and there are no safe corners of it. And actually, there probably never have been. I think, in a way, America was insulated from that for awhile [...]. But even that no longer insulates.” This precisely is the reason why Rushdie sets the locale of the novel adrift. His focus is not adherence to one specific clime; it is rather casting off as many of them as possible. Rushdie's deliberate disregard of the locale-specificity evidences his exploration of the 'abstract realm of the “global”' (Mishra) to achieve a meaningful interface between literature and the present-day world which, despite being multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi-lingual, is utterly vulnerable and borderless from accessibility angle. The term 'nation' is connected with nativity (Williams), which is a pointer towards locale-centeredness. However, Anderson questioned its actual (in the sense of 'verifiable') status thereby assigning it an “imagined” status anthropologically. For Brennan too, nations are “imaginary constructs that depend for their existence on an apparatus of cultural fictions in which imaginative literature plays a decisive role” (Brennan 8). Rushdie's fictional explorations go a step forward as they are transnational and multicultural simultaneously acknowledging as well as transcending specificities/particularities of diverse sorts. Through motifs such as nostalgia, loss of love, pain, vindictiveness, violence, murder and bloodshed, Rushdie tends to coalesce and connect diverse locales in *Shalimar the Clown* to renegotiate the notion of nation by undercutting our blissful belief in mitigating multicultural and multi-ethnic differences thereby affirming the inevitability of violence and understanding contemporary global situation. The endless geo-political tussle between India and Pakistan over the contentious issue of Kashmir merely happens to be a case in point.

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Reinventing the Self in Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

- V. L. Rinawmi

Abstract: This article attempts to advocate that the struggle for the *construction of the self* is more meaningful than the denial of the true self, the latter being a domain that has often been imposed upon by society and religious doctrine. Jeanette Winterson is an inventive postmodern lesbian author whose fictions explore the nature and varieties of erotic love. Winterson chooses to render her life story in a narrative mode which straddles the generic divide between fiction and autobiography, in the production of a semi-autobiographical fiction, with an accompanying alter ego of the same name as hers 'Jeanette' in *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* because she wanted to reinvent herself as a fictional character.

Keywords: self, identity, desire, queer narratives.

Being adopted by Pentecostal parents Jeanette Winterson, the writer, was hemmed in by her mother's devoutly religious worldview, Winterson learned to read from the book of Deuteronomy, (Winterson 15) and was taught to read and channelize her energy into preaching the words of God. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985), Winterson's first novel, has been widely understood as semi-autobiographical as it chronicles the struggles of a young girl against a domineering mother and the strictures of religion, about a conflict between Jeanette's sexual identity and her congregation, family and even her own self. *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is not so much a coming-out novel as a portrait of the artist as a young lesbian. This was a significant political shift as Ducker writes:

I want to reflect on Winterson's writing within the wider perspective of the feminist and lesbian writing, both theoretical and imaginative, which precedes her work. The early feminism of the late 1960s and 1970s, created both the context and the audience for her work. Winterson transforms, extends and subverts many themes that were common to the writing which wasn't shy of labels, or of slogan, the writing which proclaimed itself radical, feminist, lesbian (Patricia Duncker 78).

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit is both the most obvious example of Winterson's realist impulse and her first conscious attempt at deconstructing reality. Jeanette's mother is also described as a resolute woman, who called herself "a missionary on the home front" (Winterson 55) and constantly grooming Jeanette to become a missionary. Jeanette (Winterson's alter ego) talks about her adoption and the path chosen for her, the plan that was laid out to her by her adopted mother in this manner:

My mother [...] would get a child, train it, build it, dedicate it to the Lord: a missionary child, a servant of God, a blessing. And so it was on a particular day, some time later, he followed a star until it came

to settle above an orphanage, and in that place was a crib, and in that crib, a child.[...] She said, 'This child is mine from the Lord.'[...] Her flesh now, sprung from her head (Winterson 10).

Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit elucidates upon the story of Jeanette's quest for subjectivity and (homo)sexuality but rejects the traditional appropriation of the aspect of the self by the masculine. It emphasizes instead upon the mother-daughter bonding as a counter-narrative of conventional masculine bondage that highlights female specificity and gender difference. By the time she was eight Jeanette began writing and delivering sermons, impressing parents and peers alike with her precocious mastery of language. Being a zealous evangelist devoting her entire life to the church and missionary work, Winterson's mother kept tight reigns of her daughter's education, restricting her experience of literature to the *Bible*. A lot of pressure was put upon Jeanette by her mother, in order that the latter's dreams be fulfilled. Jeanette's mother's efforts and intention to inculcate in her child a worldview based on her rather eccentric interpretation of God's word ironically compel Jeanette to challenge and confuse the so-called natural plan. Even Jeanette's very willingness to fulfill the vocation chosen for her by her mother works to overturn those intensions. Jeanette from an early age discovered that everything in the natural world was a symbol of the Great Struggle between good and evil. Winterson explains that the Great Struggle is "probably one of the few things in life that rises above all kinds of oppositions-black and white, male and female, homosexual and heterosexual" (Mark Marvel 165). Theorist Judith Butler puts such struggle as opposition or constructs and as "socially instituted and socially instituted fantasies or "fetishes," not natural categories, but political ones (categories that prove that recourse to the "natural" in such contexts is always political)" (Butler 172). Jeanette's father, in the novel, is a mere shadow, and as such, gives an implicit message that men are not important in Jeanette's life, and sometimes they are made to seem ridiculous, like Pastor Spratt. Winterson achieves an accurate, non-male dominated, emotionality that releases genuine realities upon the reader. Only very few men are presented as sensitive and vulnerable. The church grants Jeanette a lot of power and in the view of the church fathers, Jeanette's masculine access to the religious domain, the privilege to preach to the congregation and thereby influence its members is what allows her to seize masculine power in the sexual domain. Winterson launches a sophisticated attack on the church and its masculine hegemony. Jeanette's "unnatural passions" stem, as she explains, from "allowing women power in the church.... [in taking] on a man's world in other ways [she] had flouted God's law and tried to do it sexually ... So there [she] was, [her] success in the pulpit being the reason for [her] downfall. The devil had attacked [her] at [her] weakest point: [her] inability to realize the limitations of [her] sex" (Winterson 134). As a result, the church strips away Jeanette's power by rescinding masculine privilege, a punishment that will leave her defenceless and without resources or community. Jeanette, the narrator, had denoted that her mother and the congregation made her feel that she "loved the wrong sort

of people” and that “romantic love for another woman was a sin (Winterson 127). The problem, as Jeanette perceives it, arise not from her longings for women, but from others' inability to recognize and acknowledge the beauty of sexual love shared between women. Winterson's representation of passionate love, sexual, homosexual and otherwise has been defined through the protagonist Jeanette:

I want someone who is fierce and will love me until death and know that love is as strong as death ... I want someone who will destroy and be destroyed by me. There are many forms of love and affection, some people can spend their whole lives together without knowing each other's names ... Romantic love has been diluted into paperback form and has sold thousands and millions of copies. Somewhere it is still in the original, written on tablets of stone (Winterson 170).

Like the novel's protagonist Jeanette's discovery of her lesbian orientation through a first love-affair, her subsequent betrayal by her lover (Melanie) who reverts to heterosexuality and her emotional detachment from her mother, the punitive treatment meted out to her by her family and the community, Jeanette Winterson, the writer, also had a difficult childhood, but that brought her to a legacy of self-confidence. In Winterson's opinion, the binary opposition between man and woman; heterosexual and homosexual; and mind/body are dissolved while conventional standards of normality are deconstructed and shown to be relative and artificial. To her, “the homosexual is not an imitation of a heterosexual; the lesbian is not an inferior version of a man” (Doan 145). Winterson dislike the word lesbian because it tells us nothing and its only purpose is to inflame. She writes to bring about a change in consciousness. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, Jeanette's attraction to women was only one part of her total identity and did not wipe out the other aspects of her other selves, and that finally showing her that it was simply the right thing to do. In the novel, when Jeanette is in primary school she is puzzled by the fact that the teacher criticizes the gloomy but original design of the sampler which she has made, while praising the tritely pretty piece of work produced by one of her class-mates. The incident leads her to perceive that:

What constitutes a problem is not the thing, or the environment where we find the thing, but the conjunction of the two; something unexpected in a usual place (our favourite aunt in our favourite poker parlour) or something usual in an unexpected place (our favourite poker in our favourite aunt) (Winterson 45).

This observation acquires further connotation, in the light subsequent events namely Jeanette's discovery of her lesbianism and the relationship which she forms with Melanie. Sexual passions which appear perfectly natural to the two girls are regarded by Pastor Finch, in the context of his puritanical religious beliefs, as decidedly *unnatural*. Jeanette conforms to her mother's hopes till she falls in love with Melanie which makes her question, “What is it about intimacy that makes it so very disturbing?” (Winterson 103). When their lesbian relationship is discovered, Melanie repents quite quickly (and later in the book is described as an insipid mother and wife), while the efforts of Jeanette's mother and her church

pastor to force Jeanette into an accepted gendered identity are more difficult. She experiences them as attempts to mutilate her as she was forcibly kept at home by her mother and the church pastor. She thought that the pastor explained to her as quietly as he could that she “was the victim of a great evil” and that she “was afflicted and oppressed” deceiving the flock and how she “was as an unfortunate victim or a wicked person” (Winterson 131). When Jeanette falls ill, she dreams deliriously in this period, and the images of a circle and a wall appear, “Walls protect and walls limit. It is the nature of walls that they should fall. The walls should fall is the consequence of blowing your own trumpet” (Winterson 112). From the extended use of the motifs throughout the book that makes clear that the closed circle is meant to represent the enclosure of the soul into heterosexual subject hood, a gendered category which eliminates love of the same sex. In her love for another girl, in her resistance to fitting into categories of gender, Jeanette experiences herself in dreams and in her waking thoughts as being forced into walls and circles, into crumbling round walls leading to destruction, as thinking that walls should fall, and as trying to avoid circles drawn in chalk and stone. In order to be allowed out of the house so that she could visit Melanie, at one point Jeanette pretends to have repented. On reaching Melanie's room in her wait for Melanie, Jeanette falls asleep and dreams about a place:

Where everyone is who can't make the ultimate decision, this is the city of Lost Chances, and this, the Room of the Final Disappointment. You see, you can climb as high as you like, but if you've already made the Fundamental mistake, you end up here, in this room. ... (Winterson 111-2).

The refusal to make the “ultimate decision” of adopting a heterosexual identity, leads from “Lost Chances” to the “Room of the Final Disappointment” which is the “Fundamental Mistake”. Jeanette sees her love for another girl as hopeless, the foreclosure of all her chances and all her dreams. At the end of the novel when Jeanette meets Melanie by accident she finds that Melanie was “now almost vegetable” and “looked vague” (Winterson 171). Winterson is trying to reflect that gendering, the taking on of sex, feels like nothing, even though Melanie is in pain. Sex seems to leave no traces, but the trace is the circular soul and walled-in body which is the norm, which passes as identity, and for the last time Jeanette and Melanie make love and their bodies are “mixed up” like rubble, hence the wall come down. In the story that Jeanette narrates, the stones that made up the wall of the body are meant for throwing: “She had a heart of stone. Who will cast the first stone?” (Winterson 112). The wall is seen as the sacrifice to oneself. Winterson, like other postmodern feminists such as Julia Kristeva and Monique Wittig, proposes that the concept of gender is socially constructed, not biologically inherent. Overall, the construction of the world in binary systems limits and excludes those people and stories that fall outside of the definitions. By not seeing the world as a strict duality, a greater multiplicity of people can be seen as creating its essence. People are not simply black and white, but also line the many shades of gray in between. In “Jeanette Winterson's *Sexing the Postmodern*”, Laura Doan comments on Jeanette's (the narrator