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## Salman Rushdie's Shame is a Critical Delight

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**Abstract:**

Shame is a pungent satire on contemporary political situations in Pakistan. The novel's story begins with a fabulous tale about birth of one of the characters "Omar Khayyam Sakil". One of three sisters become pregnant and the other two also starts boating with stimulated pregnancies. They immured themselves in their deceased father's mansion and have a dumb-waiter employed to bring in provisions from outside. The novel contains an extremely striking political situation of Pakistan including two characters Raza Hyder speaks to the character of General Zia and the Iskander Harappa speaks to Zulficar Ali Bhutto. Nishapur is a magnificent mansion, which has been owned by the shakils for generations. Shame seems to contain within itself two stories which eventually mingle as one through the character, Ommar Khayyam who is probably one of the most important characters in the novel. The part of the novel deals with the birth of Shakil and the three sisters and another part of the novel deals with the most important Pakistan's recent history as the central protagonist. The story of the novel circulates around three families, the Shakils, the Hyders and the Harappas and around the love, hatred, rebellion, Shame and Shamelessness of their family members. The novel's storyline spans three generations and centers on he lives and families of two men Raza Hyder, a celebrated general and Iskander Harappa, a millionaire playboy. Their life-and-death, struggle, played out against the political backdrop of their country, is based on the real life of Pakistani President Zia-ul-Haq and former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto who was deposed by Zia in 1977 and executed.

Key words: Mimicry, satire, postmodernism , and postcolonism

Rushdie's **Shame** is a critical delight. We can spend timeless hours walking through the labyrinthine corridors of rushdie's novels. Nishapur, the shakil home, is also a labyrinth for the young Omar Khayyam Shakil; an "Underlit corridor edifice"(Shame p.30). It is presented, as a limbo world between real and unreal, material and spiritual that he is wandering through his home of countless rooms each rich with the dust and secrets of decades like Dr.Aadam Aziz in *Midnight's Children* seeing his future wife in parts through a perforated sheet. The woman-centered claustrophobia of Nishapur is noted as a womb to which Omar seeks to cling.

Omar's accidental glimpse of this outside world through a crumbling wall strikes fear into him and sends him running back indoors-back to the womb- rather than risk venturing forth. It is an image that we can find a reflection in one of Fitzgerald's translated quatrains from Umar Khayyam: "Myself when young did eagerly frequent Doctor and Saint, and heard great argument about it and about, but everywhere Came out by the same door wherein I went" (**Fitzgerald's translated Quatrains from Umar Khayyam p.7**)<sup>1</sup>

The Rushdie avoids such a clichéd use of a womb image to represent Omar's home , illustrates both structural imperatives imposed on the text by its desire for circulating , and also, the idea that a female refuge from the dangers of the outside world would represent a threat as well as a haven. The "womb" of Nishapur serves more as a revelation of Rushdie's psychology than an interesting elaboration of the narrative. The decaying bowels of the house become like a parallel universe of faded antique to set beside the real world outside.

Certain patterns emerge as an aerial view of the labyrinth. Because of the unfamiliarity of the terrain, students especially those outside the Indian subcontinent, would appreciate a rather detailed explication of certain political and cultural landmarks. The maps that are provided by critics and by Rushdie in his interviews are not always reliable. The novel **Shame** is not a fantasy or fabulation but has a realistic core. One of the major techniques used is of stretching a reference to its utmost limit. There is a certain element of trickery in that there are two separate circuits, each with its own entrance and exit. While it is true that the country referred to in shame could be any country that has been ruined by dictatorship and political corruption the exact setting –Pakistan-needs to be identified because that geographical and historical specificity makes it a novel and not a more political allegory on dictatorships.

The main lines are clear enough, for names and events are rather thinly veiled, unlike the burqa of its women. **Shame** is the story of Isky Harappa(Zulfikar Ali Bhutto) and Raza Hyder (Zia) two Presidents of Pakistan, it is the story of how Bhutto, seeking to perpetuate his power by keeping the army in his pocket, appointed “the most incompetent general” as Commander – in-Chief “ so that he need not fear for an army take over. But “the idea that a general is likely to remain in your pocket”...is a very stupid and dangerous idea”(Kunapipi ;14). Zia ousted Bhutto had him hanged , and set up a regime of religious bigotry. Benazir Bhutto is very like Arjumand Harappa who adored her father, and Rushdie’s **Shame** foretells the rise and return of Benazir Bhutto. It would be an interesting exercise to trace the real life to the Isky - Raza story.

Rushdie also uses authorial intrusions to comment on specific social and political ills; the long joke about Zia’s deal with God; a comment on Islamic fundamentalism being imposed from government levels, an interlude on various aspects of everyday life in Pakistan, all these could be illustrated with historical examples. "They say the child become flushed at birth(Shame p.89) Between disgrace and Shamelessness lies the hub whereupon we turn; meteorological conditions at both these shafts are of the most extraordinary, fierce write. Forwardness, disgrace: the underlying foundations of savagery (Rushdie's **Shame** p.118)2

Rushdie's premise proposition in **Shame** is that disgrace, Shamelessness, and brutality are inseparably bound. His similitude proposes Earth's turning on its pivot, where one may discover disgrace at one shaft and Shamelessness at the other , while the mystical – genuine place where the conjoined twins meet is the spatial geology of brutality represented. He uses an armory of narrating methods to make viciousness with the goal that his perusers might be all the more eager to evaluate the East's and the West's way of life of disgrace. Rushdie's story style can be seen as a facetious utilize and mishandle of various scholarly account traditions and hypothetical viewpoints that incorporate misrepresented impressions of provincial mimicry, untrustworthy storytellers, tall tale themes, and intertextuality.

Salman Rushdie apparently makes ludicrous situations as analysis on the reality of these extremely circumstances, which he frequently achieves through different types of mimicry. The essential idea of mimicry incorporates reiteration, variety, and reversal, and is associated with spoof, incongruity, parody, vaudeville, and joke. Rushdie problematizes his own particular chronicled story by making a joke of mimicry, particularly with regards to frontier mimicry. "Provincial Mimicry" is an outcome of the want of the colonized to resemble the colonizer, through the energy of decades and at times hundreds of years of brutality and social molding that empowers royal social authority. Rushdie's obvious mimicry isn't so much mimicry, however a

farce of frontier mimicry. Bhaba clarifies the "ambivalence" of "Frontier Mimicry" as the not really kindhearted pilgrim talks that portrays the locals as "yet not exactly", which fetishizes the colonizers themselves, and advises us that local people are still "other". A case from V.S. Naipaul's *An Area of Darkness* outlines the issue natural for frontier mimicry, particular to India: "The Indian army officer is at first meeting a complete English army officer...This is mimicry not of England, a real country, but of the fairytale land of Anglo-India, of clubs and sahibs and syed and bearers. It is as if an entire society has fallen for a causal confidence trickster" (*An Area of Darkness*, p.61).<sup>3</sup>

**Mimicry** is also a "representation of a representation, a repetition of something itself repetitions...Mimicry tips the hand of its non originality and implies the non originality of that which it mimics". These is the particular portrayals of mimicry in disgrace. In one-occasion, Rushdie's story adventitiously appears to adjust and answer to Naipaul's concern, when, toward the finish of *Shame* "Omar's home "Nishapur" is plundered by the town individuals of Q, "It was as if a spell had been broken, as if an old and infuriating conjuring trick had finally been explained. Afterwards, they would look around at each other with a disbelief in their eyes that was half proud and half ashamed and ask, did we really do that? But we are ordinary people" (*Shame* p.303).<sup>4</sup>

The bandits shockingly ransack the Shakil house maybe exclusively in light of the fact that it had been bolted far from them for around sixty five years, and afterward the locks were evacuated. By at that point, in any case, there was nothing life of significant worth in the home, not even Omar's moms. The sister's Shameful presence that had been such a wellspring of disappointment for the townsfolk was just a hallucination, much the same as the England of the Indian armed force officer in Naipaul's novel. Disgrace itself was a self-assertive social build, which would now be reflected back on to be townspeople as a result of their plundering.

Rushdie's mimicry is obviously identified with farce and parody. Satire, with its unexpected "transcontextualization" and reversal, is redundancy with a difference (where) one content is set against another with the purpose of ridiculing it or making it over the top. It can be viewed a significant "transcontextualization" in Rushdie's description of how Pakistan is a palimpsest: "a palimpsest obscures what lies beneath. To build Pakistan it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian countries lay just beneath the Surface of Pakistani Standard Time". (*Shame* p.86)<sup>5</sup>

The disclosure that something is a palimpsest raises the way that in spite of the fact that something is being darkened, at the same time something is being uncovered. All through the novel, Rushdie fights with, and grasps, "the mechanical assembly of significant worth coding, "when Pakistan winds up Indian history with a distinction. The post-pilgrim snapshot of progress is the thing that makes this distinction.

A short scene about the town of the white dolls is one exaggeration of orientalism and reflected impressions of East/West relations. From the Harappa domain at Mohenjo, Rani Harappa watches from a separation, as: "The white concubines were playing badminton in The twilight. In these days, many of the Villages had gone West to work for a while, and these who returned had brought with them white women for whom the prospect of life in a village as a number –two wife seemed to hold an inexhaustibly erotic appeal. The number-one wives treated these white girls as dolls or pets and these husbands who failed to bring home a guddi, a white doll, were soundly berated by their women. The village of the white dolls had become

famous in the region. Villagers came from miles around to watch the girls...as they leapt for shuttlecocks and displayed their frilly panties. The number-one wives cheered for their victories as in the successes of Children, and offering the consolation in defeat.” (**Shame** p.158)<sup>6</sup>

From a postcolonial point of view, "novelty's may recommend the between social and uneven social improvement that happens amongst colonizes and colonized the moment expansionism starts, while "originality" likewise may propose how some time ago – colonized people groups make new characters or new countries for themselves after imperialism closes. Originality is particularly apropos to this novel on the grounds that a key verifiable perspective is the postcolonial reality of Pakistan. The country was made amid the segment of the Indian Subcontinent right now of India's freedom from Great Britain in 1947. A few urban communities of India moved to Pakistan after the parcel to start new lives. They were viewed as "muhajirs-untouchables and settlers – which Rushdie notes is his own family history". (**Disgrace** p.84).<sup>19</sup> Throughout **Shame**, Rushdie delineates the conflicting between refined standards of postcolonial Pakistani life, basically through cases of disgrace and viciousness.

Shame is identified with various feelings, for example, outrage: outrage is, obviously, a standout amongst the most imperative protections against disgrace. To be sure, the specific energy of disgrace to consolidate with different influences anguish, hatred, seethe, fear-is something that make it such a pivotal component in the enthusiastic existence of people. In view of the scope of feelings and activities associated with disgrace, this sensation can be both provocative and weakening. Disgrace is "instrumental as a defensive system controlling people.

Shame is a social standard and in addition a social build, and the results of Shame are probably not going to be a similar while recognizing disgrace in the west from disgrace in the East. Rushdie's storyteller characterizes on complex utilization of disgrace with respect to refined and dialect contrasts: Sharam that is the word. For which this irrelevant "Shame" is completely Inadequate interpretation. Three letters, shen re'mem(written, normally, from ideal to life); in addition to Zabar articulations demonstrating the short vowel sounds. A short word, yet one containing reference books of subtlety... . What is the inverse of shame? What is left when Sharam has been Subtracted? That is self-evident, Shamelessness.(**Shame** p.33)<sup>20</sup> Learn in the content, Rushdie suggests all the more accurately that there exists an extremity of "respect and shame"(Shame p.117), and in interviews amid his book visit to advance disgrace in 1983:"the inverse of disgrace in Shamelessness, however it is likewise respect".

The irony with which Rushdie plays on the concept of fairy-tale in his construction of shame is borne out by his treatment of the central “historical” figures in the text and in the corresponding drama of Pakistani politics like the Black widow of **The Midnight’s Children** and Mrs. Torture of **The Satanic Verses**,”Virgin Ironpants” and “old Razar Guts” are clearly recognisable objects of criticism.

As many narrative technique employed in shame, desp

ite the much more tightly ordered and concise format, Rushdie still adopts a digressional, storytelling mode as he did in **Midnight’s Children**. This tends to appear as "asides" from the storyteller to outline the crossing points of Pakistan's story with his own particular experience, enabling him to embed himself into the account. The central story is made manifest by a process of alternate concealments and revelations, where a taste of things to come is offered to

audience's appetite before being forced back into its rightful place in the narrative. This digressive technique illustrates both the storyteller in controlling the narrative and his potential as subject of his own discourse.

If Rushdie fails in successfully articulating a female narrative of Pakistan's history, it is nevertheless true that it is in shame that a coherent and positive image of the migrant, post-colonial subject is projected. Both, the real and fictional Pakistans were born out of the experience of migration –the mass migrations, particularly i

n the Punjab, following the partition of India in 1947, which led to the splitting of Rushdie's own family.

The concept of migration for Rushdie, builds in layers upon that initial movement of peoples, the historic migration of the prophet Muhammad's followers-the mohajirs –out of Mecca and into Medina during their early persecution. Migration, flight, and dislocation are perpetual themes in Rushdie's writing, and the means by which he seeks to express the peculiar sensibility of the migrant writer as it searches for new forms, new techniques, new worlds in which it can define itself. Rushdie writes of the migrant as one who is rooted in ideas and memories rather than places and material objects and who has a profound mistrust of what constitutes reality.

The narrator of shame provides a long digression on the relationship between migration, flight and gravity: "I have a theory that the resentments we mohajirs engender have something to do with our conquest of the force of gravity. We have performed the act of which all men anciently dream, the thing for which they envy the birds; that is to say, we have flown. (**Shame** p.85)<sup>25</sup>

Rushdie, defines Gravity, is the physical force that corresponds to the more abstract notion of "belonging". To oppose gravity is to be like the migrant, to engage in flight. Mohajir or migrant is a title and identity. Rushdie continues to employ for all the uprooted and displaced characters who people in his texts. In shame, the narrative voice declares: "I am a translated man. I have been borne across. It is generally believed that something is always lost in translation. I cling to the notion..... that something can also be gained". (**Shame** p.29)<sup>26</sup>

In terms of the Omar parallel, Umar's poetry now exists for us in a translated, mediated form, for removed from its original incarnation but nonetheless possessing its own character and charm.

Shame is a pungent satire on contemporary political situations in Pakistan. The novel's story begins with a fabulous tale about birth of one of the characters "Omar Khayyam Sakil". One of three sisters become pregnant and the other two also starts boating with stimulated pregnancies. The novel contains an extremely clear political situation of Pakistan including two characters Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa. Indeed, Raza Hyder speaks to the character of General Zia and the Iskander Harappa speaks to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. "This novel is very much a macho book" says Rushdie "all about careerism, cops, politics, revenge, assassinations, executions, blood and guts" and keeps on discovering more and more about female characters, who dominate the novel. There is obvious predominance of female characters and the males are reluctant to be born. Hyder's first unborn son is strangled by his own umbilical chord. Sufia Zinobia, the second child, is a daughter who is mentally retarded and third is also a

daughter who, on the day of her marriage, refuses her proposed groom and some others of her own choice.

In “**Shame**” novel, Indian contemporary political history has also been taken into account while dealing with the concurrent political scenario of Pakistan. Rushdie says, “to build Pakistan it was necessary to cover up Indian history, to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistan standard time. The past was rewritten, there was nothing else to be done. He speaks to the Pakistan culture, all around as a severe society, which is tyrant in its general public and sexual codes which pounds its ladies underneath the unfortunate weights of respect and appropriateness. Iskander Harappa once rightly said to his daughter. “As , a nation we have a positive genius for self destruction, we nibble away at ourselves, we eat our children, we pull down anyone who climbs up”(Shame p.184).

Shame seems to contain within itself two stories which eventually mingle as one through the character, Omar Khayyam who is probably one of the most important characters in the novel. The part of the novel deals with the birth of Shakil and the three sisters and another part of the novel deals with the most important Pakistan’s recent history as the central protagonist. Rushdie has used “dream –within- a –dream” concept throughout the novel. Rushdie says , “Shame contains a number of stories. I did not find that the second plot was an afterthought, nor did I find the first story too good to give up. It seems to me that the stories go together rather well and that is because I made the choices I did. But, certainly, fiction does not come about like this, you don’t work in this kind of linear or ad-hoc way, you spend quite a lot of time deciding what you will include and what you will exclude. So you certain don’t kept thing because they are interesting after thoughts”(Shame p.12)

Sufia Zinobia is the most important character of the novel. She is sinister and frightened due to flashes of violence and binding anger over which she has no control at all. She, thus, grows into something demonic. The spirit of beast first of all rises within her when she sits among the carnage of decapitated turkeys in a funny occasion. Most peculiar situation arises when she sits among the carnage of decapitated turkeys in a funny occasion. Most peculiar situation arises when she attacks her brother-in-law, Jaluarullaq on her sister’s marriage. She is seen rather as a metaphor of mob violence in the country.

Rushdie additionally toys with the idea of mother-child connections in Indian and Pakistani society, underlining the depravity of their closeness. In disgrace, for instance, the three shakil moms hover over their exclusive child Omar, keeping him “excluded from human society by strange resolve” (Shame p.29).<sup>37</sup> Moreover, the cliché mother loathes her child's new spouse for cornering his love and tries to disturb my chances for closeness in the new marriage. Bariamma's nighttime isolation of the wedded couples in shame exemplify this unusual attachment. The Quranic stand on women leaders is in staunch opposition: “A nation that appoints a woman as its ruler shall never prosper” says the Bukhari commentary on the Quran.(Zakaria p.97).<sup>38</sup>

Yet a number of women have attained high political positions in both Pakistan and India. Benazir Bhutto, former Prime Minister of Pakistan , is the model for the character Arjumand “the virgin Ironpants” Harappa in shame. Although rushdie portrays her as a woman resentful of her female body- “it brings a person nothing but babies , pinches, and shame”(Shame p.107).<sup>39</sup>

Bhutto herself told Donna Foote of Newsweek it is “the people who resent me that do, So because I am a woman”(Zakaria p.7).<sup>40</sup>

By following her father Zulfikar Ali Bhutto into political leadership, Benazir and her literary counterpart “the virgin Ironpants” highlight an interesting trend in South Asia politics: the family connection. According to Rozina Visram in her book women in India and Pakistan, the reason women have been able to overcome social obstacles and reach high political offices may be family relationships. Both the Prime minister of Sri Lanka and Bangladesh came to power after the murders of their husbands. In the Moor, Rushdie mentions another woman who followed in the footsteps of her father: Indira Gandhi, who was Prime Minister of India from 1966-77, and 1980-84 before she was assassinated.

Rushdie’s handling of retarded children is sensitive and immensely poignant. It is significant that he makes them girls. Through his women, and girl children, Rushdie loves a wide range of injustices. He sums up his view of the effect of these injustices in two authorial appearances –the –key passage about the three characters who inspired the character of Sufiya Zinobia and where he talks of women having taken over his narrative, which ends with: “If you hold down one thing you hold down the Adjoining. In the end, though, it all blows up in your face”(Shame p.173)<sup>49</sup>

Arjumand is a modernist who prepares herself to lead the country into progressive changes but she offers no model for the modern women who feel it is her right to have both marriage and career. Arjumand is a prototype of the phase in Western feminism where women professionals paid the price of spinsterhood or childlessness. Most important, strong and independent though she is, she is too much a worshipper of a male hero to be an ideal new woman, she is the only one who is trained for a profession other than housekeeping. Like the other women, her ambition is to be linked to a great man, to be the force behind his greatness. The man is her father, rather than the suitor fantasized by virginal Rani or the flesh and blood husband loved by bridal Bilquis. Arjumand tells Isky, “What things won’t you do? Just wait and see “(Shame p.126).<sup>50</sup> And when she echoes her mother’s long-ago words, about Omar Shakil , her father smiles in agreement. And when he tells her, “It is a man’s world, Arjumand. Rise above your gender as you grow. This is no place to be a woman in” (Shame p.126),<sup>51</sup> she takes him at his word and thence forward rejects her gender.

Shame was written in the style of magic realism. On the fact of it, shame is a novel about Pakistan and about the people who ruled Pakistan. One of the main aims of the novel is to portray the lives of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Muhammad Zia-ul-haq and their relationship. The more central theme is the violence that is born out of shame. These are characters that actually ‘stand’ for shame and ‘Shamelessness’-Sufiya Zinobia and Omar Khayyam respectively when one reads the novel carefully, though the city being portrayed is an imaginary one, the city of Q. The author-narrator makes it clear in the second chapter of the novel that the city of Q is an imaginary representation of any country: “My view is that I am not writing only about Pakistan”(Shame p.29).<sup>52</sup> Shame discusses heritage, authenticity, truth and of course, shame and Shamelessness as well as the impact of all these themes on an individual, the protagonist Omar Khayyam.

Again, in a single sentence, Rushdie summarizes the oppressive of women through a character who is so clearly a victim of a male-centred society that the reader is moved to sympathy. She is Naveed and her fertility is a symbolic of Pakistan's population explosion at the level of political allegory, but at the level of social satire, it only slightly exaggerate women's lack of autonomy in deciding when or when not to have children. A family that ill treats its women will destroy itself, as happens at the end of the novel

We can use once again the same quotations of **Rushdie to prove that he is a unreliable narrator**; "Between shame and Shamelessness lies the Axis upon which we turn; meteorological conditions at both these poles are of the most extreme, ferocious type. Shamelessness shame ; the roots of violence"(Shame p.118)<sup>53</sup>

Rushdie's fundamental thought in shame is that 'shame, Shamelessness, and savagery are inseparably bound. His illustration recommends Earth's turning on its hub, where one may discover disgrace at one shaft and Shamelessness at the other, while the otherworldly genuine place where the conjoined twins meet is the spatial topography of brutality exemplified. He uses a munitions stockpile of narrating strategies to make brutality tasteful with the goal that his perusers might be all the more ready to investigate that East's and the West's societies of disgrace. Rushdie's story style can be seen as a facetious utilize and manhandle of various abstract account traditions and hypothetical points of view that incorporate misrepresented impressions of frontier mimicry, temperamental storytellers, tall tale themes and between textuality.

To demonstrate, Salman Rushdie as a temperamental essayist, Rushdie's storyteller characterizes a mind boggling utilization of disgrace with respect to social and dialect differences: "Sharam, that is the word. For which this unimportant "Disgrace" is a Wholly insufficient interpretation. Three letters, shen, re, mem (composed, Naturally, from appropriate to left); in addition to zabar complements demonstrating the short vowel sounds. A short word, however one containing reference books of subtlety... what is the inverse of disgrace? What is left

In **Shame**, different story strands interlace subjects of mimicry, spoof, mysterious authenticity, tall tales, meddling and problematic storytellers, histories and palimpsests. The novel empowers a mind boggling comprehension of the legacy of expansionism in Pakistan, yet requires the peruser to uncover social standards to better understand the historical subtleties and absurdities of postcolonial modernity. The novel **Shame** is very much a macho book", says Rushdie "all about careerism, cops, politics, revenge, assassinations, executions, blood and guts' and keeps on discovering more and more about female characters, who dominate throughout this novel. There is obvious predominance of female characters and the males are reluctant to be born. The major characters are Bilquis Hyder and Rani Harappa in the city and the Shakil sisters in Q. **Shame** turnout to be an open, open-bordered text and gives the reader the power that had once been the prerogative of the author. In **Shame**, consequently the reader can become an active, independent and autonomous constructor of meaning.

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