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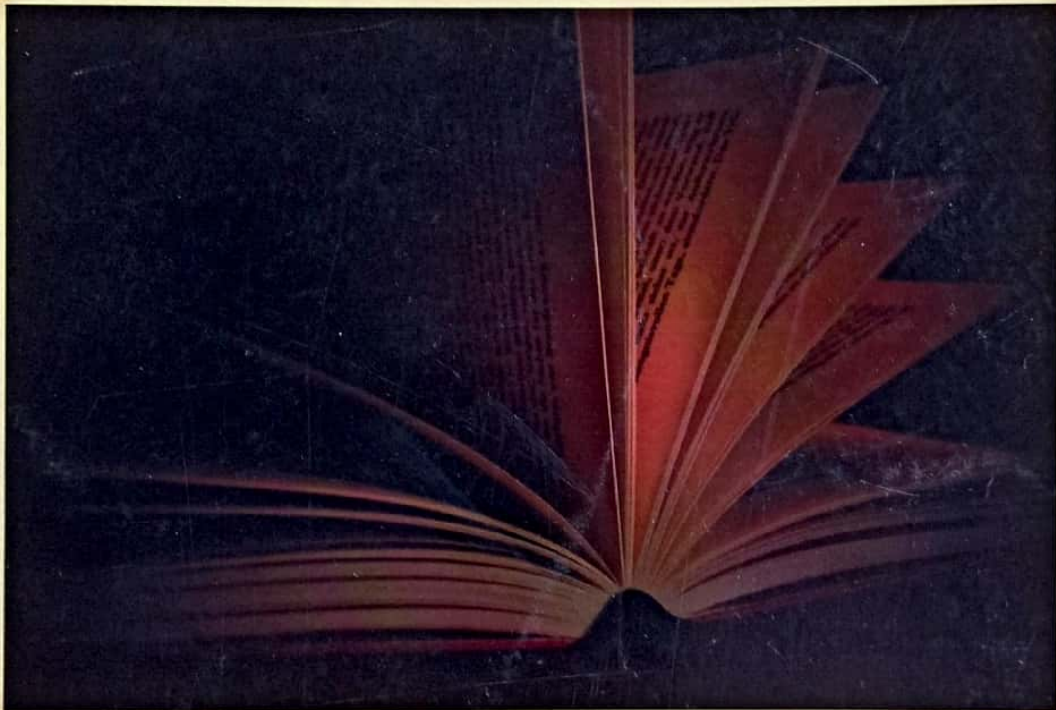
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Treatment of Politics and History in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*:  
A Perspective

Abstract

In the post colonial era history and politics emerged in a major theme of discourse and Salman Rushdie play a significant role in making it dominant. Many of his novels focus on these themes. *Shame* which followed *Midnight's Children*, continues Rushdie's concern with politics and history of Pakistan from the time of its origin and traces the events of the cruelty and barbaric execution, assassination and bloody incidents where the common people suffered and met destruction. Rushdie is a skilled novelist and his narrative mocks at the generals and rulers who exploited the nation and the people for their selfish ambitions and remain shameless. The novel has multiple dimension and several characters who display identical nature of shameless behavior. In this article attempt has been made to trace the political events and events in Pakistan and shameless role played by the individuals.

Key Words: Pakistan, generals and rulers, bloody revenge, exploitation and repression of common people.

Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) is a pungent satire on the contemporary politics and history. The treatment of history and politics received unexpected treatment and evaluation in the literary narratives of the novel. As Pathak has pointed out the novel "depicts the contemporary political situation in Pakistan. The main plot of the novel revolves round the lives of Omar Khayyam, Shakil and Sufiya Zinobia. The novel contains, however, a vivid presentation of history in the side plot involving relationships between the two important architects of Pakistan's history-Raza Hyder and Iskinder Harappa(who are, in fact, based on General Zia and Zulfikar Bhutto respectively)" (124). The Indian novel has paid the special attention and focused on the history of the emperors, kingdoms, national politics, and politics of regionalism. During 1980s the historical account discoursed in the post colonial fiction is mostly on the freedom struggle and emancipation of the country. After 1980 the subject

became a matter of critical discussion and many novelists used it as a focal point of the discourse unknown to the common people, by using imagination and the fiction mode of writing, sometimes giving it a colour of fairy writing.

Shame begins with worded the Indian politics as a fabulous tale about birth of one of the characters, Omar Khayyam Shakil. One of the three sisters became pregnant and the other two also start boasting with stimulated pregnancies. They immured themselves in their deceased father's mansion and have a dumbwaiter employed to bring in provisions from outside. The novel contains a very vivid political scenario of Pakistan involving two characters Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa. In fact, Raza Hyder represents the character of General Zia and Iskander Harappa represents Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. These two heroes who actually commanded the political situations in Pakistan are re-lived in the novel. There are thirteen characters involved in the drama of shame in the history of Pakistan.

The novel throws light on the political history of India and Pakistan. Indian contemporary political history has also taken into account while dealing with the concurrent political picture of Pakistan. Rushdie critically examines the Pakistan society as a repressive society: "As a nation we have a positive genius for self-destruction, we nibble away at ourselves, we eat our children, and we pull down anyone who climbs up" (S, p.184). The Pakistani leaders and the rulers are the destroyers of the country, as her history reveals and the citizen of Pakistan simply watcher their destruction.

Shame is a sequel to *Midnight's Children* for many reasons. Rushdie has remarked, "It seems to me that that everything in both books has had to do with politics and with the relationship of the individuals and history." (Rushdie 54). While his *Midnight's Children* is a stupendous evocation of the evolution of India since Independence, *Shame* is about what happened to the other half of the subcontinent after 1947, namely Pakistan. All the rulers are the players are playing their individual's role in destroying the nation. History "interplay with the individual" (Pathak 118). He further says Rushdie "presents realities of public history" (Pathak 119)

History is at the centre in Rushdie's novels. He went to Cambridge in 1965 to read history. His studies and experiences have helped him evolve a distinct concept of historical processes and their roles. Novel is one of the most respected literary forms which holds



mirror of the society it represent and delineated people and culture. Walter Allen rightly remarks:

In the literature of an age, its conflicts, tendencies, obsessions are uncovered and made manifest to a degree, which is continually astonishing; good writers are, so to speak, mediumistic to the deeper stirrings of life of their time while they are still unknown to, or any rate unsuspected by, the public, politicians and current received opinion... contemporary novels are the mirror of the age, but a very special kind of mirror that reflects not merely the external features of the age but also its inner face, its nervous system, Coursing of its blood and the unconscious promptings and conflicts which sway it. (14)

Rushdie has made excellent use of novel form and added new colour and dimensions to it. He discusses inner and outer lives of individuals and society in a quite distinct manner. If in "Midnight's Children" Rushdie builds up on politics and history of India in its sequel "Shame" he critically examines politics and history in Pakistan with reference to individuals and society. In *Shame*, he is 'centrally involved' with 'aspects of the most crucial critical theoretical debates of his day.' He is deeply concerned with the politics of the Indian subcontinent. His commitment and sense of urgency are really remarkable. He presents realities of public history influencing, and getting influenced by, individual's actions and aspirations, with exceptional honesty. *Shame* dramatizes 'Military politics of the divided Muslim India, whose history Rushdie considers a disaster'. It opens in the imaginary town of "Q" - Quetta in Pakistan. Quetta is an important city of Pakistan and it is also a hub of political events in its history.

Three lovely, loving sisters, known by the names of Chhunni, Munnee and Bunny. Omar Khayyam, an image of suspense and fantasy, is born as the fantastic son of these three sisters who share automatic and simultaneous symptoms of pregnancy, and interestingly with no father in picture. In the process of unfolding this grim fairy tale, Rushdie makes a savage attack on the political life of Pakistan(S, 11).

The plot of the novel revolves round the lives of the three persons namely Omar Khayyam Shakil and Sufiya Zinobia. Their stories have political dimensions. It gives a clear

presentation of history forcefully on the relationships between the two important architects of Pakistan history –Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa. These personalities are based on General Zia and Zulfikar Bhutto's lives respectively. The relationship between Iskander-Raza and their centrality unveils "all about careerism, cops, and politics. Revenge, assassinations, executions, blood and guts" All these focal issues provide an insight to Rushdie to rewrite the history of Pakistan. Pakistan to him is the peeling fragmenting palimpsest, increasingly at war with itself; it is nothing but a failure of the dreaming mind. Rushdie has a clear view of these issues: "To build Pakistan, he holds, it was necessary to cover up Indian history to deny that Indian centuries lay just beneath the surface of Pakistani standard Time. The past was rewritten; there was nothing else to be done" (S, 87). While discussing Pakistan, India comes into play because the former is carried out from the latter. He finds the society there, by and large repressive "a society which is authoritarian in its social and sexual codes, which crushes its women beneath the intolerable burdens of honour and propriety" (S, 173). It is against the background of this sort of political and social atmosphere that the characters and events in *Shame* act and react. One event and action affect other in course of time.

It has been pointed out that *Shame* is a part of "the architecture of the society that the novel describes"<sup>2</sup> *Shame* is a part and parcel of the lives of people in Pakistan. People grow upon "a diet of honour and shame" (S, 15). *Shame* is present everywhere; it spreads everywhere and is present in all houses: "In defense, you can find shame in every house, burning in an ashtray, hanging framed upon a wall, covering a bed. But nobody notices it any more. And everyone is civilized" (S, 28). All the individuals have accepted it with desire: Rushdie remarks:

The country in this story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying the same space, or almost the same space. My story, my fictional country exists, like myself that a slight angle to reality. I have found this off centering to be necessary; but its value is, of course, open to debate. My view is that I am not writing only about Pakistan (S, 29).

Rushdie reforms the history of Pakistan, it in the form of disguise. "Without any direct personal description, he portrays the reality. He writes what he sees and he sees what is

real. 'Shame' represents his satirical venom applied with merciless comic vituperation to the political reportage of the scenario and it is a supremely grotesque murky political history."

In many ways *Shame* is an extended and chronological account of the scandalous reigns of the two generals of Pakistan Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq CMLA (Chief Martial Law Administrator) represented theory Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder. With them the novel is "all about careerism, cops, politics, revenge, assassination, execution, blood and guts" (Fernandis 103). Zia-ul-Haq has fled unmanned in his wife's burqa into the oblivion of Himalayan tribes and straight in to the vengeful arms of the scandalous three mothers of Omar Khayyam. Almost all the great names of this period in Pakistan history are given in parody with their ridiculous doubles. Zia-ul-Haq is Razor Guts General Hyder Raza, Z.A. Bhutto is Iskander Mirza; Nusrat Bhutto becomes Penelope - like Rani Harappa, the virgin Ironpants. Some less central figures retain their own names in Rushdie chronicle. Even General Ayub remains as Yahya Khan, Mujib becomes Sheikh Bismilla. In this way, the whole novel is a ridiculous picture of the corrupt administration and prevailing taboos of Pakistan. The part of Pakistan is recreated for presentation in *Shame*.

The narrative of the novel covers the political events from the partition in general but more precisely from the time of the East-West conflict through the trial and execution of Z. A. Bhutto in 1977, and nearly Six Years of the Zia regime. In Rushdie's view, both Bhutto and Zia represent the worst period in Pakistan's history for they grew bigger and uglier as the country started developing, but in a stupid way. The major part of the shameful history of Pakistan therefore gets connected with their rise to power, for which the base had been laid by their irresponsible and corrupt predecessors. Rushdie here combines real with fantasy and arranges events which were crucial in Pakistan's history. "The world of Rushdie, spoiled by deception and horror, among at least two pairs of characters, Talvar Ulhaq, Haroun Harappa, Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa moving in its realms of political satire, is resolved in the world of fantasy and haunting myth of the dead and vengeance." (Rao 140)

Rushdie critically examines two political leaders. Isky stands for Bhutto, who has double faces. He was a playboy, a rake, a debauch, who indulged in all kinds of excesses before taking to actual politics. He changes his character and behavior before joining politics:

He embarked upon a massive transformational programme; he gave up stud poker, chemin de fer, private roulette evening horse - race fixing,

French food, opium and sleeping pills... his habit of seeking out beneath...tables the excited ankles and complaint knees of society beauties, and stopped visiting the whores (S, 124).

Bhutto learned essential qualities of a politician to make his position firm and stronger: "He stifled forever the high-pitched giggle of his unreliable playboy self and substituted a rich, full throated, statesman like guffaw" (S,125). He receives perfection in his attempt and leads his path towards his achievements.

His transmutation from a playboy into a saint is narrated with fine irony and the contrast between reality and illusion is bridged out:

Did any man ever fight, bear fights, snakes and mongoose duels, plus disco dancing and his monthly evenings at the home of the Chief film censor, where he had watched special compilations of the juiciest bits excised from incoming foreign films(S, p. 25).

The metaphor of life-taking fight is absolutely pertinent in developing the theme of rivalry and advancement in the field of politics. Rushdie also suggests that in spite of the transformation, he is the same person in his attitudes and behaviors. He had put on a face to dupe people. It is primarily for this reason that, from the time he assumed power to the time he was arrested by Zia and hanged, he has been presented through his daughter Arjumand, who covers his past to make him into a mythical figure of gigantic proportions. She is so passionately involved in this enterprise that she "empties herself of everything to make room, for the memories. They fill her up, her bowels, her lungs her nostrils..." (S, 178). Through them, "she allows her remembering mind to transmute the preserved fragments of the past into the gold of myth" (S, 181).

The mythical and historical versions of Bhutto are different and it is brought out through the gaps in Arjumand's narratives. For this, he chose a style, which in nearly the mock-epic manner. The discourse of Bhutto's electoral victory is mockingly constructed:

On confusion of people who have lived to long under military rule, who have forgotten the simplest things about democracy! Large numbers of men and women were swept away by the oceans of

bewilderment, unable to locate ballot boxes or even ballots, and failed to cast their votes. Others, stronger swimmers in those seas, succeeding in expressing their preferences twelve or thirteen times (S, p. 178).

When the eastern part of the country turned hostile to him, Isky made the president of the country send an enormous Army to restore a sense of Proportion in that region. In Arjumand's view, it is a perfectly justified measure, because the people were turned into "savages breeding endlessly, jungle bunnies good for nothing but growing jute and rice, knifing each other, cultivating traitors in their paddies" (S, 179). The strife that ensues and which led to the dismemberment of the country is for her no more than India's intrusion in the affairs of Pakistan. The humiliating defeat of the army in the eastern region which led to the arrest of the president, was exploited by Isky for his self – promotion. He has forgotten that he had been instrumental in starting the trouble there. He demonstrated his trumped-up anguish before the people of his amputated country in a theatrical manner. He ripped his shirt before them to show his winded chest symbolizing the injury and mutilation of his country's physical and political geography.

Isky disregarded his wife in his political career and made his daughter his permanent ally. The real character of Isky is preserved by his wife in the eighteen shawls she knitted during the time she lived in utter loneliness. They provide the most telling account of his shameful deeds: his philandering after women, his authoritarian manner, his torture of his opponents, the deathblows he gave to democratic structures, his use of police force to oppress people, the genocide of the Pathans, and his election maneuverings. He would constantly hurl foul oaths and imprecations at people and even get them murdered. Isky is disregarded as a person and leader but he indulges in his whims colours

Bhutto and Raza Hyder are the two representatives with their own characteristics. If Bhutto represents a politician who exploited the people of Pakistan by invoking the codes of civil liberty and democratic spirit, Raza Hyder, represents the greedy military generals of Pakistan. He stands for Zia-ul-Haq. He always tried to compete with the ordinary citizens. to take control of the country, and have their share in the spoils of power. In his early stint in the Needle Valley, where he was meant to quell the rebellious tribal, he teaches political lessons to the Prime Minister and advocates the use of force to suppress dissent: "Sir, you must place the law in my hands. Cart Blanche. At certain moments civil law must bend before military necessity" (S, 101). When the Prime Minister refuses this advice and help, he threatens him:

“Army is watching these days... All over the country the eyes of honest soldiers see what they see, and we are not pleased, no sir. The people stir, sir. And if they look away from politicians, where will they turn for purity?” (S, 102). Most of the military rulers indulged in this kind of whim and lead the country to downfall and destruction of people and democracy. Pakistan is a live example of this statement.

Generals took the reign of the country in Pakistan by force and legitimized it by linking it with Islam and its tenets. They put the Islamic principles in front of the people and forced them to follow them. If some dishonoured the Islamic tenets they punish the common people severely according to the laws. When Hyder puts Isky to death and consolidates his power over state, he let it be known that his main purpose for doing so was to put the country on a firm foundation of faith, which had been the very reason of its existence. It is suggested through the following way:

On the morning after the Coup Raza Hyder appeared on national television. He was kneeling on a prayer-mat, holding his ears and reciting Quranic verses; then he rose from his devotions to address the nation. This was the speech in which the famous term 'operation umpire' was first heard by the people 'understand' Raza said briskly, the Army seeks to be no more than an honest ref or ump (S. 223).

The main reason of Rushdie's criticism of the regime of Zia is that the latter used religion to perpetuate himself in power and revived medieval barbaric laws and practices. He justified measures like flogging and cutting of limbs as injunctions of God. To a team of foreign journalists he says: “These are not laws..., which we have plucked out of the wind. These are the holy words of God, as revealed in sacred texts. Now if they are holy words of God, they cannot also be barbaric. It is not possible. They must be some other thing” (S.245). Religion becomes the instrument of suppression, exploitation and dictatorship in the hands of these generals.

*Shame* builds up the history of Pakistan by providing many details about many measures, which Raza introduced to Islamize Pakistan. These measures include the banning of booze, promoting religion through the media, even incarcerating beggars, because “God and Socialism were incompatible. In the name of God he invoked the principle of stability for the country, only to put Generals everywhere, so that the Army got its fingers deeper into

things than it had ever done before” (S. 249). In order to suppress the voice and curtail the revolt these measures were the strong only means for them.

It is not that Rushdie is against the organization and working of states on Islamic principles. He even suggests that such principles could have provided the basis for a possible unity of what had been left of the country after it got split into two. However he does not approve of the manner in which it was done by Zia, and imposed religion on people, not because it was good for them or for the country, but because it provided him with a convenient and dependable exploitative ideology which people found difficult to oppose. That is why Rushdie comments:

Autocratic regimes find it useful to espouse the rhetoric of faith, because people respect that language, are reluctant to oppose it. This is how religions shore up dictators; by encircling them with words of power, words which the people are reluctant to see discredited, disenfranchised, mocked (S. 251).

It can be observed that the main purpose of Rushdie's engagement with history in Pakistan is to show that the country's decline began right from the time it was born and it touched its lowest ebb during the times of Bhutto and Zia. For the democratic rule and secular polity suffered irreparable damage under their rules and control.

The political situation in Pakistan in its all forms delineated is with parody and ironical incline to unveil the hidden reality. The history of the politics reveals that the army rulers had become increasingly autocratic, and dictatorial. The political developments in Pakistan had turned towards religion with threats and coercion. The rules themselves had betrayed their erotic and political ambitions and had fallen a prey to their immoral conducts. Babar Shakil words out this reality:

Yes - so take patriotism, number one, government takes our rice for Army troops, we should be proud, no, but we just complain there is none for us. Number two; government mines our minerals and economy gets a boost, but we just beef that nobody here sees the cash. Number three, gas from Needle now provides sixty percent of national requirement, but still we are not happy, moaning in these parts. Now

how could people be less patriotic you must agree. But fortunately, our government loves us still, so much that it has made our sex-drive the top national priority. How that? - But it is obvious to see: this government is happy to go on screwing up till the doomsday (S,132).

The history of the nation of Pakistan is full of exploitation and use of the coerce sources to maintain control on the political issues. By bringing this history back to life, by ridiculing and scolding the heroes and the nations, by indulging in metaphorical invective, by entertainment, by resorting to the obscene (which is shameful) and the erotic, and by deflating he exalted reputations, Rushdie has created a diverting literary work and demonstrated his scintillating ability to use the mock-epic prose form to combine politics with literature. It has been rightly commented that there can seldom have been so robust and baroque an incarnation of the political novel as *Shame*. It can be read as a fable, polemic or excoriation; as history or as fiction. This is the novel as myth and as satire.

*Shame* is concerned with shame and shamelessness, born from the violence, which is modern history. Revelation and obscurity, affairs of honour, blushing of all parts, the recession of erotic life, the open violence of public life, create the extra-ordinary Rushdie's mood."<sup>12</sup>It is pervading and gripping that challenges the mind of the readers and compels to pace with the narrative.

The action of the novel is controlled by the theme of *Shame*. The novel is about life in Pakistan; but Rushdie claims that the country in the story is not Pakistan, or not quite. There are two countries, real and fictional, occupying almost the same space. In fact, *Shame* is a fictionalized picture of the ideas of Rushdie about Pakistan. The characters, the action, the conflict are all so arranged and dramatized as to focus our attention on this total meaning. As the story unfolds this theme of shame at different levels become more and more sharply defined. The questions that haunt us are "Whose shame? How does it shape the story action? What are its consequences in the lives of the principal characters?"(S, 36).At a personal level the hero, Omar Khayyam Shakil continues to be affected by shame and shamelessness throughout his life even when his mother had resisted him from feeling shame at an early age. He is born of three mothers (!) and does not know who his real mother is to the end of his life. Nor does he know who his father is. Though he enters the world of school, he understands that he is an illegitimate child born of a British Officer and one of the Shakil mothers. The Shakil mothers do not show any feeling of dishonour when Omar Khayyam



was conceived, but lock themselves up in their large mansion and remain in their self-imposed captivity till the end of the novel.

Omar Khayyam is born in the prison-like enclosed world of his mothers. And to add insult to injury, he enters life without benefit of mutilation, barberry or divine approval, which the Muslims consider a must. Born in the deathbed of his grandfather, his first sight is the spectacle of a range of topsy-turvy mountains. "Hell above, Paradise below" (S, 23). He grows up between twin eternities whose conventional order is, in his experience, precisely inverted.

Omar Khayyam lives with his mother exclusively for some twelve years with fear and then joins the school and the outer world, for the next six years. He leaves them and the city of his birth for further studies at the age of 18, and visits them only when his brother Babar dies. He returns at the age of 65 to die there. He is heard for a long time, except that he has become an internationally famous doctor, and a friend of Iskander Harappa. He marries the daughter of Raza Hyder who ultimately becomes the Chief Martial Law Administrator. The novel begins with his birth and completes the circle with his death in the same room and the same mansion in the city of Quetta. At a different level, Omar Khayyam and his wife Sufiya Zinobia represent the people of Pakistan who entered into a world of freedom only to find themselves in a captivated world of broken dreams, shattered illusions and religious fanaticism, a shameful world where they cannot reject their religious beliefs nor can they wish to be ruled by Islamic scriptures in their political life. Omar Khayyam is not truly a Muslim and hence is bound to live at the edge of this world of Muslims. His mixed identity has distanced him from reality.

The shame that Sufiya Zinobia feels is that of a young woman who has the mind of a child. She is an unexpected miracle in the sense that her parents Bilquis and Raza Hyder wanted a son and got a daughter. Bilquis always calls her 'shame' and so the child in Sufiya never grows up. She imbibes and absorbs shame around her. She is a personification of shame itself so much so that she blushes at the slightest shameful thing. The beast of this shame is bottled up in her and at times takes possession of her mind and grows stronger gradually. When it first possesses her at the age of twelve with a three-year old mind, she kills Pinky Aurangzeb's turkeys. She is medicated upon by Omar Khayyam who is 43 and falls in love with her but has not the courage to declare it until she is brought back to him when she tries to kill Talvar-Ul-haq, the bridegroom of her sister. She is now nineteen with a

five-year old mind. When Omar Khayyam marries her, she is a fully-grown young woman of twenty one with a seven-year old mind. One feels that she represents the growth of political Pakistan, which has not grown to true nationhood. The beast in her too grows. She becomes a woman in veil wandering at night and killing urchins after fulfilling her womanly desires. When Omar Khayyam realizes this, he informs her father Raza Hyder who wants to put an end to the life of Sufiya Zinobia. But Omar Khayyam, the doctor and husband does not like the idea and so decides to keep her in the attic alive, though drugged and chained, so that she is not a danger to others in the house.

Rushdie explains the father's desire to kill his daughter in the name of honour. A Pakistani father killed his beloved daughter for making love to a white boy in London. Though the story appalled Rushdie, he says, "I, too, found myself understanding the killer...that men will sacrifice their dearest love on the implacable altars of their pride"(S, 115). He asserts that shamelessness and shame are the roots of violence. The girl who was thus killed in London, Anahita Muhammad haunts the novel since Rushdie finds this sort of happening understandable only in the East. He cites another event of an 'Asian' girl traveling in a late-night underground train who was humiliated by a group of teenage white boys.

This shame, burning within, bursts out and sets fire to shops etc. causing wreckage all around, but taking pride in its power. The third ghost inside Sufiya Zinobia is a boy in London who had simply ignited of his own accord without dousing himself in petrol or applying any external flame (S, 117).

The seeds of all the three incidents are to be found in Sufiya Zinobiashe feels shame but at the same time finds power to bring about wreckage all around her. Rushdie also refers to Kafka's Joseph K (The Trial) who is stabbed to death. "Like a dog! He said: it was as if he meant the shame of it to outlive him"(S. 118).Sufiya Zinobia does not die under a knife but the shame, that all these persons feel, hangs over her, making her all the more powerful when it finally bursts out of her. Only, the writer has to make her an idiot because "idiots are, by definition, innocent" (S, 120).The only way Rushdie finds of creating purity in what is supposed to be the Land of the Pure (Pakistan). Sufiya grows up, her mind more slowly than her body, and owing to the slowness she remains, "for me" says Rushdie, "Somehow clean (Pak) in the midst of a dirty world" (S, 120), a world full of corrupt power and false promises. She blushes uncontrollably for herself and also for the world in which shameful

things are done but not felt: "Lies, loose living, disrespect for one's elders, failure to love one's national flag, incorrect voting at elections... maltreatment of womenfolk"(S, 122).

Sufiya digests the feelings of shame and represents the simple-minded people of Pakistan who feel shame for the shameful actions of their political leaders. The shawls embroidered by Rani Harappa also record this shameful history of the Pakistani leaders. Rani calls one such novel "Iskander and the Death of Democracy she depicts his hand around the throat of young girl, small physically frail, internally damaged, the idiot but innocent Sufiya Zinobia, gasping and empurpled in Iskander's unyielding fists' (S, 114)."Here Rushdie clearly equates Sufiya Zinobia with the spirit of democracy, the true power of the people and leaves no doubt in the minds of the readers what she stands for. She is very symbolic of democratic power."

Raza Hyder is frightened to learn that the chained and unconscious Sufiya Zinobia has escaped. The white panther is being mythologized, fantasized and considered illusive. It is in fact "Time's ghost, the future stalking the forests of the past" (S, 252).Raza Hyder is frightened that his past- his daughter would become his nemesis and ruin him completely. He is perfectly right. When it is known that the white Panther is none other than his own daughter, he is almost house-arrested and has to escape disguised in the garb of a woman. Omar Khayyam, on the other hand, feels proud of Sufiya Zinobia in the sense that she is now free for the first time in her life. He imagined her proud; "proud of her strength, proud of the violence that was making her a legend. She had risen above everything she did not wish to hear" (S, 254). Raza Hyder and Omar Khayyam are opposite characters, symbolizing opposite principles.

Rushdie puts forth several questions: "Can it be possible, that human beings are capable of discovering their nobility in their savagery?"(S, 254). Does Rushdie suggest here that violence can free Pakistan from the shameful past? The country and the people do not know their real power till they resort to violence. They don't know the part till they break loose from the chains of their past. Rushdie creates a situation where Raza Hyder (who can be likened to Gen. Zia-ul-Haq) has to run away and find shelter in Nishapur where no ray of light or hope penetrates. But Sufiya Zinobia will not kill her father that is left to Omar Khayyam's mother for whom it is a simple act of revenge for the killing of their son Babar.

Rushdie seems to suggest that the marginal man, the peripheral man, should not simply stand and watch, but should himself act according to the principles of right and wrong. The suppressed instincts of Sufiya, the fury of the people, will catch up with the rulers and they will have to answer one day. The doctor and the patient are expected to join hands to bring about a change in the political life. The allegory appears a little confusing but then the confusing state of affairs in Pakistan may well be mirrored in this confusing manner.

Pakistan was a "wrong miracle" and the people who dreamt of freedom found themselves chained by the dictators of the country. The people should try to acquire freedom and democratic values. In Pakistan these principles have been muzzled and the disorder, dictatorship and valueless country has emerged. This is the universal shame, Rushdie brings to light. He cited a British diplomat's wife saying, "why don't people in Pakistan get rid of Zia, you know, the usual way?"(S, 29) "Shame is not the exclusive property of the East" Rushdie comments.

There is a certain tradition in the history of Pakistan and the Pakistani rulers follow the history of rules. At the political level Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder-Bhutto and president, Zia-ul-Haq follow the history of the Moghul Empire where a son kills his father to become a king is a common affair. Their empire is built upon the promises, which are false and never to be fulfilled. Raza promises elections again and again and is known not as Chief Martial Law Administrator but as "cancel my last announcement" for next trick. Rushdie presents Raza Hyder as someone who wishes to work but is guided more by a man like Maulana Dawood. He does not follow nobility of Administration. Raza always find two ghosts of Isky and Dawood on his shoulders- the two ghosts haunting him both in life and even after death. A mention of Danton and Robespierre reveals the conflict that RazaHyder feels but he is driven by the religious Dawood and feels safe in talking about the Islamic Scriptures. He imposes its dictates. Rushdie appears to suggest that religious fanaticism is not the right resolution of this conflict. Isky is killed by his orders and he himself dies at the hands of the revengeful witch-like mother of Babar. The country is now in the hands of Arjumand and Haroun Harappa and possibly will continue the same path.

In view of the expression of shame and political hypocrisy, all the characters are presented in the caricature, selfish and hypocrite. All the events with these people and their thinking are merely show bits. The characters are caricatures. Omar Khayyam is not the only one of the grotesque eccentrics who is perfectly caricaturized in the novel. Sufiya Zinobia

the fantasized heroine represents the shame felt by the individual, by the nation, but also by the universe and the writer himself. It is the universal shame, which a man should feel but does not care to. To bring home this truth Rushdie makes almost all his characters neurotic. Not one single character is normal and healthy. Through the game of dirty politics, the people of the country of Pakistan are turned into emotionless animals and thought existence crushed with principles of Islam. The history of Pakistan is studded with several events which are the evidences of fraud and cheating, destroying the spirit of Pakistan. Rushdie has very cleverly parodied the culture of Pakistan presenting politics and history of the existence.

All the characters in the novel are parodied and their true nature is exposed which is shameful. "Frankly it is all about life of men and women in Pakistan, and the shame of it as Rushdie sees it and the repression of shame that breeds violence and still more shame writ large in the social and political history of those people." (Guruprasad 47). The novel "defines tangibleness of realism in its attempt to create a coherent fictional world that seeks to clarify and define terms of stability" (Oommen 36). Rushdie is conscious of the content of the novel and form and the language he has used to express the shame that the politics and history of Pakistan contains. In Mc Dowel's view "Salman Rushdie has attempted in *Shame* to illuminate Pakistan's hideous political realities in an extravagant satire in which Raza acts out the role of the Pakistan General Zia-ul-Haq, while Iskander(Harappa) represents the deposed (and later executed) head of state, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. But one might fairly ask how readers will know enough of the inside details of these men's lives and of the grim events of the new nation of Pakistan to appreciate a satire on them" (328).

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