MARGINALIZED WOMEN : THE BREAK AWAY FROM THE CHAUVINISTIC WORLD THROUGH MYSTICAL PRACTICES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO 'SHAME' A NOVEL BY SALMAN RUSHDIE

Abhibunnisha Begum,
Research Scholar (Ph. D),(FT)
Department of English, Andhra University,
Visakhapatnam.

The destabilization of political and cultural boundaries between peoples and nations caused, the concept of identity, and with its implications in the dialectics of self and other, becomes a truth-seeking challenge in a globalised multi-ethnic world. The challenge resides in the fact that in such a postmodern situation where identity is viewed as shapeless, shifting and moving beyond the fixity of thought, a process of questioning is enacted to grill identity in its past, present and future implications.

> The logic of the discourse of identity assumes a stable subject, i.e., we've assumed that there is something which we can call our identity which, in a rapidly shifting world, has the great advantage of staying still. Identities are a kind of guarantee that the world isn't falling apart quite as rapidly as it sometimes seems to be. It's a kind of fixed point of thought and being, a ground of action, a still point in the turning world. That's the kind of ultimate guarantee that identity seems to provide us with. (Hall 1989, 10)

This traditional discourse conceives of identity as being related to a fixed point, a particular set of values, serving as a sort of trait for the individual in society. Stuart Hall goes further to suggest that identity is a dialogue wherein the logic of stability and continuity steers towards the belief that an individual can remain the same person over time, whatever his life experiences may be. In this discourse, identity is associated with a point of orientation, a kind of origin that secures or guarantees legitimacy, fixity and steadiness.

The sense of identity is the logic of something like a "true self." And the language of identity has often been related to the search for a kind of authenticity to one's experience, something that tells me where I come from. The logic and language of identity is the logic of depth– in here, deep inside me, is my Self which I can reflect upon. It is an element of continuity.

> "I think most of us do recognize that our identities have changed over time, but we have the hope or nostalgia that they change at the rate of a glacier. So, while we're not the fledglings that we were when we were one year old, we are the same sort of person." (Hall 1989, 10)

The previous logic of identity creates, as Stanley Abramowitz puts it,
 "a self-enclosed universe of identity discourse" (in Rajchman 119).

The previous self-enclosed discourse of identity rests on the segregation of the other, the other individual or the other identity group, whose difference is felt as constituting a potential threat or danger. The danger of such an identity discourse is that it offers a fertile terrain for all sorts of essentialist thinking such as communitarians', fanaticism and deep-seated nationalism.

Postcolonial fiction is an ambivalent text that offers a fertile terrain for the never-ending investigation into the third space of identity. Founded on the concept of difference, identity opens onto apartness which reveals itself as a process of implication that feeds on ambivalence and elucidation, calling for uninterrupted destabilization of meaning. With the destabilization of cultural frontiers between nations, identity emerges as a philosophical challenge. Without offering possibilities of reaching definite answers, identity, as a process of grilling, will continue to raise questions about the self in its incessant efforts to apprehend the unattainable other.

Postcolonial fiction invites us to believe that in our attempts to answer questions about our relations with others, and no matter what new commands may the concept of identity take in the future, what matters most is perhaps the balance that should be required for in order to avoid all forms of fixity of meaning that characterize essentialist thinking. In line with postmodern thought, postcolonial theory fully subscribe to the new identity discourse by acknowledge the de-stabilisation and the crumbling affects the concept of identity. The destabilisation of the concept of identity stems from the growing awareness that identity is a question involving the liaison of the self and the other. Without the other, there would be no self, no identity. The contemporary concern with otherness highlights the suggestion that legerity (difference or the existence of the other) determines the process of identification.

It is the existence of the other that gives the self meaning. Besides, the self is not a finished product; it is not a stable construct; it is, rather, a process in constant flux; something that is incessantly shifting. The ceaseless change that affects the self in its relation with the other endows identity with mutable fluidity.

> "Identity emerges as a kind of unsettled space or an unresolved question in that space, between a number of intersecting discourses" (Hall 1989, 10).

As it develops the self embraces different identities and becomes therefore an on-going process of demarcation. Identity is not stable because the self is constantly shifting from one identity to another, and this is mainly because of the intrinsic assortment within identity. Identity cannot be constrained to only one particular thing; instead of being en-closed within the boundaries of particularize, identity opens out to clinch pluralism.

A Literary text is influenced with the cultural and historical contexts. Among these contexts there are several issues bound like power, class and culture. These issues affect the role of the individual and the position in the society. Hence, an individual struggles in these limits. The individuality is resoluted by his identity and his destiny. The postmodern scenario in the recent trends compels a writer to search for alternatives, and to confer for a social change which suits the circumstances and re – address the history. Hence, the reality is sunk in the erroneous hyper real.

To sum up, events and experiences that dissolve young people from normative ideals and positively sanctioned statuses create feelings of hostility or social isolation within them and earn them undesired statuses and treatment from important others (personal marginalization). Social marginalization, i.e., an individual's relative economic, employment, educational, and cultural dispossession compared to those around them, works in a similar fashion to provide a second source of alienation from conventional society. These two types of marginalization lead to an

extreme discomfort in how individuals feel about who they are (ego identity discomfort). This discomfort, coupled with a strong sense of not being able to construct a definition of themselves (because external sources are exerting too much control) that will be positively sanctioned (lost control in defining an identity) motivate them to identify with alternative social groups (identification with a drug sub cultural group). These groups provide opportunities to resolve identity problems.

Economic opportunity, educational opportunity, and popular culture set the stage for the appearance and growth of drug sub cultural groups and help define the essence of the identity-based solutions such groups will offer to those who are motivated to participate in them. Their effects on credentials with a remedy sub cultural group are mediated by social marginalization. Consequently, identification with a remedy sub cultural group reduces young people's ego identity discomfort or helps them, in the short term, to solve their identity problems. Drugs are sought as the solution because they provide, for the abuser, material imagery, affect control, and identity creation. It is through this process that young people change from non-drug users to remedy abusers.

Differences by Race, Gender, and Class. Scholars today ever more note the importance of centering basic elements of social union (race, ethnicity, gender, and social class) in theory and research. Discussed below are some prelude observations about how these phenomenon might alter the cultural-identity theory. Researchers studying the leading etiological theory have attempted to evaluate the expounding power of their models across population sub-groups (i.e., testing for differences between certain groups as an peripheral validity question), but few have considered how the "essence" of the concepts or variables which comprise their models may differ by the same (an internal validity question). The cultural-identity theory attempts to address both matters.

Since a fundamental aspect of the socialization process is the acquisition of sex-appropriate social identities, i.e., gender identities, it makes sense that problem in or resistance to this process may be a source of ego identity discomfort that results in later drug use. The same might also be expected for race/ethnicity and social class. Hence, the question of identity is not something static and backward looking, but is a dynamic reality, where the context demands that answers be given and positions be taken into regard.

Any talk about identity has also to take into account the reality that the identity issue is not something which is value neutral. On the one hand there is the talk about a larger cross-cultural conglomerate identity. On the other there is the attempt to define a micro identity. One must not lose sight of the fact that in recognising that identity has a politicised facet to it, those who have been intentionally and cruelly marginalised have to be suspicious of any attempt to speak with them, through them, and for them, especially when such attempts come from either those who historically were responsible for such marginalisation, or from those among them who are situational privileged.

> [a] socially marginalized group does not have the power to
> exclude, silence, and command obedience from a dominant group.
> Its claims for epistemic privilege, lacking a social power on which
> to base them, cannot yield the same results as the self-authorizing
> claims of a dominant group and are, therefore, merely normative,
> compelling only for those who are theoretically persuaded by
> them, usually members of the socially marginalized group who

> find them empowering. Although the empowerment of its own members is an important goal for every marginalized social group, by claiming an authority based in epistemic privilege the group reinscribes the values and practices used to socially marginalize it by excluding its voice, silencing it and commanding its obedience to the voice of the dominant group. (Ami Bar. 93)

Taken by itself, the above quote might appear to negate all the efforts of the marginalised community to give themselves the agency. It might even look as though the writer is trying to deny the marginalised the right to protest. This is certainly not what the writer attempts to do here. In her very complex but well-argued essay, she shows how the claim for epistemic knowledge - which, in the context of this article, would link it to the efforts to 'politicise identity' or to use identity 'strategically' - assume a single centre of authority and also assumes making use of the language and tools of this authority.

> "There are no tools that can replace [the master's tools], nor are any needed, because when the oppressed feel a need to authorize speech, they are acting on feelings that are a function of their oppression. Speech needs to be authorized only where silence is the rule. This is an oppressive rule." (Ami Bar. 97)

Attempts to understand this reaction has made writers create a link between human attitude and their backgrounds. The effort made by scholars to unfold the mystical influence of characters on life is seemingly unsuccessful. However, postcolonial critics seem to believe that in order for peace and harmony to rein in a socially stratified society certain social conventions must be restructured. Consequently, emergent females, due to subjugation, have resorted to Para normality in a bid to assert themselves in postcolonial societies. Rushdie presents the disconcerting conditions of women in the Pakistani society.

The liberal feminists believe the women should have as much chance to succeed in the Public realm as men do. The Indian society is not exempted from this marginalization; the Pakistani women yearn for a society where they can assert themselves. Liberal feminists like

Salman Rushdie have done all to empower the women as a means of emancipating them from oppression. This work examines how the subjugations and marginalization meted out on women in Rushdie's *Shame* urge them to resort to paranormal means to assert themselves. Rushdie' s the Indo-Anglian Writer and the trend setter for the Postmodern setting in the Indian writing in English initiated the feministic aspects with his third novel Shame(1983). *Shame* resort to mystical practices as a means of emancipating themselves from oppression of the patriarchal order in the Pakistani society. It exposes Rushdie's life and experiences in the Pakistani society and proceeds to show the relevance of *Shame* to Cameroonian secondary school students. The work is based on the hypothetical contention that the women are forced to live inauthentic lives because of restrictions place by the patriarchal order, which hinder them from asserting themselves. Thus, the search for happiness or meaning in such a society results into abnormal behaviors. The mythology and archetypal theory, feminism and new historicism constitute the backdrop against which the analysis is carried out. In sum, women would go to any level to liberate themselves from the different forms of subjugation meted out by patriarchy.

Thus, women are forced to live inauthentic lives as a means of emancipating themselves from patriarchal entanglement. For this reason, their search for happiness or meaning in such a world results in abnormality. In *Shame,* President Iskander Harappa encourages his daughter to rise above her gender level as she grows.

"It's a man's world, Arjumand. Rise above your gender as
you grow. This is no place to be a woman in." (Shame.126)

In order to effectively understand the intriguing elements that abounds in *Shame,* New Historicism, Feminism and Mythological Theory will be used to expound on the question of Para normality and female Subjugation in *Shame*. The American Psychologist, Gary R. Vandenbos defines Para normality in the APA Dictionary of Psychology as "the transfer of information or energy that cannot be explained by existing scientific knowledge.'' Vandenbos uses terms like psychology and theology to define Para normality; he views it as ghost, psychic activity, and strange creatures. He views Para normality as "beside usual", ghosts, psychic activity, or anything non-normal such as aliens, strange creatures, and human psychic abilities.

Rushdie clearly depicts the experiences of post independence India, Pakistan, where the citizens are not only poor and marginalized, but are completely disappointed in their new leaders, who promised to attend to the socio-cultural, economic and political needs of the people at the time when independence was granted. At this level the autobiographical comes into play, especially the political instability, female subjugation and religious disputes. Raza Hyder is one of the post colonial leaders' who does not only marginalize his citizens in the Pakistani society but uses supernatural powers to eliminate his political rivals.

Rushdie searches the minds of his characters and brings out their thoughts, for example, we get to know the psychological torture of women in the Pakistani society through the author. The characters in the novel pursues a great quest to realize his destiny, the "Beast," who is a representation of the primitive past of man and the "expedition", which represents man's quest towards self-realization because through the names and deeds of some characters in *Shame* like Sufiya, Talvar and the three Shakil sisters, we establish that they are closely linked to the mythical and mystical activities in the novels. Through them, several post-colonial problems are exposed and they steer in several positive changes in Pakistan.

The women in Rushdie's *Shame* are viewed as caricatures and reproductive machines. This is evident as the women are almost silent; the Muslim culture places them in the periphery. The men belief the women have nothing to contribute to the society thus they see them as second class citizens. For example, Naveed Hyder delivers twenty seven children within seven years. Rani Harappa is looked upon as a mere possession. As a liberal feminist, Rushdie is not happy with this segregation against women especially as his sisters were not exempted thus he empowers his women to fight against the chauvinistic men. The above liberal Feminists do not just conscientize the women on female subjugation and suppression; they proposed solution to trounce their problem.

The women in *Shame* are faced with the issue of patriarchal inhibition and alienation from political positions. They are not educated; cannot speak against their husbands; they are limited to domestic activities; they are also passive and mediators of male powers. As the novel unfolds the women play a vital role in the socio-economic and political domain. This interesting insight that Rushdie makes in the novel is a critique of the domination of women; the women have no place in the society.

Rushdie's *Shame* as a misogynistic piece of work. He observes that at no point does the marginalized woman fight against the domineering male foil. He believes Rushdie seems to suggest that Hyder, Iskander and Omar are products of a postcolonial past; their abusive or dominating behavior can be seen as effort to restore their diminishing power over their women. This view differs from the work understudy in that, this research examines how Rushdie empowers his women through mystical practices to emancipate themselves from oppression. The three Shakil sisters for example, use their bizarre powers to get rid of the dreaded despot, Raza Hyder.

To this critic, though her family considers Sufiya Zinobia a failure, she endures the anger and self pride of shame, instead of being its vessel of embarrassment and family honor. "Salman Rushdie's Attempt at a Feminist Fairy tale Reconfiguration in *Shame"* examines the Beauty and the Beast fairy-tale. The woman is doomed to remain outside culture.

Rushdie uses several women to narrate the Pakistani history. Rani Harappa, Bilquis Hyder, Naveed Hyder, Arjumand Harappa and Sufiya Zinobia. The book does not focus on male dominance but portrays the marginalization of women in the Pakistani society. Rushdie glorifies the woman; Sufiya Zinobia is seen as a determined and an independent heroine. *Shame''* acknowledges that reality takes primacy over art and says cultural displacement plays a vital role in *Shame*. Rushdie sees it as an important factor in seeking freedom.

> "Rushdie's ventures into a female realm and speaking with not to or about women, paints to his willingness to deconstruct stereotypical patriarchal configuration and images of women as well as to his subscription, albeit with reservation, to the policy of Genesis'. In more general terms, through such identification. Rushdie wishes, however discontinuous his resoluteness may appear to oppose dominance of representation produced by any majority."(41. Justyna.)

She focuses on female subjugation in Rushdie's *Shame*. She uses the term 'Veil' to show the marginalization of women, the term has both negative and positive connotation, veil in the positive sense signifies purity and chastity while in the negative sense it symbolizes silence and subjugation. The twenty seven children by Naveed Hyder reveal male prejudice, since women are considered as reproductive machines. Naveed Hyder believes she can free herself from this chauvinistic world through suicide, this explains why she commits suicide in reacting against the repressive patriarchal system. In *Shame*, he focuses mostly on female experiences in the Indian sub-continent. He brings to the lime light the subjugated women who resort to the use of mysticism to break away from the patriarchal society. In *Shame*, though the women are marginalized, they end up emancipating themselves from patriarchy.

In *Shame*, we mostly find names like Chunni, Munni, Bunny, Bilquis, Harappa. By portraying these names, he asserts an identity for himself as an Indian. Also, the fact that he focuses on the marginalization of women and their reason to resort to mystical practices breaks away from Patriarchy which may imply the dynamic nature of what he considers Indian culture. Rushdie also brings to the lime light the indispensable roles played by women in fostering the socio-cultural, economic, religious and political roles of women. After independence. This is glaring in *Shame* as Arjumand Harappa ceaselessly fights to liberate women from marginalization.

In Rushdie's *Shame,* It operates at three levels that is, psychological, physical and emotional perspectives. The patriarchal cultures in the Indian subcontinent place women in a position where they are almost silenced and voiceless. Rushdie's female associates were not exempted from the marginalization since the Islamic courts bestow women only half of what the man gets. Rushdie was not happy with the way women were marginalized in the Pakistani society since his sisters were not exempted from such action. This affected him greatly and he decided to empower the subjugated women against the chauvinistic men. With the dawn of independence, liberal ideas such as female deliverance saw a light in the Pakistani society and this is evident in *Shame.* Rushdie, however, concludes that women have been marginalized, betrayed and as a result of this, tend to break away from patriarchy. Rushdie's woman plays an important role in the Pakistani society as they rise above the gender role assigned them.

He presents this situation not as a misogynist but goes further to explain how some marginalized women emancipate themselves from oppression. Rushdie presents the marginalized women but does not put them in any position in the society to fully assert themselves. Finally Rushdie is saying that, if using the natural is not possible in breaking patriarchy, then characters can go to the mystical world to emancipate themselves from oppression. In this light he issues his female characters with mystic and mystical qualities.

CONCLUSION

This recognition of the politicised nature of identity will be of assistance in the attempt to understand the characteristic of the hyphen as something which is not isolated but as an entity which has the power to draw together elements which come from the living past, while being informed about the machinations of the present, and anticipating an uncertain future. The research comes up with the premise that women can go to extremes to free themselves from prejudice and subjugation. This work is unique in that it brings to the limelight the fact that Rushdie does not only present the marginalization of women but empowers them through mystical practices to get what they cannot get under natural circumstances. Furthermore, Rushdie puts his experiences into fiction, he writes about the political instability in Pakistan, how some marginalized women in Pakistani society break away from the chauvinistic world through mystical practices.

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