





## **Dedication**

*I would like to dedicate this work to my parents for their endless prayers and encouragement throughout my life, and to my siblings .*

*Dehbia*

## **Acknowledgements**

This Section is devoted to think who contributed from near or far to the accomplishment of this research paper. We would like to express our most sincere thanks to our supervisor Dr.SEDDIKI Sadia for providing us with this crucial topic and her kind support. She was always willing and gracious enough to answer our questions.

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## **Abstract**

This dissertation explores the postcolonial condition through a comparative study of Salmane Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) and Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné* (1982). It argues that both novels examine the disillusionment that follows political independence, revealing how postcolonial elites reproduce the oppressive structures of colonial power. Using Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* as a main theoretical framework, along with elements of New Historicism and Marxist theory, the study analyzes how each author represents political violence, identity crises, and resistance through distinct narrative techniques. Rushdie's use of magical realism and satire is contrasted with Mimouni testimonial ethics and symbolic realism. The findings show that while the two writers adopt different styles, both portray fragmented societies marked by betrayal and ideological manipulation. Their narratives serve as acts of resistance, offering alternative truths against official histories. In conclusion, *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* demonstrate the power of literature to critique failed postcolonial promises and give voice to silenced experiences.

**Keywords:** Postcolonial, Salmane Rushdie, Rachid Mimouni, *Shame*, *Le Fleuve Détourné*, Frantz Fanon, Disillusionment, Magical Realism, Resistance, National Allegory.

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# I. Introduction

Post colonialism is a critical theoretical framework that examines the lasting effects of colonial rule on formerly colonized societies. It reflects on wounded memories, fractured identities, and the new forms of domination that emerged after independence. In many postcolonial nations, the legacy of colonialism has resulted in enduring challenges, including national identity crises, political corruption, and social disillusionment. Postcolonial literature captures these tensions, portraying societies caught between the promises of liberation and the harsh realities that followed independence.

This research explores the postcolonial condition through a comparative analysis of two major literary works: *Shame* (1983) by Salmane Rushdie and *Le Fleuve Détourné* (1982) by Rachid Mimouni. Although rooted in distinct geopolitical and cultural contexts, Pakistan for Rushdie and Algeria for Mimouni both novels examine the disillusionment that follows political independence. Each author demonstrates how emerging postcolonial elites who reproduce systems of oppression, leading to political decay and societal stagnation, often betray the ideals of liberation.

## Literature Review

From our reading of the literature on Rachid Mimouni's *Le Fleuve Détourné* and Salmane Rushdie's *Shame*, it seems that Mimouni novel has received much more critical attention than Rushdie's. *Shame* has mostly been reviewed in a few local newspapers and online platforms, and only rarely in detailed academic studies. On the other hand, *Le Fleuve Détourné*, published in 1982, is often described as a symbolic novel because it deals with many different themes. It offers a deep look at the social and political situation in Algeria after independence.

The story follows an anonymous narrator who finds himself rejected and forgotten by the society he lives in. One of his important statements reflects the message of the novel: "What we want is to awaken our compatriots from their slumber, to teach them to be suspicious, to claim their part of life in this world, so that the suborders can no longer exploit the ignorance of the masses" ( Rashid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* 1982, p. 8). This quote has been mentioned by several critics who focus on how Mimouni uses fiction to talk about politics and the struggles of postcolonial Algeria.

Moreover, Yasmina Khadra, the Francophone Algerian writer, described Mimouni as "Giant of literature." This description was part of a message he sent to the organizers of a tribute event held thirteen years after Mimouni's death. The event included literary debates and emotional reflections on Mimouni's life and work. Khadra praised Mimouni's courage in denouncing terrorism and injustice, especially in Boudouaou, his hometown, which had suffered from violence. During the tribute, which took place at the Cultural Center of the city as part of the fourth edition of the Francophone Forum, Khadra stated: "It's war that we're calling for down there – Not war, dignity..." ( Yasmine Khadra, pp. 55–56).

Robert Elbaz is another critic who has written about Mimouni work. He is the director of the Maghreb Writers collection and has studied how Mimouni continuously focused on the story of postcolonial Algeria. According to Elbaz, the difficult historical and social context of Algeria influenced almost all of Mimouni writings. Postcolonial Algeria is always the main source of inspiration in his work. Elbaz explains: "And if Mimouni is a greedy and tireless rehashed of the same stories, of this same narrative of postcolonial Algeria, it is because the socio-historical referent is so problematic that the work is in the total inability to overcome it" ( Robert Elbaz, 2003, p. 5).

In contrast, the academic discussion of Rushdie's *Shame* often focuses on the way the novel criticizes Pakistan's culture and politics. Rushdie questions the founding principles of Pakistan, especially its identity as a nation created on the basis of religion. One of the most symbolic characters in the novel is Maulana Dawood, a stereotypical strict and conservative religious figure who uses Sharia law to control and frighten villagers. Rushdie dehumanizes him by comparing him to an animal, which reveals the author's critique of religious extremism. Rushdie's position as an author living in exile also gives him the ability to reflect critically on his homeland from a distance. The concept of "double vision" is useful here, as it shows how Rushdie's satire targets both specific historical figures and broader political systems. He does not only criticize individuals like Bhutto, but also the larger issue of authoritarian regimes that pretend to be democratic.

In addition to political and cultural interpretations, *Shame* has also been studied through different critical approaches, including New Criticism and Marxist theory. Critics like Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, who are part of the New Criticism school, focus on close reading and analyze the structure, language, and techniques used in the novel. On the other hand, Marxist critics, based on the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, explore how literature reflects class struggle and economic inequality. In *Shame*, Rushdie presents a divided society where capitalist systems and power structures are deeply embedded. This is clearly shown in the following quote: "In the north of the sad city stood mighty factories in which (so I'm told) sadness was actually manufactured, packaged and sent all over the world, which never seemed to get enough of it" (Salman Rushdie, 1983, p. 15).

## 2 - Issue and Working Hypothesis

From the review of the literature above, it is clear that various critics have studied both Rachid Mimouni and Salman Rushdie. However, most of these studies have focused on specific themes such as resistance or disillusionment in each novel separately. Very few scholars have attempted to compare the two works directly, and none has explored how similar themes operate across both narratives. In other words, the shared concerns of *Le Fleuve Détourné* and *Shame* have been largely overlooked in comparative analysis.

The aim of this research is to compare *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*, focusing on how both novels explore similar issues such as political violence, radicalization and religious , and the breakdown of postcolonial societies. This study will focus on three major aspects. First, it will examine how the main characters in the both novels experience disillusionment in the face of failed independence. Second, it will analyze the process of resistance, particularly how these characters come to adopt radical or symbolic forms of opposition. Third, it will explore the narrative techniques used by both authors, especially how they depict psychological and structural violence through realism, allegory, and magical elements. In the final part, the study will also consider how both novels function as national allegories.

To address these issues, the research will rely on Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, where he analyzes the political and psychological problems of postcolonial societies. The study will mainly focus on Fanon's concepts of violence, alienation, and national identity. In addition, attention will be paid to how allegory and magical realism are used by Mimouni and Rushdie to represent deeper postcolonial realities.

## Methodological Outline

This dissertation follows the IMRAD method. It begins with an introduction that identifies the main problem of the study. This is followed by a review of the literature, which presents existing research on *Le Fleuve Détourné* and *Shame*. The Method and Materials section provides an overview of postcolonial theory and includes a summary of both novels: *Le Fleuve Détourné* (1982) and *Shame* (1983). This section also explains the theoretical concepts used in the analysis, especially those drawn from *Frantz Fanon*. The Results section outlines the main findings of the research. The Discussion is divided into four main chapters. The first chapter focuses on the theme of disillusionment. The second explores political resistance and how the main characters respond to betrayal by loved ones and political systems. The third chapter analyzes the use of magical realism and allegory in representing postcolonial experience. The fourth and final chapter considers both novels as national allegories, where characters and events symbolically represent historical and social realities. The dissertation concludes with a general conclusion that summarizes the key points of the analysis and reflects on the broader significance of the study.

## End - Note

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## II. Method and Materials

This section includes the material chosen to study and compare the theme of post colonialism in two novels: Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné* and Salmane Rushdie's *Shame*.

### a. Method

In this part, we explain the theories used in our work. The main one is *Frantz Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth*, which is a key book in postcolonial studies. We also use some ideas from New Historicism, a theory that appeared after colonial times, and it helps understand the historical and social background of both novels.

Postcolonial theory looks at the effects of colonialism. Fanon says that getting independence is not enough if the new leaders repeat the same problems as the colonizers. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he explains how some countries had a peaceful independence, but still kept unfair systems. This helps us understand the problems in countries like Algeria and Pakistan.

Fanon believes that colonial systems look stable but are actually full of problems. He also says that violence is sometimes the only way for colonized people to get freedom. Another writer, Albert Memmi, criticized the French system in Algeria, where Muslims had fewer rights than Europeans did. This led to the Algerian War in 1954. Fanon says that colonized people must free themselves mentally and physically. He wanted the postcolonial world to follow a socialist path, not copy the West. His ideas came from his experience in the Algerian War and his role in the FLN One critic wrote:

“When Fanon’s critiques of racism, colonialism, capitalism, and humanism are brought into the ever-widening orbit of Africana critical theory... his discourse on

white supremacy, patriarchy, racial colonialism, racial violence, racial exploitation, racial oppression, and what it means to really and truly be and become ‘human,’ though thoroughly radicalized and colonized.” ( Frantz Fanon , 1968 , *The Wretch Of The Earth*).

These ideas help us to understand the two novels we study in this dissertation.

## **b. Materials**

This part includes short biographies of the two authors and summaries of their novels.

### **✓ Biography of Rachid Mimouni**

Rachid Mimouni was born in 1945 near Algiers. He studied science at the University of Algiers and graduated in 1968. Then he went to Montreal for further studies. When he came back to Algeria, he taught for a while but later became a full-time writer.

His first novels were published in Algeria. Later, his books gained more attention, especially in France. In *Une Paix à Vivre* (1983), he writes about young Algerians trying to live after the war. He often criticized corrupt leaders and those who took away people’s rights.

Mimouni believed writers should speak for those who have no voice. He supported freedom and warned against extremism. He wrote about these issues in works like *Barbarism in General and Fundamentalism in Particular* and *La Malédiction* (1993). He published seven novels and a short story collection called, *The Ogre’s Embrace* (1989). Some of his works were translated into English, including *The Honour of the Tribe*.

Most of his stories are set in Algeria, but the themes are global. His novel *Le Fleuve Détourné* (1983) is well known for showing problems like dictatorship and corruption in postcolonial Algeria.

### ✓ **Biography of Salmane Rushdie**

Salmane Rushdie is an Anglo-Indian writer known for his use of magical realism. His writing mixes fantasy, religion, and history. He has been compared to authors like Angela Carter and Peter Carey. His views on religion have caused a lot of discussion. Rushdie was born on June 19, 1947, in Bombay (now Mumbai), India, in a middle-class Muslim family. His father studied in Cambridge. At age 14, Rushdie moved to England to study.

He went to Rugby School and later studied history at King's College, Cambridge. In 1964, his family moved to Karachi, Pakistan, because of political problems. This experience influenced his writing. After university, he worked in Pakistani television for a short time before returning to England to work in advertising. His job in media had an effect on his writing, especially in *The Satanic Verses*. His first novel, *Grimus* (1975), did not get much attention. He became famous after publishing *Midnight's Children* (1981). His next novel, *Shame* (1983), is often seen as a political story about Pakistan. He uses a wealthy family to represent the country, with characters based on real politicians like Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq.

Although he was once seen as a voice for Muslims, Rushdie later faced criticism from many in the Muslim world. He is an atheist and often writes about religion's role in society.

### ❖ **Synopsis of *Le Fleuve Détourné***

*Le Fleuve Détourné* is the story of a man who comes back to Algeria after independence. In the present, he is in a prison camp with other people who are seen as a threat to the state. Among them are students like Omar and Saharawi. They are unhappy and feel the promises of independence were not kept. The story then goes back to the past. During French rule, the narrator's family was exiled. His father sent him to learn shoemaking. When the war started, he joined the fighters in the mountains. After a bombing, he was the only survivor but lost his memory. He woke up in a hospital in another country and stayed there for years.

When his memory returned, he went back to Algeria. However, everything had changed. His family thought he was dead. His wife and son were gone. She refused to accept him to keep her pension. His son also did not recognize him. The narrator had problems with getting his identity papers, finding work, and starting a new life. The novel shows the sadness and betrayal of those who fought for freedom but were forgotten after independence.

### ❖ **Synopsis of *Shame***

*Shame* begins and ends in a strange house near the border of Pakistan and Afghanistan. Three sisters raise a boy named Omar Khayyam Shakil. They make him promise to live without shame. He becomes a doctor and lives a selfish life. He becomes friends with Iskander Harappa, who later marries Rani. They have a daughter named Sofia Zinobia.

Sofia is mentally weak because of a fever in childhood. She holds the shame of others. As she grows, the shame becomes like a beast inside her. One day, she kills 200 turkeys by biting their heads off. Omar tries to help her and falls in love with her.

At the same time, political events happen. Raza Hyder becomes leader after removing the Prime Minister. Later, he is removed too. He runs away in women's clothes with his wife and hides in Omar's old house. The three sisters kill him because of past revenge. In the end, Sofia also kills Omar. Both of them die with their shame.

The novel uses fantasy and politics to show how shame affects people and countries. It is also a story about Pakistan's history and leadership.

## End – Note

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### III -Results

This section of our work aims to exhibit the main findings we reached through this research. First, our analysis of postcolonial literature through Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné* and Salmane Rushdie's *Shame* led us to the conclusion that both novels are powerful means of denouncing and portraying the postcolonial condition in Algeria and Pakistan, as is the case of our study.

The second important finding is related to committed literature. In fact, through the exploration of Mimouni's and Rushdie's works, we have noticed that both authors tend to highlight similar themes. They show political problems and the paralysis of societies governed by intellectuals in both Algeria and Pakistan, two countries that experienced European colonization. Therefore, we can say that both authors are committed to exposing and giving voice to the new forms of repression practiced by political leaders and intellectuals after independence.

Third, concerning Fanon's theory on post colonialism, our study of *Le Fleuve Détourné* and *Shame* helped us to analyse his concepts of alienation, the betrayal by post-independence elites, and the difficulty of building a national identity. These aspects are clearly shown in the two novels. In Mimouni work, the Algerian people experience deep disillusionment, as the hopes of liberation are replaced by internal oppression from a corrupt ruling class. This perfectly illustrates Fanon's warning that decolonisation without real social change is transformation remains incomplete. In the same way, Rushdie's *Shame* presents a post Partition Pakistan where the ruling classes are corrupt, which also echoes Fanon's analysis of the post colonial condition.

In the same way, Rushdie's *Shame* presents a post-Partition Pakistan where the political elites are corrupt, which also matches Fanon's analysis of the postcolonial condition. Both authors show that political independence does not mean true liberation. As Fanon said, real decolonisation must address the conflicts between cultural legacies. These two novels highlight that the process of decolonisation is not finished and that real liberation needs not only political independence but also a rebuilding of identity, society, and structures of power.

## IV . Discussion

### Chapter One: Disillusionment in *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*

This chapter explores the theme of disillusionment in Salmane Rushdie's *Shame* and Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, focusing on how both authors present the disillusionment of individuals and nations through symbolic characters and surreal narratives. Although coming from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, Rushdie from Pakistan and Mimouni from Algeria both writers construct postcolonial fictions that highlight the betrayal of revolutionary ideals, the perversion of independence, and the persistence of repression.

The narratives of *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* suggest that political liberation did not bring dignity, social justice, or progress. Instead, it produced regimes that mimicked colonial authoritarianism while adding their own layers of violence, corruption, and hypocrisy. With fictional characters, surreal scenes, and symbolic deaths, both Rushdie and Mimouni reflect on how individuals are trapped in larger ideological machines that promise freedom but deliver silence and fear.

Disillusionment, in these novels, is not merely a private feeling it is a generational experience. It emerges from the contrast between hope and outcome, revolution and reality. By focusing on the lives of two characters both named Omar, the authors depict postcolonial subjects who carry the weight of national failures on their shoulders. Their personal fates mirror collective disappointments. This chapter offers a detailed reading of both novels through four lenses: the historical context of Algeria and Pakistan; disillusionment of the protagonists; the role of symbolism and surrealism; and the collapse of revolutionary hopes.

## 1. Post-Independence Context , Algeria and Pakistan

Algeria gained independence in 1962 after a long and violent war against French colonization. The National Liberation Front (FLN) emerged as a hero of the revolution, carrying the dreams of an entire people. However, once in power, the FLN quickly turned into a repressive state party. As historian, Benjamin Stora explains: “The post war FLN became increasingly disconnected from the people, transforming from a revolutionary force into a repressive state apparatus” (Benjamin Stora, 1992, p. 118). Promises of democracy, justice, and equality gave way to one-party rule, bureaucratic inefficiency, and the silencing of dissent. The revolutionary idealism of the 1960s turned into disenchantment by the 1970s and 1980s, as Algeria faced economic stagnation, housing crises, and the rise of state surveillance.

Similarly, Pakistan’s creation in 1947 followed the traumatic Partition of India. Born in violence and chaos, the nation struggled with its identity from the very beginning. As Ayesha Jalal writes: “Pakistan was “a nation conceived in the name of Islam but unable to define what that meant in political and constitutional terms” (Jalal, 1995. p. 77). Frequent military coups, ethnic divisions, and religious manipulation shaped the political landscape. Rushdie’s *Shame* draws heavily on the military dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq, whose Islamization campaign sought to legitimize power through divine authority.

Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, warned that postcolonial elites often become “the transmission line between the nation and a capitalism... with a thousand faces” ( Frantz Fanon, 2004. p. 152). Rushdie and Mimouni seem to echo this view. Their novels present post-independence regimes not as liberators, but as betrayers of the people’s hopes. What replaces the colonial order is not freedom but a modified system of exploitation, now run by nationals rather than foreigners.

## 2 . Disillusionment in the Characters of *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*

In both *Shame* by Salmane Rushdie and *Le Fleuve Détourné* by Rachid Mimouni, the main characters named Omar are used to show the theme of disillusionment. These characters are not strong or powerful. They are confused, isolated, and become victims of systems that are supposed to protect them. Their lives show how post-independence societies like Pakistan and Algeria failed to give freedom and dignity to their citizens. These Omar's are not just individuals. They also stand for a whole generation that had hope and then lost it.

In *Shame*, Omar Khayyam Shakil grows up in strange conditions. Three mothers who never tell him the truth about his father raise him. His entire childhood is full of lies. Rushdie writes: "They swaddled the boy in mystery, wrapped him in fabrications, and sealed him into the legend of their choosing" (*Shame*, p. 14). This sentence shows how Omar lives in a world where truth is covered by fantasy. This situation reflects the way Pakistan, after independence, also created false versions of history to make people believe in a national story that hides the truth. Omar's confusion is a symbol of national confusion.

He becomes a doctor, but he does not do much. He works with the military regime, especially with Raza Hyder, who is inspired by General Zia-ul-Haq. Omar sees violence and oppression, but he remains passive. He marries Sofia Zenobia, a young woman who is intelligent but full of rage. Rushdie writes that Sofia's "rage knew no limits" (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 234). Her anger becomes dangerous. She finally kills Omar. His death is not noble or brave. It is quiet and sad. It shows that he has no power or control over his own life. This can be linked to what Salmane Rushdie says earlier in the book: "Shamelessness, shame: the roots of violence" (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 1). The shame that fills the characters' lives turns into destruction.

Sofia Zenobia is also an important symbol. She is angry at a world that controls women and punishes those who resist. Some scholars like Priya Kumar suggest that women in postcolonial novels often represent deeper political meanings. Sofia becomes a symbol of repressed pain and national failure. When she kills Omar, it is not just personal revenge. It is a way to show how the country has failed its own people.

In **Le Fleuve Détourné**, Omar is a political prisoner who has just been released. He walks around the city and finds it different and hard to understand. He asks many questions, but the people around him do not want to think or talk. At one point, he says, “Why are you silent? Why do you no longer believe in anything?” (*Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 41). This question shows how much society has changed. People are afraid to speak. They no longer trust in ideals. Later, his dead body is discovered, left in a public building. Nobody knows who killed him. This reflects how people who try to resist or question authority are simply removed. The narrator says, “His death was like a warning—a whisper to those who dared to think”. (*Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 146). This shows that the system punishes not just actions, but also even thoughts.

There is also the character of the administrator. He works for the government but still tries to stay honest. He says, “We have become jailers of the soul... we file people like folders and forget them” (*Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 102). This line shows that the system no longer sees people as human beings. It sees them as numbers or problems to control. Even those who want to do good, like the administrator, feel trapped and powerless. As Edward Said wrote in *Culture and Imperialism*, “postcolonial states often continue the same systems of control as the colonizers, but now in the name of national unity” (Edward Said, 1993, p. 213).

Critics have also said that both Omar's represent the loss of meaning in postcolonial societies. For example, "Homi Bhabha" explains in *The Location of Culture* that postcolonial identity is full of contradictions. People try to be modern and traditional, free and controlled at the same time. This makes life very difficult. In both novels, Omar cannot find peace. His society gives him no clear path. He is always confused, always searching. His death shows that such people have no place in a society that fears change and truth.

Both novels also show that death is not always loud or dramatic. It can be quiet, forgotten, and unexplained. This makes it even more painful. The Omar's die without justice. They are victims of system that eat their own people. Their deaths are symbols of how countries like Pakistan and Algeria have failed to protect their youth and thinkers. These novels remind us that independence does not always mean freedom. Sometimes, it just means a new kind of control.

In conclusion, the characters of Omar in both novels are not just individuals. They are symbols of national pain and lost dreams. Through them, the writers show how postcolonial countries betrayed the hopes of their people. These characters are destroyed not by enemies from outside, but by the systems that were supposed to bring justice. The use of simple people like Omar makes the message even stronger: the real tragedy is that ordinary people suffer the most.

### **3 . Symbolism and Surrealism as Tools of Disillusionment**

Both Salmane Rushdie and Rachid Mimouni use symbolism and surrealism to portray the deep disillusionment that haunts their post-independence societies. Instead of describing reality in a straightforward or realistic way, they distort it, exaggerate it, or make it absurd to

reflect how broken and irrational their countries have become. In this way, surrealism becomes a mirror of internal chaos psychological, social, and political.

In *Shame*, magical realism is not just an artistic choice; it is a deliberate way of expressing truths that cannot be said directly. One of the most memorable and disturbing examples is when Sofia Zenobia kills 214 turkeys with a knife. This episode is described with grotesque and surreal details: “She slaughtered them with a knife, one by one, laughing and sobbing” (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 199). The image is both comic and terrifying. The turkeys can be read as symbols of innocence or of the population itself helpless, sacrificed by a figure consumed by uncontrollable rage. Sofia’s act is not random; it comes from a place of emotional trauma, repression, and shame. As Timothy Brennan writes, “Rushdie’s magical realism is a political language it exaggerates to reveal, not to escape” (Timothy Brennan, 1989, p. 84).

Rushdie also uses symbols through names and characters. The political figures in *Shame* Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder are based on real Pakistani leaders, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Zia-ul-Haq. However, they are not presented realistically. Instead, their lives become like a tragicomic soap opera. Their political rivalry is filled with theatrical speeches, betrayals, and absurd reversals. At one point, the narrator declares: “In our country, power eats its children” (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 172). This metaphor shows how politics in Pakistan is destructive, not only to leaders but to the entire national fabric. These leaders, once symbols of hope, become monsters or caricatures, showing how ideals turn into tools of oppression.

In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, Mimouni uses a more realist style, but surrealism still appears in symbolic moments that break logic. One example is the scene where chickens go on strike

and refuse to lay eggs. The narrator explains: “Even the chickens mock us. They have become wiser than men” ( Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 87). This situation is absurd, but it has a clear meaning: the natural order is reversed. Economic collapse and political failure have reached such a level that even animal’s rebel. It is a metaphor for the loss of productivity and dignity in Algerian society. It also shows the ridiculousness of a system that cannot even maintain necessities.

Another surreal moment is when the police arrest a man just for smiling. This is not a joke. It reveals how paranoia has become part of everyday life. The regime suspects joy itself. “*Edward Said*” argues that: “colonial and postcolonial regimes both create systems where surveillance and suspicion replace trust and dialogue”. (Edward Said, 1993, p. 213). Mimouni uses these serious events not only to criticize the government, but also to make the reader feel the absurdity, fear, and helplessness experienced by ordinary people.

The theme of identity is also central to both novels and is often treated in symbolic and surreal ways. In *Shame*, Omar Khayyam Shakil’s illegitimacy becomes a metaphor for Pakistan’s national confusion. He never learns who his real mother is, and this lack of origin creates a lifelong sense of insecurity. At one point, he is humiliated by being made to wear a necklace made of shoes: “A string of old shoes around his neck, dragging through the dust” (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 23). In South Asian culture, shoes are often considered dirty and shameful this scene represents not only personal humiliation, but also cultural rejection. Omar becomes a symbol of a country that does not know who it is.

In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, the idea of identity is linked to bureaucracy. If a person does not have an ID card, he does not exist. The administrator says about a job applicant: “He’s not a citizen. He is not even a ghost. He’s a blank page” ( Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p.

132). This statement is powerful. It shows how identity is reduced to a piece of paper, and how without it, a person has no rights, no presence, no future. Recognition is no longer a natural fact, it is manufactured, denied, or erased by the system. *Frantz Fanon* observed: “Colonialism turns the colonized into a mere abstraction, a thing to be documented, not a human to be known” ( Frantz Fanon, 2004, p. 110). This continues even after independence.

Finally, both authors use surrealism not to escape reality but to reveal its violence. The exaggerated scenes, irrational decisions, and symbolic deaths are not exaggerations for pleasure. They are warnings. They show how postcolonial regimes are built on confusion, loss, and betrayal. When reality becomes too painful, literature expresses it through symbols and absurdity. As Homi Bhabha explains, “Postcolonial literature often speaks in riddles and fragments because history itself has become fragmented” ( Homi Bhabha, 1994, p. 38). Rushdie and Mimouni use these techniques to show that the disillusionment of independence is not just political it is emotional, cultural, and existential.

#### **4 . The Collapse of Revolutionary Hope :**

The theme of Disillusionment reaches its peak in the symbolic and tragic deaths of both protagonists named Omar. In *Shame* Omar Khayyam Shakil is killed by at the hands of his wife, Sofia Zenobia. In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, Omar is discovered decomposed in an abandoned building. These deaths are not explained in detail, nor are they accompanied by dramatic closure. Instead, they occur quietly and symbolically, as if to underline the failure not only of these individuals but also of the revolutionary dreams that were carried entire nations. Both deaths embody the end of a promise is post-independence ideal that been corrupted or lost.

In **Shame**, Sofia's murder of Omar is an act of extreme and unresolved rage. She has been marginalized, misunderstood, and emotionally repressed. Her final act is both personal and political. Rushdie writes: "She slaughtered him without a sound, while her baby was asleep in the next room" (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 234). The murder happens in silence, but it speaks volumes. Sofia, a woman shaped by shame, patriarchy, and trauma, becomes the agent of Omar's end. However, she is also a victim. Her violence reflects the broader violence within Pakistani society, which has denied agency to women and silenced dissent. The act is not. The novel ends with a return to the narrator's voice, who concludes: "And so it ends. The story of Shame. But shame never ends" (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 241). This ending suggests a cycle of violence, of betrayal, of shame that continues beyond the individual.

The symbolic death of Omar is also embedded in the very meaning of his name. In Arabic, Omar means "life," or "prosperous." It is a name that carries with it connotations of vitality and endurance. Yet, in both novels, the characters named Omar are not long-lived; they perish under mysterious or violent conditions. This ironic reversal emphasizes the failed promises of post colonialism. The name that signifies life becomes a symbol of death. As literary critic Abdul Jan Mohamed argues, "The postcolonial subject is overburdened with symbols of renewal while being denied the means to actualize them" (Jan Mohamed, 1985, p. 18). This is precisely the case in *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*.

In Mimouni's novel, the circumstances of Omar's death remain vague. We are told that his body was found rotting in a disused administrative building, but no official explanation is provided. The narrator, the administrator tries to piece together Omar's story, but he arrives at no clear conclusion. Instead, he is left with a haunting metaphor: "The River has been diverted. The current no longer knows its path" (Rashid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 148). This final line is profoundly symbolic. The "river" represents Algeria's revolutionary

energy, its hopes for justice and freedom after independence. A diverted river cannot nourish the land; it cannot follow its natural course. Mimouni implies that the Algerian revolution has lost its moral and ideological direction. It has become a hollow system, more concerned with power and bureaucracy than with dignity and change.

The administrator, narrates much of *Le Fleuve Détourné*, is himself a disillusioned revolutionary. Once a believer in the ideals of independence, he now finds himself complicit in the very system he once opposed. His moral discomfort is visible throughout the novel. At one point, he reflects: “We were supposed to build a new world, but we ended up with new prisons” ( Rachid Mimouni. *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 93). His position reflects a larger truth about many postcolonial states: the replacement of colonial authorities with new authoritarian leaders, often using the same tools of control.

Rushdie also touches on this transformation of revolution into oppression. Through the figures of Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder both inspired by real Pakistani leaders he shows how revolutionary rhetoric turns into political theatre and violence. The rivalry between these leaders becomes more about personal power than national progress. The narrator bitterly observes: “In our land, revolution eats its fathers as well as its sons” (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 170). This line echoes the earlier quotation about power consuming its children, reinforcing the cyclical nature of betrayal in postcolonial societies.

Furthermore, both authors use silence as a motif to emphasize collapse. In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, the final chapters are filled with pauses, unanswered questions, and fading voices. The administrator is not even sure what happened to Omar. The people around him either do not care or are too afraid to speak. In *Shame*, Sofia’s silence after Omar’s murder reflects not peace but emotional exhaustion. The narrative voice grows more distant, as if acknowledging

the limits of storytelling itself. As literary theorist, Homi Bhabha puts it, “The postcolonial condition is marked not only by what is said, but by what cannot be said” (Homi Bhabha, 1994, p. 117).

Both novels end not with resolution, but with ambiguity. There is no catharsis, no heroic transformation, and no return to hope. Instead, they suggest that disillusionment is not a temporary phase. It is a permanent state. The revolution, instead of being a new beginning, becomes a source of new disappointment. The characters who once symbolized change are now symbols of failure or death.

Ultimately, the collapse of revolutionary hope in *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* is not only political but also existential. The deaths of Omar reflect a profound loss of meaning. They suggest that when ideals are corrupted, when history is falsified, and when identity is denied, life itself becomes unliveable. The “Omar” who was supposed to live becomes the “Omar” who dies forgotten, buried, or erased

## **Conclusion**

*Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* are powerful novels of disillusionment. They tell the story of two nations Pakistan and Algeria that won independence but lost themselves. Through the symbolic journeys of two men named Omar, Rushdie and Mimouni reflect on how revolutions betray their ideals, how power corrupts memory, and how shame and silence replace truth.

While their styles differ Rushdie’s flamboyant postmodernism contrasts with Mimouni sombre realism, both authors achieve a similar goal: they expose the emotional and political costs of postcolonial betrayal. Their novels are not just stories they are testimonies of failed

dreams. By using characters, symbols, and surreal events, they analyse the regimes that promised freedom but delivered fear.

In the end, both writers suggest that true liberation requires more than the end of colonization. It requires the courage to confront history, to rethink national myths, and to refuse silence. Until that happens, the river remains diverted, and shame continues to poison the roots of nations.

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## **Chapter Two: Resistance and Postcolonial Disillusionment Theme in Salmane Rushdie's *Shame* and Rachid Mimouni's *Le Fleuve Détourné*.**

In this chapter, we turn to postcolonial theory to examine resistance as a core theme in Salmane Rushdie's *Shame* and Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*. Resistance in both novels emerges as a layered, complex response to the failures of post-independence leadership and the psychological aftermath of colonial rule. While characters in both texts often dreamt of emancipation, dignity, and justice, they find themselves entangled in systems of oppression that mimic or even exceed colonial brutality. This chapter explores how both authors, through varied narrative strategies and symbolic characters; map the contours of resistance in the postcolonial condition.

### **I . Disillusioned Protagonists and Fragmented Identities**

In *Shame*, resistance begins in the shadow of disillusionment and fractured subjectivity. Omar Khayyam Shakil, the central protagonist, is not a revolutionary in the traditional sense, but rather a symbolic product of cultural displacement, repression, and emasculation. Raised in total isolation by three eccentric sisters Chunni, Munnee, and Bunny who obscure the truth of his paternity, Omar's psychological development is stunted by shame and secrecy. He confesses, "You see before you a fellow who is not even the hero of his own life" ( Salmane Rushdie, *Shame* p. 24). This pivotal line encapsulates a profound self-alienation and passivity, suggestive of a postcolonial subject rendered voiceless and directionless in the wake of inherited trauma.

His physical and psychological confinement becomes a metaphor for postcolonial paralysis. As Homi K. Bhabha notes, in postcolonial narratives, the nation is often imagined through

fractured identities that resist coherence (*Bhabha, The Location of Culture, p. 139*). Omar's refusal to act, his retreat from politics, and his indifference to the suffering around him make him a tragic symbol of internalized failure. He becomes, as Fanon describes, the colonized intellectual who cannot reclaim agency because he has internalized colonial shame ( Frantz Fanon, *White Masks, p. 100*).

Resistance in *Shame*, it lies beneath the surface, veiled in passivity, silence, and irony. Rushdie's use of magical realism his "modern fairy tale" is not escapism but a protective device, allowing him to indict political regimes without incurring censorship. "Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale. Nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously" ( Salmane Rushdie *Shame* , p. 27). This ironic aside not only challenges the reader's complacency but also reflects the impossibility of direct resistance in authoritarian settings.

Characters like Raza Hyder and Iskander Harappa are thinly veiled depictions of Pakistani rulers General Zia-ul-Haq and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Through their trajectories, Rushdie exposes the betrayal of postcolonial promises. Initially seen as liberators, they devolved into Dictators. Hider, in particular, is emblematic of the military strongman who justifies violence in the name of order: "It was not General Raza Hyder who seized power. It was the army. The army acted. The general was ordered" ( Salmane Rushdie, *Shame* p. 72). His performance of reluctant authoritarianism conceals the machinery of systemic repression, echoing Fanon's view that postcolonial elites often become indistinguishable from their colonizers in their exercise of power ( Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of The Earth, p. 148*).

In contrast, *Le Fleuve Détourné* presents a more sombre and immediate portrayal of disillusionment. Rachid Mimouni's narrator also named Omar returns to an independent

Algeria that is spiritually and morally bankrupt. The post-independence state, instead of fulfilling the revolutionary promise of dignity and justice, reproduces colonial structures of surveillance, censorship, and dehumanization. “Since I returned to my country, I have lived through bad dreams” ( Rachid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 38). The metaphor of dreaming evokes a dissociative state in which the narrator is alienated not only from society but from his own memories and identity.

Unlike Rushdie’s surrealism, Mimouni prose is stark and grounded. His narrator wanders through a decaying urban landscape where former freedom fighters have become corrupt administrators, indifferent to the people they once pledged to liberate. The protagonist’s efforts to re-establish a life are they wanted by opaque bureaucracy and emotional trauma. The administrator’s indifference, symbolized by a simple but brutal gesture “the security guard kept us very far away” (Rachid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 109) is emblematic of how the state has turned its back on its own citizens.

Mimouni’s portrait of fragmented identity also emerges through the figure of Houria, whose name means “freedom” in Arabic. Once a symbol of hope and resistance, she has become a haunted figure, her body and soul violated by the very revolution that promised her liberation. Her reunion with Omar is not joyful, but painful and marked by silence and resentment. She tells him, “It’s you. Therefore, you are not dead” (Rachid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 59), with a tone more accusatory than relieved. The implication is clear: survival in such a oppressive society is a form of betrayal.

In both novels, the protagonists’ identities are fragmented by the betrayal of revolutionary ideals. Omar Khayyam Shakil's identity is shaped by lies and illusions in Mimouni’s character Omar is undone by painful truth. Both novels reveal how postcolonial subjects are caught

between competing narratives myth and memory, ideology and reality. They neither fully belong to tradition nor find solace in modernity. Their resistance is not armed rebellion, but the painful act of witnessing and remembering. As Edward Said argues, "Exile is not a privilege but an alternative state of being, and writing from exile, as these authors do, is an act of resistance against imposed silence" ( Edward Said , Reflections on Exile, p. 173).

This internal exile, being at home yet estranged, defines the experience of Mimouni narrator. He returns to his homeland only to find it unrecognizable, as if the river of revolution has been diverted. Both Rushdie and Mimouni design protagonists who are passive not because they are weak, but because they are morally overwhelmed. Their disillusionment is not apathy but a reaction to the collapse of meaning in a post-revolutionary world.

In sum, the theme of disillusionment and fractured identity is central to understanding resistance in *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*. Rushdie uses allegory and satire to analyse the postcolonial condition, while Mimouni offers a deeply personal, almost journalistic account of betrayal. Together, these works illustrate that resistance does not always take the form of action. Sometimes, it resides in the refusal to forget, in the courage to confront disillusionment, and in the painful articulation of a broken self.

## **II - Female Resistance and Gendered Oppression**

Both *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* show how women suffer in societies dominated by men. In both novels, women are not only victims, they also resist. Their resistance is not always political. Sometimes it is emotional, physical, or symbolic. The stories of Sofia Zinobia and Houria show how deeply patriarchy affects women's lives in postcolonial societies. These women reflect what Gayatri Spivak calls: "The subaltern" those who are silenced or ignored by dominant power structures.

In *Shame*, Sofia Zenobia is born with structural problems and is seen by her family as a source of shame. She is treated as weak and silent, and she rarely speaks. Rushdie writes: “She was the receptacle into which the shame of her family was poured” (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 132). This means that she carries all the unspoken guilt and fears of her society. Her name itself, Zinobia, evokes a kind of exotic femininity that masks deep suffering. However, Sofia changes. She becomes violent, killing animals and later men. This transformation is not just as madness it is a symbol of rebellion. Her actions show what happens when society suppresses women for too long. Rushdie describes her like a monster, but also like a symbol: “She killed men. She ripped them open. Tore them to shreds” (Salmane Rushdie, *Shame* p. 207).

Her violence is shocking, but it makes readers think about why she became like this. Rushdie uses magical realism to tell her story, mixing real problems with fantastical events. The story forces readers to ask: what kind of society creates such a person? Sofia is not evil—she is a victim who becomes a symbol of resistance. She is like a mirror showing the violence of the world around her, critic Eille Boomer explains, Sofia is “The result of the pressures of patriarchy turning inward upon the female body” (Eille Boomer, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature, 1995*).

Rushdie also talks about other women. For example, Bilquis loses her beauty after acid is thrown on her. She starts wearing veils and hides from the world. Her silence and withdrawal are another kind of resistance. As Rushdie notes, “Her beauty had made her vulnerable. Her veiling made her invisible” (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 180). These different women show how shame, silence, and control are used to keep women quiet but also how women fight back in different ways.

In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, Houria's story is more realistic. She is the wife of Omar, the main character. During his time in prison, people from the state rape Houria. This horrible experience is not just personal—it shows how women are used and hurt by the system. When she sees Omar again, she says: "It's you are not Dead" (Rashid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 59). These simple words carry deep pain. Her trauma is never fully healed, and the novel shows how little the state cares about women like her. The rape of Houria is not only an attack on her person, but also an assault on the postcolonial family structure. Mimouni does not exaggerate or hide these moments he uses them to underline the deep betrayal women experience.

Houria's suffering is quiet, but it is powerful. It shows that postcolonial governments, still abuse their people, especially women. Her rape is a form of control, showing how the state uses power over women's bodies. The novel does not try to make her story. It is told with honesty and sadness. Her endurance, even in silence, is a form of resistance. As the narrator reflects, "The woman body, is the battle field of power" (Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 94).

Zahia Smail Salhi, a scholar of North African women's writing, explains that the female body is often used as a symbol for the nation. When women are hurt, it shows that the whole country is hurt. Houria's body is like a map of pain and betrayal. Not only individuals hurt her, but also by the system itself. Salhi writes: "The violated female body becomes the metaphor for the disillusioned nation" ( Zahia S . S *Gender and Violence in Algerian Women's Writing*, 2003).

Frantz Fanon, in his book *The Wretched of The Earth*, says that colonialism causes deep wounds in people's minds and societies. He writes: "The colonized man is an envious man"

(Frantz Fanon , p. 39). This means people who are oppressed feel frustrated and angry. However, in these novels, not just men feel this way. Women like Sufiya and Houria also suffer, and they resist in their own ways. Fanon also speaks of how violence can be a cleansing force for the colonized. For Sufiya, her violence becomes this kind of purification not just personal, but historical.

While Rushdie uses fantasy and symbolism to tell Sofia's Zinobia story, Mimouni uses realism to tell Houria's. However, both show that resistance can come from pain. These women do not have power, but they become strong through their suffering. They are not just characters, they are symbols of how deeply patriarchy affects postcolonial life. Lila Abu-Lughod states "Stories about women's resistance are not always heroic, but they are deeply revealing of systems of control" ( Lila Abu Lughod . *Do Muslim Women Need Saving?*, 2013).

In the end, these novels show that we cannot understand resistance without looking at women's experiences. Whether it is the silence of Houria or the rage of Sofia, women in these stories show us the truth about power, shame, and survival.

### **III. Power and Bureaucracy: Broken Promises and Political Theatre**

Both *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* show how power operates through spectacle, bureaucracy, and distance. They criticize how postcolonial governments that once promised freedom and justice end up creating new systems of control. In both novels, figures of authority like General Raza Hyder and the unnamed Administrator are symbols of how disconnected leadership becomes from the people they rule. These leaders use bureaucracy and rituals of power to protect themselves and hide their failures. The result is a feeling of abandonment and betrayal among citizens who once believed in change.

In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, the Administrator is a shadowy figure. He is supposed to help Omar, the narrator, find answers and justice, but he remains unreachable. When Omar tries to meet him, he is blocked: "For a moment, I had hoped to approach him ... But the security guard kept us very far away" (Rachid Mimouni, in *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 109). This distance is not just physical. It shows how the people in power are emotionally and morally detached from ordinary citizens. The Administrator becomes a symbol of a government that refuses to listen. Bureaucracy turns into a wall instead of a bridge.

The absurdity of this bureaucracy is further emphasized when Omar is told to go from one office to another to get a simple signature. The more he tries to navigate the system, the more trapped he becomes. Mimouni writes, "each corridor was a la labyrinth each door a dead end" (Rachid Mimouni 1982 , *Le Fleuve Détourné* , p. 115). The building itself becomes a metaphor for the confusion and futility faced by citizens. This Kafkaesque structure of governance leads to exhaustion and hopelessness, showing how the ideals of the revolution have transformed into tools of oppression.

Even when the Administrator seems to care, he is powerless. He says: "We are overrun with files ... the weight of the paper has become unbearable" ( Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 131). His complaint about paperwork reflects the failure of a system that drowns in its own rules. Instead of helping people, the system buries their lives in silence. The novel ends with the haunting image: "The River has been diverted. The current no longer knows its path" ( Rachid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 148). This metaphor shows how the revolution has lost its direction. Fanon warned in *The Wretched of The Earth* that after independence, new leaders might copy colonial power structures: "The national bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of the former European settlement" ( Frantz Fanon, *In the Wretched Of the Earth* 1961, p. 122).

Rushdie's *Shame* also criticizes political theatre. General Raza Hyder, who takes over the country, is both ridiculous and dangerous. He gives long speeches about discipline and morality, but he allows violence and chaos. When he says, "No drastic action need be taken either" (Salman Rushdie, *Shame* p. 72), it is meant to calm the public. But behind these words is fear and force. Hyder's power depends on illusions. He uses the language of order to cover up brutality.

Rushdie often uses irony to make his point. He writes: "Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale. Nobody need get upset, or take anything I say too seriously" (Salman Rushdie, *Shame* p. 27). This ironic statement is a way to criticize without being censored. However, it also shows how storytelling itself becomes a way to expose lies. The whole country becomes a stage where power pretends to be real. Hyder's staged authority reflects a regime that governs more through performance than through policy.

Rushdie also introduces Iskander Harappa, another political figure who mixes glamour with corruption. He is charming and stylish, but he ends up in prison, humiliated. This fall shows how quickly power can disappear. Both Harappa and Hyder are based on real Pakistani leaders Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Zia-ul-Haq who fought for power and left behind confusion and pain. As the narrator says, "In our country, power eats its children" (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 172). This line suggests that every leader eventually destroys those who once believed in them.

Hyder's daughter, Sofia Zenobia, becomes a hidden victim of this power system. Her violent transformation symbolizes how the repression practiced at the top of the political pyramid seeps down into private life. While her story is often read as personal, it is also political highlighting how domestic and national spaces reflect each other.

Critics like Homi Bhabha have explained how postcolonial nations use symbols of authority to create what he calls the "nation-space"—a place where rituals of power hide the truth. Bhabha writes, “The nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities, and the displacement of the people” (Homi Bhabha .Nation and Narration, 1990, p. 294).

In both novels, the characters try to enter this space but are blocked. The result is disillusionment. The bureaucratic system promises answers, but delivers silence. The spectacle of power promises change, but delivers control. Furthermore, both novels explore how language and official discourse are used to create a false sense of progress. The speeches of Hyder and the documents in Mimouni offices are full of empty words. As Edward Said writes in *Culture and Imperialism*, “Words can be used to liberate, but also to dominate” (Edward Said, Culture and Imperialism 1993, p. xxv). In these novels, words are more often used to obscure reality. Mimouni illustrates this when a clerk tells Omar: "Your file is still under review ... perhaps in another department" a phrase that represents endless delay and avoidance “ . (Rashid Mimouni, Le Fleuve Détourné, 1983 . p. 123).

Historian Achilles Mbembe adds another dimension to this critique *On The Post-colonial* “Postcolonial authority uses vulgarity and excess to sustain itself” (Achilles Mbembe, 2001, p. 102). This description fits Hyder’s grotesque yet theatrical governance, where official rituals mask a decaying structure of control.

In the end, both *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* show how postcolonial leaders become distant and empty figures. They wear the costume of revolution, but inside is fear, betrayal, and failure. Power becomes a show. Bureaucracy becomes a cage. In addition, the people like Omar in both novels are left searching for justice in a system that has forgotten them.

#### IV - The Absurd and the Meaningless

In both *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*, the idea of absurdity plays a powerful role. The novels show a world where meaning is difficult to find, where events are strange, and where resistance can feel useless but still important. This postmodern theme of absurdity is not only about strange events; it also shows how hard it is to make sense of a world filled with violence, silence, and confusion.

In *Shame*, Salmane Rushdie uses absurdity and irony to criticize society and politics. Many characters die in strange and almost ridiculous ways. For example, one character dies of a very common illness: "Almost certainly died of natural causes... by the genuinely fatal banality of peritonitis" (Salmane Rushdie. *Shame* p. 18). Instead of a heroic or dramatic death, we get something ordinary. However, people still make up rumors and strange stories about it. This shows how people try to find meaning in meaningless events. It also shows how myths and lies are created in society. Resistance here is not direct. It becomes a part of Story, and performance where truth is mixed with fiction.

Rushdie's use of magical realism makes this confusion even stronger. He writes about a country full of rumors, masks, and fake heroes. Characters like Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder become symbols of a fake reality. Everything is performance, and nothing is truly honest. However, in the middle of all this, small acts of resistance still happen. People gossip, writes, and remembers. In this world, even telling a story becomes an act of resistance. As Rushdie says: "Reality is a question of perspective; the further you get from the past, the more concrete and plausible it seems but as you approach the present, it inevitably seems incredible" (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 124).

On the other hand, *Le Fleuve Détourné* takes a more serious and emotional tone. Rachid Mimouni shows the absurdity of life not through humor, but through sorrow and grief. Omar, the narrator, does not fight with weapons or speeches. Instead, he resists by remembering and observing. After losing his son and seeing the trauma in his wife Houria, Omar becomes silent and reflective. At one point, He simply says: “I am Stayed and I heard ” ( Rachid Mimouni, *Le Fleuve Détourné* p. 91). These simple words are powerful. His act of listening becomes his way of not forgetting. He does not take revenge, but he does not look away either. This quiet resistance is full of sadness, but also strength.

In this way, Mimouni shows that resistance can be about staying human in an inhuman world. His characters live in a system where truth is hidden, where pain is ignored. However, by choosing to feel, to remember, and to stay honest, they resist the system. Philosopher Albert Camus, in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, wrote: “The struggle itself toward the heights is enough to fill a man's heart. One must imagine Sisyphus happy” (Albert Camus, *The Myth of Sisyphus* 1942, p. 123). Like Sisyphus, Omar keeps going, even when life or seems pointless.

This kind of absurdity where everything seems broken does not stop people from resisting. In fact, it gives their small actions more meaning. In *Shame*, people resist by telling stories and creating myths. In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, they resist by remembering and refusing to be numb. Both novels show that even in a world full of lies and pain, people still find ways to say no.

Critic, Linda Hutchison explains in her book *The Politics of Postmodernism*, “Postmodern fiction is not about escape from the real world, but about confronting it in new ways” ( Linda Hutchison, 1989, p. 23). Rushdie and Mimouni do exactly this. They do not offer clear

solutions or happy conclusions. Instead, they show how confusing, painful, and absurd life can be, but also how important it is to keep telling the truth, even if it is hard to find.

In the end, *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* teach us that resistance is not always loud or powerful. Sometimes, it is quiet. Sometimes, it is strange. However, in both novels, the characters keep going. They keep speaking, listening, remembering. In addition, in a world full of absurdity, this is a kind of hope.

## **V . Resistance as Ethical Confrontation:**

In *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*, resistance is not always loud or heroic. Sometimes, it is quiet, painful, and deeply ethical. Both Salmane Rushdie and Rachid Mimouni use literature as a tool of resistance, but they do it in very different ways. Rushdie uses magical realism and irony, while Mimouni uses a plain and serious style. Still, both writers show how writing can be an act of resistance especially when it tries to tell the truth.

In *Shame*, Rushdie mixes fantasy with politics to create a strange world that reflects real problems. He uses humor and irony to show the lies of powerful people. His characters often act in exaggerated or absurd ways, but their actions reveal something true about society. Rushdie, says in the book: "Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale. Nobody needs get upset, or take anything I say too seriously" ( Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 27). This quote shows how he hides his serious message inside a story that seems like fiction. However, the message is still clear: behind the fairy tale is a deep criticism of political power, corruption, and violence.

Rushdie's Meta fictional approach when he breaks the narrative and speaks directly to the reader, reminds us that history and fiction are closely connected. He questions the idea of

official history, replacing it with fragmented memories and alternative narratives. This technique helps to break the illusion and make the reader think more critically. According to Homi Bhabha, this kind of writing challenges national myths and fake histories. **In *The Location of Culture***, Bhabha explains that literature can create a "third space" where people can question what they are told and imagine alternative identities ( *Location of Culture* , 1994, p. 36).

Rushdie also uses allegory and satire to resist dominant ideologies. His characters, like Iskander Harappa and Raza Hyder, are fictional versions of real Pakistani leaders. Their flaws vanity, hypocrisy, and cruelty are exaggerated to reveal the dangers of unchecked power. In doing so, Rushdie turns literature into a form of political criticism. He does not offer clear solutions but insists on exposing contradictions. As the narrator says: "Shame, the feeling, is like everything else: live with it for long enough and it becomes part of the furniture". (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 125). This metaphor suggests how normalized political and moral failures have become.

Mimouni takes a very different approach in *Le Fleuve Détourné*. He tells his story in a simple and serious way. There are no jokes, no magic, and no fantasy. His narrator, Omar, speaks in the first person and tells the truth as he sees it. When he talks about his son's death or his wife's trauma, he does not try to make it poetic or beautiful. He just tells it as it is. This honesty is a form of resistance. Mimouni refuses to turn suffering into entertainment. Instead, he offers what we might call a "testimonial ethics." He writes so that others will remember and not forget. , Omar chooses to remember. Philosopher Emmanuel Levinas talks about the ethics of responsibility to the other. To be ethical, he critic: " Is to answer to another person's pain" (Emmanuel Levinas ,p 27 ) . Mimouni novel follows this idea. He writes not to entertain, but to speak for those who cannot speak.

Scholars like **Zahia Smail Salhi** have pointed out that North African literature often serves as a space of remembrance and resistance. According to Salhi, “testimonial literature helps to preserve collective memory and fight against official denial “(Salhi scholar, magazine, 2005). Mimouni novel fits this model. His plain-spoken style gives voice to suffering that is usually ignored. The repetition, the silence, the slow pace all are meant to reflect trauma rather than to dramatize it.

Even though Rushdie and Mimouni have different styles, they both believe that literature can fight against forgetting. Rushdie uses fiction to expose lies and hypocrisies. Mimouni uses truth and memory to make sure victims are not erased. Edward Said , ***In Culture and Imperialism*** . states that : "Stories are at the heart of what explorers and novelists say about strange regions of the world" (Edward Said, *Imperialism* 1993, p. xiii). Both authors challenge these old stories and try to tell new stories that are more honest and more human.

In the end, both *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné* show that resistance is not just about politics. It is also about ethics. It is about how we tell stories, whose voices we listen to, and what we choose to remember. Whether through irony or honesty, fantasy or testimony, Rushdie and Mimouni show that literature can still speak truth in a world full of lies. Their novels offer a way to confront violence not by erasing it, but by facing it with courage and compassion.

## **Conclusion**

Rushdie's *Shame* and Mimouni's *Le Fleuve Détourné* offer complementary visions of resistance. Where Rushdie uses irony, allusion, and allegory, Mimouni turns to realism, grief, and silence. Both expose the corruption of post-independence regimes and the psychological

cost of failed revolutions. Through Fanon's lens, resistance is more than armed struggle; it is an assertion of being, reclamation of voice, and a refusal to forget.

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## Chapter Three: The Novels as National Allegories

Both *Shame* by Salmane Rushdie and *Le Fleuve Détourné* by Rachid Mimouni can be seen as national allegories. This means that the characters and stories in these books stand for bigger issues in their countries Pakistan and Algeria. Instead of telling simple personal stories, the authors use fiction to talk about political problems, broken dreams, and the struggles people face in postcolonial nations.

### I. Allegorical Critique in *Shame*

In *Shame*, Rushdie creates a fictional country that closely resembles Pakistan. He changes the names of cities and characters, but many readers recognize them as representations of real political figures. One important example is General Raza Hyder, who reminds us of General Zia-ul-Haq, a military leader in Pakistan. Through this character, Rushdie shows how politics in the country have become corrupted and violent. The government becomes a place of fear instead of freedom.

Rushdie's writing style mixes fantasy, humor, and serious political criticism. Early in the novel, he tells readers, "Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale. Nobody needs get upset, or take anything I say too seriously" (Salmane Rushdie *Shame* 1982, p. 27). This playful remark establishes a sense of detachment while simultaneously urging the reader to engage in deeper reflection. Although Rushdie presents his narratives as a kind of fairy tale, the conflicts and dilemmas it stages are firmly rooted in historical and political realities.

A central symbol in the novel is Sofia Zinobia. She is born with mental issues and is considered a source of shame for her family. She stays silent most of the time, but inside she

is full of pain and anger. At one point, her silence breaks, and she becomes violent. Rushdie writes, "She turned into a beast of shame. The shame of her father, the shame of her country. She bore it all" (*Shame*, p. 212). Her transformation shows how society's pressure and emotional pain can build up until it explodes. Sufiya Zenobia becomes a symbol of how much the country itself is suffering and how that suffering turns into destruction.

This kind of storytelling is what literary theorist "**Fredric Jameson**" calls a "National allegory." In his article "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," he says that in third-world literature, personal stories are always linked to national problems. According to Jameson, "All third-world texts are necessarily... allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call national allegories" (Jameson, 1986, p. 69). In other words, the life of Sofia Zenobia is not just about her personal pain it also shows the pain of an entire country. Her madness reflects the madness of the political system.

However, not everyone agrees with this. Aijaz Ahmad criticizes Jameson's idea and argues that it is too simple to treat all literature from the Global South in the same way. In his book In Theory *The Wretch of the Earth*, Ahmad says this approach ignores the different histories and styles of writing. He believes that each country and author has unique experiences and literary traditions that cannot be placed into one model. Still, in the case of *Shame*, many readers agree that the story clearly shows the problems Pakistan is facing loss of freedom, military rule, violence, and injustice.

Rushdie uses irony to question power. Even when he is funny, he is pointing at something serious. His narrator says: "I tell stories, not lies; I leave that to politicians" . (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 23). This line shows that the novel is a tool for truth. Politicians may lie,

but fiction can tell emotional and symbolic truths. Rushdie's fiction becomes a way to resist official lies.

The novel also contains scenes of censorship and fear. Iskander Harappa, a political leader based on Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, is thrown into prison and tortured. General Raza Hyder, the military leader, talks about law and order while using violence to control the country. These characters reflect the way real-life leaders use fear to stay in power.

Another key part of *Shame* is the way women are treated. Sofia is suffering, her silence, and her transformation show how women in the country carry the burden of the family and the nation. Rushdie connects national shame with the female body. This is also a political message. The personal pain of women becomes part of the larger story of national struggle.

In conclusion, *Shame* is more than a novel about a few characters. It is a powerful story about a country in crisis. Rushdie uses allegory to show how violence, shame, and silence affect both individuals and nations. By mixing fantasy and politics, he invites readers to reflect on the real history of Pakistan and the dangers of unchecked power.

## **II . Allegory and Disillusionment in *Le Fleuve Détourné***

Just like *Shame*, *Le Fleuve Détourné* by Rachid Mimouni is not just a personal story. It also speaks about a whole country; Algeria. The novel follows Omar, a man who comes back from prison and tries to find out the truth about his missing son. However, as he searches, he faces a wall of silence, confusion, and lies from the government.

The title itself, "The Diverted River," is symbolic. It suggests that something natural and powerful, like a river, has been turned away from its path. This river stands for the revolution in Algeria, which once had strong ideals of justice, freedom, and independence. Now, it seems

lost. Mimouni writes, "The River has been diverted. The current no longer knows its path" (Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 148). This quote shows that the country has lost its direction. What was supposed to bring hope has turned into disappointment.

Omar's journey through the city is like walking through a maze. The government offices he visits are cold and unhelpful. People give him false promises or tell him to come back later. He faces endless paper work, long waits, and strange rules. Mimouni describes it by saying, "everyone did what they wanted, how they wanted, and when they wanted." ( *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 115). This means that every hallway was a maze, and every door led nowhere. It shows how ordinary people are trapped in a system that does not care about them.

The Administrator, one of the powerful characters in the novel, never really helps. When Omar tries to speak with him, a guard stops him: "For a moment, I had hoped to approach him ... But the security guard kept us very far away" ( Rachid Mimouni *Le Fleuve Détourné*, p. 109). This physical distance shows the moral and emotional distance between the rulers and the people. The government appears strong, but it is empty inside.

*Mimouni's* style is very different from Rushdie's. There is no magic or humor here. His tone is serious and sad. He focuses on pain, memory, and silence. The narrator does not try to fight with violence or loud protests. Instead, he says, "I stayed and listened." This quiet act becomes a way of resisting. He refuses to forget. He wants to understand and speak the truth.

**Frantz Fanon** warned that postcolonial governments might copy the ways of their old colonizers. He wrote, "The national bourgeoisie steps into the shoes of the former European settlement" ( Frantz Fanon *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1961, p. 122). In Mimouni's novel, we see this happen. The new government, which was supposed to bring freedom, now acts like the colonial one. It controls people with fear, files, and lies.

In this way, *Le Fleuve Détourné* is a national allegory. Omar's story is also the story of Algeria. His pain shows the pain of a whole country that fought for independence but ended up lost. His resistance is quiet but powerful. It reminds readers that truth and memory are important tools when governments fail to listen.

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## Chapter Four: Magic Realism

### Introduction

In this chapter, we examine how Salmane Rushdie and Rachid Mimouni use the literary device of magic realism in their respective novels *Shame* (1983) and *Le Fleuve Détourné* (1982). Magic realism blends realistic narrative with fantastical elements and is often associated with postcolonial literature. Unlike pure fantasy, magic realism remains grounded in real historical and political contexts, embedding magical events within otherwise realistic worlds. Both authors use this narrative technique to analyze the postcolonial conditions of their countries Pakistan in the case of Rushdie, and Algeria in the case of Mimouni.

#### A. Magic Realism in *Shame*

Salmane Rushdie, one of the most well known postcolonial writers, uses magic realism in *Shame* to explore and criticize the political and cultural realities of Pakistan. The story is set in a fictional country, but the people and events in it are clearly based on real figures like Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and General Zia-ul-Haq. By using fiction, Rushdie is free to push reality to extremes, exposing how ridiculous and harmful power, corruption, and control can be. Early in the book, he says, “Fortunately, however, I am only telling a sort of modern fairy tale. Nobody needs get upset, or take anything I say too seriously” (Salmane Rushdie *Shame*, p. 27). This statement makes it clear that magical and unreal moments are part of the message.

Rushdie uses magical realism to show how blurred the lines are between fantasy and truth in a society full of problems. He shows a country that is old-fashioned and modern, hopeful and broken. This mix of opposites comes across through strange, symbolic scenes. For example, the government in the story seems like a play, full of silly rituals that hide real

cruelty. Magic realism makes these scenes feel even more absurd, drawing attention to the lies and weakness behind the rulers' power.

A powerful example of magic realism is the character Sofia Zinobia. She is seen as her family's and her country's shame. She is born with mental delays and hardly speaks, but inside she holds great pain. This pain becomes something magical: she turns into a violent creature. Rushdie writes, "She turned into a beast of shame. The shame of her father. The shame of her country. She bore it all" (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 212). Her magical form shows how ignored emotions and social pressures can explode in dangerous ways.

Sofia's violent acts like killing animals and people are not described like in a horror story. Instead, they seem dreamlike and distant, almost like myths. She becomes more than a person she is a symbol of how a nation refuses to deal with its problems. Just as Sofia is misunderstood and ignored until she becomes deadly, Pakistan's deep problems are also pushed aside until they cause real damage.

Rushdie also includes strange and ghostly images to add meaning. One of them is a huge, headless man: "Giant, grey and headless man, a figure of dreams, a phantom with one arm lifted in gesture of farewell" (Salman Rushdie *Shame*, p. 305). This could stand for lost leadership or a country that has lost its identity. Such dreamlike pictures make the reader think about the deeper fears and pain the society carries.

Magic realism in *Shame* is more than just a style; it helps criticize male-dominated culture, cruel politics, and false traditions. It brings to light the things people do not want to say or remember. Through this, Rushdie creates a story that is full of layers part politics, part emotions, part history.

Another important aspect of Rushdie's style is the voice of the narrator. The narrator often talks directly to the reader, reminding them that this is a story, not a report. This playful tone adds to the magic, as it shows that the story is made of memory, ideas, and imagination. Rushdie mixes personal stories with the country's problems, showing that people's private pain and public events are closely connected.

Additionally, scholars such as Timothy Brennan (1989) argue that, Rushdie's use of magic realism is not only a literary strategy but also a political one. Brennan notes that *Shame* turns postcolonial trauma into a mythical landscape where history and fantasy merge to challenge the official narratives of the state. Rushdie's narrative tricks invite readers to distrust the smooth surface of national histories and to see the cracks underneath.

In this sense, Rushdie's novel reflects what Homi Bhabha (1994) calls the "Third Space," a zone of negotiation where hybrid identities and contested histories emerge. The mixing of the magical and the real becomes an act of resistance against the rigid binaries of colonizer colonized, traditional/modern, or religious secular. This complexity is embodied in Sofia Zinobia, whose transformation is not only psychological or symbolic but also political. Her silent suffering turns into an uncontrollable force that destabilizes the patriarchal and political structures around her.

Ultimately, Rushdie's *Shame* uses magic realism to reimagine the nation not as a fixed entity but as a constantly shifting and unstable narrative. In doing so, the novel questions the very idea of national identity and memory in postcolonial societies. The magical elements, while surreal, illuminate real historical and emotional truths, making *Shame* a deeply political and ethical work of fiction.

## **B. Magic Realism in *Le Fleuve Détourné***

In *Le Fleuve Détourné*, Rachid Mimouni adopts a more subtle and philosophical approach to magic realism, using it as a tool to explore the shattered hopes and hidden truths of post-independence Algeria. Rather than filling his novel with overtly fantastical scenes, Mimouni blurs the line between reality and illusion through symbolic narrative techniques, surreal images, and psychological depth. His use of magic realism is more inward looking, portraying the erosion of individual identity in the face of a disillusioning political system.

A central figure in the novel is the character "Vingt-Cinq" whose fragmented identity functions as a metaphor for the postcolonial Algerian subject. He is simultaneously a narrator, a victim, and possibly an invention his status keeps shifting, emphasizing the unreliability of truth in a politically manipulated society. Vingt-Cinq's voice blends memory, fantasy, and introspection, echoing the broader confusion between lived experience and ideological fiction. As Redouane (1993) puts it, the power of Mimouni fiction lies not in a faithful reproduction of facts, but in creating a world that feels probable and coherent in its emotional truth.

Much of the novel's action unfolds in settings that seem real but behave strangely. Bureaucratic offices resemble mazes, everyday interactions feel scripted or unreal, and time stretches or contracts based on emotion and memory. This dreamlike texture of the novel mirrors the psychological impact of political oppression. Mimouni builds a literary space in which the protagonist navigates through absurd social systems that are technically real but experienced as nightmarish. According to Bensahnoune, *Le Fleuve Détourné* is "a bitter observation of post-independent Algeria, a brutal reality of a catastrophic socio-political situation, made of buried hopes and violated freedom." (Bensahnoune Abd-el-Kader, 1999).

In this hostile environment, the protagonist's moments of surreal reflection become acts of resistance. He often retreats into a private inner world where he reconnects with his sense of self his "original self" untouched by the ideological pressures of the state. The tension between this personal imagination and the external world of conformity creates the novel's deeper magic. It is not spells or supernatural events, but the idea that literature and memory offer an escape and a form of truth that politics cannot erase.

Mimouni also juxtaposes the rational and the poetic. While political discourse pretends to offer clarity and control, it is shown to be manipulative and hollow. Meanwhile, the narrator's philosophical reflection though more ambiguous offer a deeper kind of honesty. As Najib Redouane explains, fiction becomes the site of what seems true, even when it is not literally factual. This positions magic realism not as escapism but as a form of political critique.

In the final parts of the novel, the narrator even considers suicide, seeing it as a possible escape from a reality that has denied him his individuality. Yet this is not a tragic surrender but a philosophical dilemma, showing the cost of living in a world where both history and the self have been "diverted," like the river of the title. Mimouni magic realism thus functions as a subtle but powerful tool: it layers metaphor, memory, and myth to analyze Algeria has broken promises and the psychological damage of authoritarian rule.

Ultimately, *Le Fleuve Détourné* uses magic realism to explore the conflict between inner truth and political lies. Mimouni invites the reader to question official history and to recognize that imagination, far from being a fantasy, can be a weapon of resistance in a world where reality has been corrupted.

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## V . General Conclusion

Our research has allowed us to discover that both Rashid Mimouni and Salmane Rushdie share the same vision and conception of colonialism. Through our comparative study of *Shame* and *Le Fleuve Détourné*, we have come to the conclusion that the corrupt political power from which the *Indian* and *Algerian* people suffer was not caused only by British and French colonial systems but also by the politicians of the countries and by some ideological beliefs such as religion and family, along with neighbourhood terrorism.

The comparative dissertation also leads to the following conclusion: although Algeria and India have different languages, cultures, and traditions and belong to different geographical areas, the literature developed under these conditions is not so different, especially since these countries share the same historical background. Since their literary works were written in a similar context, Salmane Rushdie and Rashid Mimouni have expressed close visions and attitudes toward colonialism. Both of them condemned its effects. The second conclusion we reached through this comparative dissertation is that the effects of colonialism are the same on native people, no matter the identity of the colonized country.

In the first chapter, by using aspects of *Le Fleuve Détourné* and *Shame*, we showed that *Shame* presented many ways of disillusionment for the protagonists against the patriarchal society. The novel shows how Omar Khayyam and Omar struggle to overcome all the restrictions imposed on them by family and friends. Therefore, the main tool they use is education, which helps them achieve their ambitions and awareness, instead of following gender and racial norms. It is clear that both authors succeeded in creating characters that are independent and able to move from subjugation to resistance and empowerment.

The third conclusion we reached is that the effects of post-colonialism and class struggle are universal themes. The bourgeoisie, who took power by force all over the world, oppressed the working classes. The history of Partition can be understood as a class struggle between those in power and the people. In the same way, Algerian history after independence, as shown by a realist writer like Mimouni, also reflects this same struggle.

In addition, *Le Fleuve Détourné* is a post-independence novel that was written after independence and the resulting from colonialism. It shows clearly the postcolonial moment. The author gives a strong criticism of the irresponsibility of the ruling class. Its story focuses on the moral and political failure of the country and the feeling of a non-productive economy that affects the minds of the new political leaders.

For example, *Shame* deserves to be called a postmodern novel because it contains the key elements of postmodern literature like narrative fragmentation, self-reflection, non-fixed meanings, imaginary framing devices, different worlds, and the loss of reality, magical realism, and historical fiction. The novel does not follow traditional and fixed structures or meanings. Instead, it presents fragmented events and scattered characters. It moves between past and present as period allowing the reader focuses on what happened at different times and places in the lives of the characters. To conclude, our research does not cover all the topics that can be studied in *Le Fleuve Détourné* and *Shame*. We believe this is still a rich and interesting subject that requires study and analysis in the future.

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