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**(Un) Gendering the Postcolonial Indian Nation in Salman Rushdie's *Shame*
(1983) and Anita Desai's *In Custody* (1984)**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's
Degree in Anglophone Literatures and Civilisations**

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Declaration

We hereby declare that this thesis is entirely the result of our investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

June, 2022

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to our beloved families for their support and encouragement not only through this study but also throughout all our educational career. To our friends for their motivation and advice.

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Abstract

The Indian society is considered one of the most patriarchal one. There, the gender inequality is highly practiced. To deal with this issue, a number of Indian, Anglophone writers shed the light on this phenomenon. Each on his way, as some of them reinforce patriarchy and the other are neutral. Salman Rushdie appears at gendering the nation in his novel through his male characters mainly Omar, while Anita Desai takes an ungendered stance by giving same degrees of oppression as well as struggle for both men and women through the characters of Deven and Sarla. Accordingly, relying on the theory of Nira Yuval- Davis' *Gender and Nation*, Anne McClintock's "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family" and Albert Bandura and Key Bussey's "Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation", this paper aims at demonstrating how the two novelists view the issue of gender inequality. Salman Rushdie takes a gendered position as he reinforces the patriarchy over the females by giving his protagonist Omar the power to be imposed on his wife Sufiya and the females around him. However, Anita Desai creates both male and female characters who are both disappointed and hurt in their lives by embodying a married couple Deven and Sarla who share common pain, each on his own.

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General Introduction

The practice of gender inequalities is a highly observable truth. It refers to the unequal treatment of individuals based on their gender. Hence, because of their biological, sexual differences, men occupy a higher position in cultural and social organisations. However, women are confined to domesticity (Weedon 2). Over the years, women struggle to restore their position among the public realm. Yet, the world we are living in still imposes strict discriminations upon the male and female contributions to the formation of the nation. As Anne McClintock claims, women “are represented as the bearers of their nation”, they are “excluded from the national agency” (62).

Many Indian writers explore the issue of gender inequality in their works by examining the themes of socio-cultural issues as well as marital-familial relationships. Among them, writers including Gauri Deshpande, R.K Narayan. In fact, most of Narayan’s novels have women characters not as central ones but often secondary like mothers, wives and sisters. He portrays women as “characters who accept marriage as their fate and are shy as the traditional Indian women should be” (Raghunatha and Gupta 170).

Similarly, the two Indian contemporary writers Salman Rushdie and Anita Desai examine the issue of gender inequalities in their novels. They discuss several themes including family relationships, patriarchy, identity and nationalism. The concept of gender takes a great portion of their works. Rushdie deals with psychological and socio-cultural aspects of life. In addition, Desai aims at demonstrating the resistance discourses both for men and women in India. Hence, this study explores how Rushdie and Desai tend to tackle the issue of gender inequality. It is viewed as the act of social and cultural discrimination between the male and the female.

Salman Rushdie is an Indian Anglophone writer. He is a controversial figure thanks to his treatment of sensitive, religious and political subjects. His first published novel *Grimus* appeared in (1975). His next novel *Midnight's Children* (1981), is a fable about modern India. It won him international recognition and it was adapted into a film in 2012. His fourth novel *The Satanic Verses* took a different reception as it depicts one of the characters as the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his transcription of the Quran in a manner that drew criticism from Muslim community. He won numerous awards for his writings including the Booker prize in 1981.

Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983) combines history, myth, language, politics and religion. It depicts the life of three sisters who share everything to raise their son Omar Khayyam. Omar is ordered to never feel shame. He grows up and becomes a brilliant immunologist. He meets Sufiya Zinobia nicknamed shame. He treats her mental retardation which is caused by a fever in her childhood. Sufiya Zinobia experiences an unending shame which begins at her birth. This shame is turned into a beast that punishes male offenders. The author presents women's shame in a patriarchal society where gender discrimination is highly present.

Anita Desai was born and educated in India. She is an English-Indian novelist. She excels in evoking character through visual images and her published works include adult novels and children's books. She devotes her first novel *Cry the Peacock* (1963) to the subjects of suppression and oppression of Indian women. In addition to *Where Shall We Go this Summer* (1975), *Fire on the Mountain* (1977), the novel *Clear Light of Day* (1980) is considered the author's most successful work. It explores the story of two sisters caught in the misery of Indian life. She also writes short fiction such as *Games at Twilight and Other Stories* (1978). Her works generally reflect her tragic view of life, as she claims that men and women suffer equally in this world (Desai).

Anita Desai's (1984) *In Custody* portrays the story of a disillusioned Indian university teacher Deven Sharma. The novel unfolds mostly from his point of view. Desai devotes her work around Deven's journey into interviewing his idol Urdu poet Nur which ends up in a disaster that eventually takes Deven out of his purposeless life and pushes him to accept his responsibilities. Deven is unhappy in his marriage with his wife Sarla. She, in her turn, is also disillusioned and disappointed in her life that she has no right in choosing it. In her novel, Desai depicts the equal suffering of both men and women in the postcolonial India.

The choice of the topic as the aim of the research is of high significance and importance. Both novels discuss the dilemma of gender. The study is also motivated because and in spite of the fact that the two writers are both contemporary Indians who write in English, they hold different positions as far as gender is concerned. While Salman Rushdie genders the nation in his novel *Shame*, Desai ungenders it in hers *In Custody*. This topic has been chosen because of the great interest in gender equality and national identity as well as the two novelists.

Shame and *In Custody* are both significant and important works of Anglophone literature. Rushdie and Desai, in these novels, explore various issues related to gender, identity and nation. Many criticism and reviews have been conducted on the two novelist's fictional creations since their publication. In fact, several critics and scholars have examined the two novels from multiple perspectives and interpretations.

Zubaidah Shaburidin, in her "Decoding Gender in the Selected Works of Salman Rushdie" (2020) examines the changes in Rushdie's use of language and its effects on gender in his selected novels, *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Satanic Verses*, *The Ground beneath Her Feet* and *The Enchantress of Florence*. Indeed, the scholar argues that "Rushdie's concern about including women's stories in his texts means that he is always experimenting and exploring new ways to articulate gender issues" (Shaburidin 258). In this perspective, she claims that his awareness of the issues of gender as well as the portrayal of women have observably

changed over time (258). However, the critic has not mentioned that Rushdie genders the nation in his novel *Shame* which is the main concern of this present study.

Furthermore, in his article “The Representation of Politics in Salman Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* and *Shame*” (2014), Papai Pal studies how the novels explore the social and political life in Pakistan. The critic argues that the novels combine political, social satire, internal identity struggles and reinterpretation of historical events (Pal 1). In addition, he asserts that the notions of politics are marked through the major male characters whom are a satire manifestation of historical rulers as well as the precise reflection to the historical periods in Pakistan that of the decolonisation and the partition (1). On the contrary to this study that examines the political aspects in Rushdie’s novels, this research showcases how Rushdie genders the nation in his novel *Shame*.

Rajni Bala in her article “Psychological Study of Anita Desai’s Novels” (2017) sheds light on Desai’s focus on the psyche of her characters. The critic asserts that Desai in all her thirteen novels “presents the concepts of psychological conflict, alienation, cultural identity and individuality” (Bala 640). Her first novel *Cry the Peacock* (1963) describes the psychological dilemma of Maya’s inner psyche. The critic argues that Desai centres her narrative on Maya’s remembrance of things past (640). Furthermore, in the novel *In Custody* (1984), she introduces to the readers the struggles of Deven Sharma in interviewing the famous Urdu poet as well as the series of disasters he faces throughout that journey. At the end, he admits his responsibilities, and gains his self-confidence (Bala 642). Although the critic succeeds in examining Desai’s psychological approach in presenting her characters in her novels, this study elaborates on how the same author ungenders her characters in the novel *In Custody*.

Mukesh Kumar Bairva’s article (2020) “Alienation, Identity and the World: An Existentialist Reading of Anita Desai’s Novel *In Custody*” examines the existentialist struggles that face the characters in the novel leading to desolation, boredom, identity clashes as well as

alienation from their family, work and environment. The scholar points out that “the protagonist, Deven, represents the condition of a man whose life is full of anguish and despair” (Bairva 5305). He adds that the majority of characters aspire to find “identity and truth” to escape from a meaningless world to a state of trance and tranquillity (5305). Although this critic succeeds to analyse the issue of alienation and identity in Desai's novel, this study deals with the gender roles and the challenging circumstances of both genders, the male and female characters of *In Custody*.

The above mentioned studies and reviews on Rushdie's *Shame* and Desai's *In Custody* shed light on different issues such as the use of gender in expressing ideas about post-colonialism, political issues, psychological conflict, portrayal of female characters as victims, languages, alienation and existentialist struggles. However, the previous critics have not elaborated on how Rushdie and Desai deal with the issue of gender in their novels. In fact, even though the two writers are contemporary postcolonial Indian novelists, Rushdie genders the nation in his narrative *Shame* as he presents the men as the nation builders and women as their followers. However, Desai ungenders it in hers *In Custody* through portraying men and women equally suffering in the post-colonial India.

This study relies on a number of theories, articles and books to analyse Rushdie's *Shame* and Desai's *In Custody*. It employs Nira Yuval Davis' *Gender and Nation* (1997). The essential argument of this book is that “the construction of nationhood involves specific notions of both manhood and womanhood” (Yuval Davis). Davis examines how gender relations contribute to the reproduction of the nation. The theorist also sheds light in her book on the debates between “citizenship, gender and nationhood” (Yuval Davis).

This research also refers to Anne McClintock's “Family Feuds: Gender Nationalism and the Family” (1993). The article discusses the themes of nationalism, family and gender. According to McClintock “women are represented as the bearers of their nation”, yet, they “are

excluded from the national agency” (62). However, “men represent the progressive agents of national modernity” (92).

Furthermore, it depends on Kay Bussey and Albert Bandura’s (1999) “Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Devolvement and Differentiation”. The article discusses how the “human differentiation on the basis of gender is a fundamental phenomenon that affects virtually every aspect of people’s daily lives” (Bussey and Bandura 676). The critics argue that “gender conceptions and roles” are produced of a wide relationship of social and cultural “influences” (676).

The above theories are applied on Salman Rushdie’s *Shame* and Anita Desai’s *In Custody* in order to analyse how the characters Omar Khayyam and Sufiya Zinobia represent the patriarchal society in *Shame*, while Deven and Sarla portray the common chaotic life of both genders in *In Custody*.

This thesis is divided into three chapters and a conclusion. The first chapter is entitled “The Socio-cultural and Biographical Context”. It discusses in details the representation of gender in post-colonial Indian society and literary narratives. It also demonstrates the relation between the biographies of the novelists and the reasons behind creating these novels.

The second chapter is an analytical one entitled “Gendering the Postcolonial Indian Nation in Salman Rushdie’s *Shame* (1983)”. It is divided into two sections. The first section is devoted to the discussion of Indian patriarchy in relation to Rushdie’s novel. The second one demonstrates how Rushdie genders the nation in his novel. The two sections rely on the theories of Nira Yuval Davis, Anne McClintock, Albert Bandura and Kay Bussey.

The third chapter is entitled “(Un) gendering the Postcolonial Indian Nation in Anita Desai’s *In Custody* (1984)”. It is divided into two sections. The first one sheds light on the patriarchal Indian society in relation to Desai’s novel. The second is devoted to analyse how

Desai ungenders the nation in her novel. Both sections depends on the theories of Yuval Davis and Anne McClintock.

Finally, the conclusion sums up the findings of this study. It demonstrates Rushdie's and Desai's positions towards the issue of gendering the nation in *Shame* and *In Custody*. It explores how Rushdie genders the nation in his novel while Desai ungenders it in hers.

Chapter One

The Socio-cultural and Biographical Context

The first chapter of this thesis is devoted to the representation of gender in the postcolonial Indian society and literary narratives. It also discusses the relation between the biographies of Salman Rushdie and Anita Desai and the reasons behind creating their novels. At last, a brief conclusion serves as a summary to all the discussed points and ideas.

1. The Representation of Gender in the Postcolonial Indian Society

It is widely common that the Indian society is one of the most patriarchal environments in the world. As patriarchy exists in all “aspects of life” (Patowary 85). In fact, the gender gap still exists in India, even though several strategies and procedures were done by the government to stop this phenomenon, as well as encouraging the equality between the sexes (Sumanjeet 139). This means that the Indian authorities are aware of the inequality between the genders which is controlling all fields and domains. Additionally, these discriminations result in a limited access for women into the public sphere including work opportunities as well as professional independence (139).

According to a research prepared by the United Nations on behalf of the United Nations Country Team-India (2015), “Women in India lack economic, political and social empowerment” (Kumar 9). As these women have limited access to the working life, they are excluded from any participation to gain such permissions. Therefore, the ratio of women working in “decent jobs” is low comparing to that of their counterparts the men working in similar ones (Kumar 9). Moreover, women are rarely present in the parliament and they lack the ability of ownership (9), because they are underestimated by the patriarchal dominance and thought to be unqualified to occupy similar positions as men.

Furthermore, the inequality between the genders in India is widely spread both at the level of the household, including “domestic violence”, “preference for son” and “dowry deaths”

(Saryal 49). Inside the houses, be they of the parents or husband, women are exposed to different kinds of violence. Additionally, at the level of society where under-age marriages and “sexual harassment at workplaces”, as well as “societal violence against women” is undeniable (Saryal 51). In addition, Indian women are highly exposed to physical and mental harm throughout their whole lives without any resistance, because they are ignorant of their fundamental civil and constitutional rights (51). According to the above, the Indian abused women are unaware of their rights, therefore they do not make any resistance towards the oppressive treatments they receive and not because they are unable to do so.

In her (2002) research, Radhika Parameswaran discusses that for the middle class Indians, young women are “encouraged to pursue careers and gain success in the public sphere”. However, they are obliged to live strict lives that “denied them emotional independence” (Parameswaran 834). So, even though some middle class families support their girl child to accomplish professional careers, they still do not mean that these young girls will become independent at all. As they are restricted to gain “approval from authority figures” when they intend to accomplish outside movements, they need also to be at home before dark as well as to train for household duties (834). Whether at her parents’ house or her husband’s, she needs to obey their orders on at what time she must be home or what type of home shores she has to do. In fact, from childhood, girls learn that the honour of their families is for them to be modest and obedient in order to win the “marriage market” (834). In the same context, the behaviour of women “movements, clothing and leisure practises” are supervised by their male authorities including fathers, elders and brothers in order to ensure that they do not threaten their reputation because they are to be housewives (Parameswaran 836). As a matter of a fact, all what is related to the woman is dependent to the man, from the beginning of her life, the woman is controlled by the male figures around her.

Additionally, in India the rate of women illiteracy overpasses that of men (Kumar 8), since they do not have similar opportunities as men to go to school. However, the few of the middle class women who are able to read and enjoy fiction prefer Western writings over the Indians. By doing this they escape their patriarchal society where for example, travelling is a “masculine privilege”, hence, they like to read about heroines who are free to travel alone and have their own cars and houses. As a result they feel that they escape their expected future of becoming “dutiful wives and responsible mothers” (Parameswaran 841). These women could not find other ways to go against their abusers only that of distracting their minds and ideas by getting to know how foreign women are living in those luxurious houses and cities, through imagining themselves in such places.

2. The Representation of Gender in Indian Literary Narratives

The Indian literary narratives deal with the gender roles representations. In fact, the main themes that they tackle are marriage and motherhood (Lisa Lau 272). In this context, Lisa Lau asserts that both marriage and motherhood, for a long time, “defined Indian women’s roles and identities” (272). In India, marriage is very sacred as it is the ultimate answer on whether the woman is virtuous and decent or not. Furthermore, some of the South Asian women who choose to write in English decide to speak about the “urban, middle class, *married* (sic) women” (275). However, others including Manju Kapur, Anita Nair and many more deal with “the contemporary *single* (sic) career woman” (Lau 275). These contemporary Indian women writers concentrate on the struggles and challenges that face the young women in the search for “the suitable job” they acquire to pursue (275). In this regard, the female writers are showing an example of resistance toward the patriarchy since they chose to depict the harsh race in which young women are competing to obtain a job to ensure their selves better lives. Nevertheless, they are seen as unqualified and are being fought by the society.

In the same context, it is true that in India, there is a category of women who prefer the life of housekeeping and being the caretakers of their families. However, it exists a different one of young Indian women who are willing to choose the life of pursuing a professional career as well as ensuring financial independence even at the level of their parents' custody (Lau 275). They live in a patriarchal world where the public sphere is limited only to men, in addition to the cruel competition as well as discriminations from the society. These poor young women who do not come from a wealthy family and do not have any connexions, find it hard to gain as well as ensure a suitable job (275). Since the Indian society is known for its corrupted political system, to gain a job with just their educational degrees and scores is far away from happening. If these women do not have money to bribe the employers or their parents lack public relations, they will struggle to get their professional independence.

As a matter of a fact, the problems that these "young, single, middle class, working Indian women" encounter throughout the journey of becoming professionally and financially independent, according to Lisa Lau, are "societal disapproval" such the case of Moyna, the fictional character of Anita Desai's *The Rooftop Dweller* (2000). Moreover, the unbreakable oppression of "women's autonomy and identity" by their families. This is depicted by Anita Nair in her (2002) novel *Ladies Coupe* through the life struggles of Akhila. Additionally, Manju Kapur portrays the problems of lack of appreciation and underestimation of the work of women by their families as well as the repetitive reiteration of the arranged marriage, under the story of Nisha in her (2006) novel *Home* (Lisa Lau 282). In these novels, the Indian women writers portray their female characters as the protagonist of their lives in addition to all the difficulties they face whether from their families or the society they come from which is the male dominant Indian one.

For centuries, the males dominate not only the social and public sphere but also literature, in which the females' contributions to the literary field are strictly limited. Thus, the

depiction of women in literature produced by men is biased as most of the female characters are always marginalized; a well-known example is Shakespeare's play *Macbeth* (1606) as he portrays the wife of Macbeth as an evil and seductive lady that pushes him to commit horrible crimes. Other male narratives regard the female as a weak creature; her only duty is taking care of her husband and family while the male is the dominator. Pundir and Singh shed the light on the male's vision and sentiment towards the feminine sex in Oscar Wilde's novella *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) in which he describes women as a decorative sex "[m]y dear boy, no woman is genius. Women are a decorative sex. They never have anything to say, but they say it charmingly. Women represent the triumph of matter over mind, just as men represent the triumph of mind over morals" (51, see 137).

The female characters in the Indian male narrative are portrayed as "a property to their husbands" (Pundir and Singh 137) and mothers who are confined to the domestic sphere (peter 1). Therefore, they are passive characters, their only duty is taking care of their family. R. K. Narayan is one of the greatest Anglophone novelists who has several novels that examine contemporary social issues such as *Mr. Sampath* (1949), *The Guide* (1958), *The Vendor of Sweets* (1967)...etc. Narayan portrays in his novels and short stories multiple kinds of Indian females. In *Swami and Friends* (1987), he examines the statue of women in which they are regarded as wives, daughters, daughters-in-law and servants with fixed roles and stereotyped traditional image. *The Guide* (1958) is another novel written by Narayan, where the heroine Rosie represents the character and the soul of the ideal traditional woman. She is a daughter of a dancer, which provokes her to feel ashamed and give her a low cast. Marko was not her first choice but she marries him because of his social outstanding, she does, however, portrays the character of a typical Indian lady (Pundir and Singh 140). Furthermore, Mulk Raj Anand is an Indian "Marxist author, who was influenced by Gandhi to some extent, dealt with the issues of downtrodden in his works" (Kumari 1). He is a novelist known for writing about the weaker

class. He raises special attention to the issue of sufferance of woman in the patriarchal society, marriage and the domestic violence in the Indian family. In his novels, he portrays the female characters deprived from their rights.

Actually, the gender roles phenomenon touches all categories of the society. The depiction of women in the literature destined to children shapes their understanding and perception of gender behaviours as well as portrayals. In fact, all types of educational and entertainment literature for children in India portray a “false image” about women whether inside the household or in the society and spread patriarchal norms that can easily be planted in the child's mind (Sucheta Pramod Shinde 233). In this context, it is seen that the Indian media and literary works which are supposed to be educational for the children is on their turn still depicting the wrong, male dominant, submissive position of women in India. In spite of the wide awareness about women's struggles and discrimination, it still exists a remarkable stereotyped depiction of women in the children's media. Women's portrayal is highly inadequate as they are represented as “submissive mothers of their children, efficient housekeepers” exactly how men wish them to be (Shinde 234). If the men want the women to remain under their control, they insist on depicting them as unqualified, weak and vulnerable. In addition, women characters in both printed and electronic media have seldom dialogues or script to utter and are always submissive to the male heroes (241). They are, therefore, speechless as in real life similarly how the children see their mothers and sisters at home, always silent and obedient to their male authorities. As a result, the child will grow older with the idea that he needs to show more dominance and oppression toward the females around him.

3. The Relation Between Patriarchy and the Novelists

Ahmed Salman Rushdie is a British-American author, who wrote various literary works. His novels represent “an uncomfortable meeting place of patriarchal and anti-patriarchal sentiments” (Shaburidin 2). He was born in Mumbai, two months before the partition of India

into two separate nations, India for the Hindus, and the new Muslim country of Pakistan. Rushdie grew up in a well-to-do Muslim household. He received a well education and graduated from the University of Oxford in 1968. He gained his fame in India thanks to his successful and controversy novels and won several awards. As his works shed the light on “the damaged and questionable concept of home and how it can impact the gender dynamics and relationships of family unit, the community and the individual” (Shaburdin 16). His third novel *Shame* (1983) examines sensitive religious and political issues and brings light to the deep Pakistani society. Rushdie’s *Shame* is published for the following reasons. First, he attempts to highlight the status of gender in Indian society with regard to its beliefs, religions, traditions and costumes. Second, through his fictional characters, Rushdie shows “the struggles of women against behaviors and traditions that offend them” (Bendjemoui 43). In fact, the story of Sufiya Zinobia is a fantasy about a female rebellion against the dominant male. While the male characters are presented as rulers, authorial, dominators and hold more power in the household as well as in society. As a result, many studies and researches “have identified the ambiguity and ambivalence in Rushdie’s female characters” (Shabudin 13).

Anita Desai is one of the major Indian Anglophone writers. She is considered as a postcolonial feminist author as her keen observation of the society she comes from allows her to grasp the deep psyche and traditions of her people, to produce outstanding literary pieces. Particularly, she explores the deep psyche of her characters especially the females “[s]he writes about sensitive women in insensitive world” (Aarthilaximi 115). Anita Desai was born to a German mother and Bengali father. She stated that she was able to experience India both as an insider and an outsider because of her mother's European roots. As far as literature is concern, her heroines “are exceptional women who find themselves trapped in situations over which they have no control and for whom the tradition-bound, patriarchal family and society manifests as the world of absurdity (Ranjita Pati 15). In this regard, the first reason behind Desai’s writing *In Custody* is revealing the struggles of people of her society in which they want “to deviate from the role

assigned to them by the milieu” (Singh 3), as well as breaking the traditional patriarchal image that women are culturally and emotionally depended to man.

In her short article “A Secret Connivance” (1990), Anita Desai states that although India won her independence from colonial power in 1947, oppression still exist in connivance in the society (Chakravarty 75). She examines the domestic disharmony in the traditional Indian family and the sufferance of women. The female characters in her multiple novels similarly to Virginia Woolf’s famous work *A Room of One’s Own* (1929), “search for an independent identity and place call their own, a place safe from patriarchal intervention and male domination” (Batts 7). Even though Desai depicts the actual state of the women in India, she urges her female characters to adopt any kind of resistance to the male domination. However, her latest novel *In Custody* is clearly about both men and women. As the story include the Indian couple Deven and Sarla, these partners are unhappy with each other, nevertheless they do not make any effort to improve that. “There is no communication between the husband and wife” (Sabzar Ahmad Chopan 160) and Desai argues that the institution of marriage is like being in police custody “[b]eing in marriage is like being in jail” (159).

In addition, through her novel Desai highlights the changes in the culture after the partition of India. She blends historical, realistic elements with fictional events in attempt to examine the Hindu-Urdu conflict of the 1999’s. The Urdu is considered as a sophisticated language of intellectual people and the cultural legacy of India during the postcolonial period. It arises from the mingling of different languages of people who came from different parts of the world among them Arabs, Persians and Turk. It has mainly been connected to Muslims in spite the fact that it was spoken all over India with all its diversities. In this regard, Desai intends to examine the question of culture and languages historically, politically and ideologically in India, in addition to the depiction of the tragedy of the decay of Urdu language by the Indian government that has abandoned it. In fact, on the 14th of September 1949, Hindi was adopted

as the official language of India. To sum up, Desai's *In Custody* demonstrates women in the patriarchal society as well as the chaotic situation in India after the partition that affected both genders the man and the women. In addition, to the examination the conflict of languages.

By the end of this chapter, detailed ideas are provided about the representation of gender and how women are portrayed in the patriarchal, post-colonial Indian society as well as literary narratives. Furthermore, this chapter clearly explains how the biographies of the authors Salman Rushdie and Anita Desai relate to the creation of these novels.

Chapter Two

Gendering the Postcolonial Indian Nation in Salman Rushdie's *Shame* (1983)

This chapter delves into the analysis of Salman Rushdie's *Shame*, relying on the Western theories of Nira-Yuval Davis' *Gender and the Nation*, Anne McClintock's "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and Family", and Albert Bandura and Key Bussey's "Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation". It emphasises in that regard the relation between the Indian patriarchy and *Shame*. Besides this chapter illustrates the ways Rushdie genders the nation in his novel through his two characters Omar Khayyam and SufiyaZinobia.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section "The Postcolonial Indian Patriarchy in *Shame*" deals with the aspects of patriarchy that are implicated upon the female characters in the novel. It is intended to reflect Rushdie's portraying of these characters in the light of the theory of Nira-Yuval Davis' the role of women as the biological reproducers of the nation and how they are excluded from the public arena, and McClintock's discussion on the inequality between individuals in a nation where women do not possess the same rights and resources as men. Rushdie reinforces the patriarchal prejudices through his male characters Raza, Isky and mainly Omar Khayyam, while he diminishes the contributions of the females through his characters Bilquis, Naveed, the Shakil sisters and especially Sufiya Zinobia. The second section shows how Rushdie genders the nation focusing on the ways that Omar, the main character, imposes his masculine strength and power over his females while Sufiya is illustrated as a monstrous unworthy character. The analysis of this section relies on Bandura and Bussey's theory that claims that the environmental and social influences shapes the creation of individual's behaviours and attitudes.

1. The Postcolonial Indian Patriarchy in *SHAME*

Nira-Yuval Davis argues that women are the biological reproducers of the nation (ch.1). Their sole role is the production of the nation as they bear children and raise them to be participants in the formation of the nation. In this context, Davis discusses how the society views women as only biologically producers of the members of the nation as they hold the position of mothers and caretakers inside their houses without being indulged in any other occupation. This statement can be seen in the character of Sufiya. In fact, Rushdie presents the character of Sufiya Zinobia as a woman incapable of acquiring the ability of bearing children to her husband, in spite of her mental retardation, she is conscious that women should give men babies “a husband is for babies, but babies-aren't-for-you” (Rushdie 215). Seen from this angle, growing up in a society that imposes and implants gendered conceptions which limit the production of the nation to women denying any other kind of female contribution that of professional or educational aspects, and with no doubt who is incapable of such responsibility is considered unworthy.

In fact, Rushdie allows Omar Khayyam to have affairs with Sufiya's keeper Shahbanou ayah inside her very house. As if it is a legitimate right that a man needs “so three times is at least two too many” (Rushdie 211). Omar admits that he as a man has all the right to satisfy his sexual needs (128). Seen from this perspective, Rushdie gives authority to his Omar to live extramarital affairs as a compromise. According to Zubaidah Shaburidin “Sufiya is arguably represented ambiguously” (87). Rushdie embodies the treatment of her husband as a trivial deed that women can simply face with no account on how they will feel and how much hurt it can cause for their mental as well as physical health. Moreover, and even though Omar grows in an affectionate and loving house , he negates the care and admiration he receives from his mothers as he leaves them behind while following his dreams and taking off their responsibility from his mind by just sending them money without asking about them “ his money has paid for his

absence” (Rushdie 127) . Omar appears to be a selfish man as he ends up by hating his very mothers who have protected him from the wooded insults he is intended to face from the outside world as he calls them “ the old witches” (56) . Furthermore, the limitation of the production of nation to women is also seen through the mother of Sufiya, Bilquis as she is incapable of birthing a male child for her husband, eventually she lives with the disappointment and shame that she is the reason behind her husband’s failure to transmit his political fame throughout the future generations of their family “the internal injury which made sons impossible” (119). Rushdie reinforces the patriarchal prejudices by creating a narrative that is full of applications of oppressive attitudes towards women. Talif et al. state that Omar Khayyam is born to “a merciless community” and as a result he experiences discrimination (18). In the story, Omar had occupied an authoritative position over his females and the people around him. Rushdie had created in him a man who represents the superiority in the postcolonial nation.

Davis argues further that women are excluded from “the public political sphere” (ch.1). As it is confined to men according to the nationalist discourses. This statement indicates that women are eliminated from the public field, particularly the political domain. This can be related to the novel as the most powerful and higher positions in the nation are held by male agents, the leaders are men, the soldiers are men, and in fact, Omar Khayyam occupies a remarkable status as an intellectual successful immunologist, the dream job that he quits his childhood house as well as hometown for, additionally Omar takes advantage of his capacity of hypnosis to exploit women for his sexual desire , Iskandar and he indulge in different sexual relations with women using “his flirtatious offers of hypnosis”, justifying himself by the excuse that claims that it is impossible to force someone to do something without their will (Rushdie 128). According to Tara Prasad Adhikari “all the women characters [in Rushdie’s work], including the protagonist, are introduced and discussed from the perspective of male characters. This is the world that a male writer has created in order to gratify male ego” (1), indeed Rushdie

showcases that the female characters are fairly expressed from his point of view. As the women in the story support and accept the patriarchal norms. Bilquis and Naveed Hyder keep on insulting and accusing Sufiya as being the family's shame "insults... rained on her instead" (Rushdie 121). Moreover, the Shabanou ayah accepts to have a sexual relation with Omar encouraging him to cheat on his wife under the excuse that "men are only men" (211). Additionally, the mothers of Omar grow in a house of a dictator father whom he imposes strict and abusive attitudes on them "[t]he three girls had been kept inside that labyrinthine mansion until his dying day" (13). However, they eventually end up by raising a boy in such a spoiled way that leads him to be a future misogynistic man. According to Ananya Kanai Shah, "[h]e [Omar] seems to lack all moral understanding of decency, manners, and societal conventions". He grows up with an absence of social interactions skills only that of what his mothers teach him, he ends up by adopting the violent, aggressive ones to be practices upon his surroundings.

Following the above discussion that women have no right and saying in the public domains. Omar adheres to this idea and as an experimenting object he performs his studies and tests on the psychosomatic case of Sufiya Zinobia under the reasons of being interested and caring for her health "Omar Khayyam devotes himself... to the case of the simpleton girl" (Rushdie 142). This case brings him wide recognition in the medical field. Conversely, the females in the novel are entirely excluded from the public realm. The wives of the two famous political leaders Isky and Raza are pushed into the shadows as Zubaidah Shaburdin states in her dissertation "women are treated as second-class citizens" (87). Rushdie creates peripheral females in his novel as the story folds mainly around the males. Additionally, Sufiya Zinobia is seen as a weak, unworthy wife of such a husband "[y]ou. Thing...who would marry you with that hair? Even if you had a brain" (Rushdie 136). Sufiya is blamed for her mental retardation and in fact Rushdie embodies in her character the worthiness of such a woman to be a wife. She is exposed to a multiple range of insults "idiot" (120), "that birdbrain, that mouse" (101). The

above mentioned analysis proves that Rushdie embodies the patriarchal norms by oppressing the character of Sufiya in the novel. Talif et al. believe that the character of Omar is considered as a silenced voice in the narrative (18). In the story, Omar had been the representation of the ambitious man who had longed for success and who had fulfilled what no one else had.

In this context and according to Anne McClintock, there is no nation in the world that gives men and women “the same access to the rights and resources of the nation-states” (61). In this regard, McClintock assures that women do not possess the same opportunities as men in the building of the nation. In *Shame*, Rushdie presents the males as the main characters of the novel. Raza Hyder who is “the future strong-man of the nation” (Rushdie 89) is defeated because he has got a girl instead of a boy as it is believed that such a man deserves an honourable male heir. In this perspective, Rushdie believes that only boys have the right to inherit their fathers wealth and fame which means that Sufiya is not the intended child wanted for the family. Rushdie, according to Rebekah Reilly, follows a gendered subjection of his characters (4). It is seen that Rushdie takes a gendered side toward the male figures in his narrative and gives them the opportunity to acquire their total rights, with neglecting those of the females.

Furthermore, Rushdie creates all male characters as ambitious people who long for political fame as well as higher status in the nation including Iskandar Harappa, Raza Hyder and Omar Khayyam. While on the other hand, he creates females that their sole interest in life is to have a husband and to satisfy his needs as Bilquis dreams of becoming a queen from childhood (Rushdie 60) the thing that is far from happening in such an environment. Besides after marrying Raza, she becomes disappointed for giving birth to a girl first. In addition Naveed keeps on thinking how she can marry a rich man “he's famous, he's rich” (155), noticeably Rushdie asserts that this character only thinks of material recognition not of pursuing an educational as well as professional career. Moreover, the Shakil sisters “had never received a proper education” (36). They are the mothers of a great doctor yet they appear to be illiterate.

This statement best illustrates how Rushdie degrades women in his novel as Tara Prasad Adhikari puts it in words “*Shame* also portrays women very negatively” (3). Women in the novel are the illiterate, vague people who are not capable of rational behaviours. Sufiya is a mentally disabled character who is considered “her parents’ burden” (Rushdie 121), hence it is seen that Rushdie’s intention to illustrate women in such a trivial manner reinforces his patriarchal beliefs.

2. A Gendered Postcolonial Indian Nation

According to Bandura and Bussey’s “Social Cognitive Theory of Gender Development and Differentiation”, children adopt and acquire the various gender behaviours from the environment surrounding them and specifically from their parents (685). In this regard Bandura and Bussey explain how the familial and social environment influence the shaping of children’s behaviour as well as personality, from childhood the children observe their surroundings and they end up by imitating and adhering to the various attitudes and behaviours they got in touch with. As a matter of a fact, the case of Omar Khayyam best illustrates this phenomenon. He grows up in a household where he is treated preferably in addition of being a son of three mothers whom they restricted to never “feel the forbidden emotion of shame” (Rushdie 38). In addition of banning him to be modest or shy of anything in the world as they overprotect him and make all his wishes come true, at first they approve to let him step outside their mansion and they let him pursue his dream of becoming a great immunologist.

As a result, Omar becomes an arrogant and a playboy adult who does not have neither respect nor affection toward other people. In fact, it is noticeable that he has used to gain everything he admires, as “his obsession with Sufiya” (Rushdie 144) makes him mischievous enough to possess her as a wife in spite of her mental condition by justifying himself of being in love with her, and the fact that she is underage comparing to him “a man fully thirty-one year her senior... older than her own father” (197). Talif et al. find that “Omar becomes hegemonic

over his wife” (19). He believes that he has the right to control her as he possesses the needed knowledge as well as power to do so. In contrast, Rushdie creates Sufiya Zinobia as a girl who is born the wrong sex “the first should be a boy” (111) as she is supposed to have come a boy. So to speak, from her birth, Sufiya is treated oppressively and discriminatory because she is supposed to be the first male child for the Hyders. In fact, both her father and mother keep on blaming her for the shame she brought to the family. Her father Raza Hyder feels defeated after knowing that he cannot deliver a boy to inherit his fame. As a result the poor Sufiya ends up by experiencing all kinds of shame and mental mistreatment from her earliest childhood which eventually leads her into deep pain and struggles and finally turns her into a beast “[h]ow do you change into something? The bad, wrong words and feelings sharper and more painful”(215). As Zubaidah Shaburidin asserts that “this bestial construction of Sufiya reinforces patriarchal attitudes towards women” (90). Rushdie personifies Sufiya as a creature which threatens the members of the nation and therefore the males need to be aware of. From the above analysis, it is noticeable that Rushdie presents Omar Khayyam as a man who has the right to have the ability as well as the power to be imposed over women as a support to the patriarchal attitudes. Rebekah Reilly asserts that Omar marries Sufiya out of good intentions, however, his actual will is to exert control over her (1). It is seen that Rushdie gives the reinforcement to Omar’s attitudes by creating in him the patriarchal practises of the postcolonial society.

Bandura and Bussey also argues that men “denigrate femininity in an attempt to establish their own separateness and individuation” (677). In this regard, the statement is discussing how men by nature diminish femininity as a manifestation to prove themselves as valuable and worthy individuals. In the novel, we can relate this claim to the character of Omar Khayyam. As a matter of a fact, Omar holds the authority as well as the right to imprison and hypnotise Sufiya as an attempt to protect the world from her threat as she transforms into a

beast against her will, because of all the wooded treatments in which the surrounding events caused her. Hence, she is kept constrained in a cold room “they wrapped her in a carpet” (236), besides being forced to remain asleep “was to be kept unconscious” (236). As Tim Haywood finds that Omar “uses his shameless upbringing as a means of justifying his actions” (10). This protagonist holds a sort of excuse for his behaviours, as the narrator asserts that he has not received a proper childhood.

Rushdie enables Omar to treat his woman such barbaric way as he is the hero of their story who is struggling to insure the safety of the nation, in addition he makes him the victim as he becomes worried and afraid of the fact that she will haunt him “where is she... will she come now...?” (Rushdie 261). It is observable that he intends to shed the light on the courageous contributions of Omar as the protector of the nation. He forcefully keeps searching for Sufiya after she escapes her prison attempting to capture her, he in fact “[becomes], a familial, eccentric figure at the bus depot” (253) as a way of heroic acts that men are instinctively up for. On the other hand, Rushdie embodies Sufiya after becoming a beast as a naturally savage creature which seeks to kill “for the love of killing, or to satisfy some hideous need” (260). She is seen as the monster who longs for revenge from the husband and father in addition to terrifying the citizens and spread the disorder in the land (253). Shadan Jafri finds that Sufiya glorifies the process of converting her anger into a sort of power to be used to challenge “the male-oriented customs” (58). By contrast, Rushdie had personified Sufiya as no less than a terror that had menaced the world and whom Omar had had the absolute rights to capture. Additionally, Sufiya had used to imagine her father’s smile at each time she had tried to distract her mind from the bad things happening to her. Hence, she by no mean had intended to take revenge over her father as Rushdie had stated in the novel that “his daughter was coming for him” (Rushdie 260). According to the aforementioned discussion of the ways Rushdie personified both Omar and Sufiya in the novel, as Omar being the good-hearted man who seeks

the best for the nation, while Sufiya as the savage creature who needs to be aware of. Rushdie here follows a gendered stance in his novel.

Hence, it is through glorifying the male contributions that Salman Rushdie genders the nation in his novel. He allows his protagonist Omar to have extramarital affairs as well as imposing physical and mental power over his wife Sufiya. On the other hand, Rushdie portrays the female characters as unworthy, irrational and particularly as a threat, for the case of Sufiya Zinobia.

To conclude, Salman Rushdie embodies the patriarchal prejudices of the post-colonial Indian society in his novel *Shame*. He seems to be reinforcing these dominative attitudes by empowering his male characters and conversely imposing oppressive behaviours over the females mainly the character of Sufiya Zinobia.

Chapter Three

(Un) Gendering the Postcolonial Indian Nation in Anita Desai's *In*

Custody (1984)

The last chapter of this thesis attempts to analyse Anita Desai's *In Custody* in the light of the theories of Nira Yuval-Davis' *Gender and Nation*, and Anne McClintock's "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family". This chapter discusses how the patriarchal postcolonial Indian society relates to Desai's novel. It also highlights the ways in which Desai (un) genders the postcolonial nation in her narrative.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section "Resisting Patriarchy in the Postcolonial India" focuses on the domination of the patriarchal cultures and traditions over the lives of the characters. This section demonstrates Desai's depiction of these characters relying on the theory of Yuval-Davis which explains how the nationalist discourses determine the rights and duties of men and women in life. In addition to Anne McClintock's theory in which she discusses how the nations are figured through an iconography of domestic space. Through the character Sarla, Desai illustrates the injustice and the oppression of women who are supposed to obey the expectations of their society and to adhere to the hierarchy of the family in the patriarchal Indian life. Diversely, the male struggle is represented through the character of Sarla's husband Deven who represents the male figure who imposes power over his female and who undergoes numerous dilemmas. The second section is entitled "The Postcolonial Indian Nation is Ungendered" in which she creates both male and female characters, Deven who goes through a series of disappointments and segregations in addition to Sarla as a silent, obedient woman in the postcolonial Indian society. The section relies on Anne McClintock's theory that claims that social differences are invented through historical and conventional attitudes. Additionally to Yuval-Davis' theory in which she discusses the reasons after prioritising the call for equal liberation over the women's by the third world feminists. Moreover, this section also relies on Yuval-Davis' theory of the obligation of sacrificing and defending one's own country in order to be good citizen.

1. Resisting Patriarchy in the Postcolonial India

Davis argues that the rights and duties of both men and women are determined by various nationalist projects and processes (ch.1). In this context, Davis discusses how the responsibilities and rights of men and women are related and associated to the norms in which the nationalist discourses have set. In fact, we can relate this statement to the novel as following. The male characters, mainly Deven, are assigned by the nationalist norms to be the responsible for the financial matters of the family. Deven struggles to ensure his small family a decent life “it is my living... I am a married man, a family man” (Desai 39). Furthermore, both man and women in the Indian society have no right in choosing their life partner. Sarla is not Deven’s choice as she is an acquaintance of his family and therefore he is not hers. Throughout this illustration, it is seen that the society sets the rules for the citizens to follow and by no chance can these characters refuse to adhere to them. Indeed in the novel, Deven does not share Sarla his future dreams and plans as he cannot identify with her personality. Sarla dreams of the life of magazines’ women but her actual life gets her disappointed as she cannot possess any of that dream (68). Sandhya Rani believes that Deven is defeated in all aspects of life, besides being unhappy in his marriage, his isolated lifeless town increases his sufferance and denies him any opportunity to progress “he feels himself placed in a cage” (75). Desai had represented the same disappointment in Deven’s personality in his partner Sarla, as she had gone through a tiring life that had dismantled her any chance of improving herself.

Deven, on the other hand, acquires for a professional career as an Urdu poet in spite of his temporal position as Hindi lecturer. Sabzar Ahmad Chopan puts it into word that Desai puts the idea of “being in marriage is like being in the police custody” (159). Desai finds that marriage is like a trap of people’s dreams and aspirations. Furthermore, according to Davis’ claim, women’s duty in the nation is limited to raising the children. Sarla is the only responsible for their child. In fact, she thinks that if she leaves herself and gives up to the tiredness of life

like her husband does, who will take care of their child. It is seen that if women give up their duty, the life of the children is threatened. The men will only stick to their financial duty with no interference in the caring of the children (139). This shows how people are differentiated in the society, mainly men and women.

On the contrary to Rushdie and how he gives his males the right to choose their way of fulfilling their dreams and wants, Desai presents both of her male and female characters as equally dismantled of their life aspirations and choices. In addition, they are constrained with the social norms imposed on both of them. Desai illustrates the sufferance of her men and women in the postcolonial society that restrict hard attitudes over people with taking away all rights of resistance.

Furthermore, Anne McClintock argues that “nations are frequently figured through the iconography of familial and domestic space” (63). In this statement, McClintock offers a significance to the organisation of the family members. Relating this statement to *In Custody*, we can speak about how she illustrates the characters living in a society that forces them to stick to a fixed principle which is following and respecting the order of the family institution. Although, the protagonist Deven, is a man who endures painful struggles in his life, he is still the head of the house and the ruler of his family, the ruler over his wife Sarla. Hence, the truth why Deven hides his weaknesses, worries and failures from his wife is to save the image of the strong man of the family “[h]ow else could he tell her he shared all her disappointments and woe? ... It would have permanently undermined his position of power over her” (Desai 214). Furthermore, Desai embodies in Sarla the women that accepts this order in spite of being under domination and being fully aware of his unproductiveness, she does not interfere in his granted position because he is the man of the house. She just speaks herself about trivial matters like when he does not answer her back or just keep silence. Smt. Ranjita Pati states that “a short absence from home at her parental house makes her understand the value of compromise and

acceptance” (343). As a matter of a fact, Desai presents in her novel the condition of women in the patriarchal society in which women are pushed by the circumstances to accept their lives and some of them like Sarla, they end up by adopting a certain acceptance for that, which enables them to live.

Rushdie makes Omar the absolute authoritative figure in the story while Sufiya is the weak and passive wife. However, Desai introduces Deven as a devastated man who is forced by the society to show a strong personality to follow the patriarchal postcolonial India. Furthermore, she illustrates how Sarla needs to conform to the same norms that forces her to accept the domestic order which puts her under her husband’s custody. Desai is opposing Rushdie by holding an ungendered position in presenting the life hardships of both man and women, without prioritising one over the other.

2. The Postcolonial Indian Nation is (Un) Gendered

Anne McClintock argues that “nations are not simply phantasmagoria of the mind, but are historical and institutional practices through which social difference is invented and performed” (61). In this statement, McClintock believes that the inequalities and differences between the members of the nation and mainly as this study is about gender, discriminations between males and females are shaped by historical as well as conventional attitudes. We can relate this discussion to the novel by speaking about the different norms and attitudes that obliged the characters to behave in an acceptable manner for the society. Deven is discriminated and abused by his friend Murad. He occupies a position of the head of a literature magazine. While Deven is just a lecturer at a local college. Besides, Deven is insulted because he seems like a villager who is unsuitable for the city lifestyle “[b]etter act like a city dweller if you want to work for my paper” (Desai 27). From the above, it is seen that Deven lives in a society that differentiates people based on their status as well as backgrounds. In addition, Sarla is seen as a character who is living in her own world. She feels disappointed because as being forced to

adhere to the nationalist and social norms, she finds herself empty. Sarla is aware that she cannot change her lifestyle, so she does not even bother herself to try. “Sarla never lifted her voice in his presence-countless generations of Hindu womanhood behind her stood in her way, preventing her from displaying open rebellion” (158). It is known that women should not rebel nor argue with their husbands, they are destined to be obedient and the few women who could, they only protest in their “own domain” (158) as the case for Sarla. In this matter, Arburim Iseni et al. find that Desai portrays women as individuals who are lost and feel unable “to cope with the patriarchy” (649). Furthermore, they assert that Desai deals with the matter of unhappy marriage as a sorrowful impact for women (650). In the novel, Desai highlights the problems caused by the social norms and attitudes that lead people to undergo serious as well as unavoidable issues such as being obliged to live an unpleasant, hurtful relationship between a man and a woman who do not have anything in common. Eventually it leads them to live a vague life plus having a child without being able to ensure a safe environment “they never listened” (Desai 72). It is observable that they do not provide their child the support as well as approval he needs as they lack it in their lives. Desai portrays the effect of these problems on men and women in the postcolonial society.

Additionally, Yuval Davis claims that during the 1980s Third World feminists find it hard to call “for women’s liberation” when in fact, “their menfolk are oppressed” (ch.6). In the above words, Davis argues that the feminists of the Third World countries priorities their call for equal liberation over just women’s. In her novel, Desai adheres to this claims as she believes that men are as suppressed and discriminated as women, they both hold equal positions in the postcolonial society. She portrays the character of Deven as a disillusioned man who fails to be an Urdu poet and a good father for his son. He cannot afford to provide him with the needed elements for a good life “he was ruined” (Desai 214). Furthermore, Desai presents Deven as a man who always faces various insults and disrespect from other figures surrounding him. Murad

keeps on manipulating him for his self-interest. Besides, his students do not show any kind of respect for him “the words were spoken with an undertone of threat” (201). Also it is seen that Deven throughout all the story is manipulated by Nur. Desai attempts at showing how Deven faces all these kinds of oppression and segregation in the postcolonial India, therefore, by his turn he ends up by accepting his defeat (214). Moreover, Desai believes that women are strictly and observably undergoing huge range of discriminations and suppression from both the family and the society. Sarla is the wife of a “temporary lecturer” (66). Yet she seems “too prosaic” (67) for him. Her family denies her any right of choosing her future. Besides, in her house she is silenced, unable to raise a voice. Desai presents Sarla as a woman fully influenced by the harsh environment surrounding her, hence, she ends up by accepting it “she was actually quite pleased to be back in her own domain to assume all its responsibilities” (214). As Ratna Hasanthi Dhavaleswarapu declares that “women characters [in Desai’s novel] fail to resolve the conflict between their traditional roles and their interests in life” (8). Desai portrays the life conditions of men and women in the postcolonial India through the sufferance in which her characters are living. Desai portrays the struggles of both Deven and Sarla in an attempt to underunders the nation in her narrative.

Furthermore, Yuval Davis discusses in her book the fact that it is mandatory for the citizens to defend their “own community and country” (ch.4). In this claim, Yuval Davis believes that the individuals need to defend as well as sacrifice in order to gain their selves the name of welfare citizens. In her novel, Desai deals with this phenomenon as she embodies Deven in the character who is seen as an unworthy individual for his nation. Deven gives up on his passionate interest for the Urdu language in order to make a living. So far it is seen as a rational act to be done as he is a man of a family; it is money that he needs. However, Desai portrays him in a disillusioned state. He is thought to be unfit for anything “you don’t look fit to serve anyone” (Desai 39), additionally he does not feel free to express himself inside his

house even when he finds out that his child fails his grades (70). Desai presents Deven as a failure in both domains. He has not succeeded in his parental responsibility nor saving the Urdu language. Additionally, Desai portrays Sarla as a woman who sacrifices her life interests and aspirations to be able to bear the sadness of her destined life. Desai presents her condition in that she is silenced, she gets carried away by life, “she had missed the sense of her own capability and position” (214). Desai gives similar chances in illustrating how both Sarla and Deven each on his way are facing a hard life. She creates for the two of them a series of events as well as problems that illustrate their similar suffering and hardships. Furthermore, it is observable that their mental and emotional health is the most infected according to Desai. She focuses on their state of disappointment and passivity. Ranjeet Kaur asserts that the females in Desai’s novels conform to the situation imposed on them by the patriarchal society (549). In her narrative, Desai had made both genders undergo similar struggles and she had not prioritised one over the other.

While referring to *Shame*, Rushdie creates a male character who embodies and reinforces the postcolonial Indian patriarchal society over the female characters. Rushdie also utilises Omar, the protagonist’s heroic acts to portray women through the character of Sufiya, as monstrous, cruel creatures who seem to threaten people’s safety. On the contrary, Anita Desai gives equal chances in depicting the life struggles of both men and women. Contradicting Rushdie’s stance of reinforcing male domination, Desai holds an ungendered approach. Her character Deven undergoes various insults as well as repeated disappointments from the society and family. Additionally, Sarla finds herself obliged to remain under her husband’s rule in an unhappy marriage as she has no other option.

Desai’s novel focuses on depicting the life struggles of both men and women in life. She creates a man who is disillusioned and distracted in his life journey to discover himself. Likewise, she creates a female character who finds herself trapped and disappointed in her not

wanted life. Desai embodies the internal as well as external struggle of her characters in a way that sees the world as hurtful for men to women.

General Conclusion

This thesis has discussed the representation of women in the Postcolonial Indian patriarchal society in Salman Rushdie's *Shame* and Anita Desai's *In Custody* and how these two novelists have dealt with the issue of gender inequalities. Accordingly, as an attempt to focus on the position of the two novelist in what concerns gender, a number of theories presented by different scholars have been provided, including Nira Yuval-Davis, Anne McClintock and Albert Bandura and Key Bussey.

This present study has been an attempt to prove the domination of the male and the subjugation of women in a society where patriarchy controls every aspect of life. In order to understand the relation between the patriarchal authority and the Indian society, a full illustration has been given to how patriarchy is practiced from the perspectives of different scholars. From this point, a number of Indian writers have discussed the issue of gender inequality, each one on his way as some of them have reinforced it and others have held a neutral stance.

This thesis has also demonstrated how Salman Rushdie has supported the domination of men over women, as he has given his male characters the absolute ability to practice their patriarchy. On the other hand, Anita Desai has depicted the life struggles and pain of both men and women. A detailed analysis of these characters has been provided to show the dominant and the dominated, the powerful and the weakened in a world full of prejudices and persecutions. In spite of the cultural similarities, the novelists have created different characters who live in similar societies, but each writer has held an opposite stance as far as gender is concerned. *Shame* and *In Custody* have highlighted different patriarchal attitudes as well as struggles in the postcolonial Indian society. According to the social norms, a woman must remain under the patriarchal dominance without showing any kind of resistance, in addition, both men and women go through various shapes of pain and disappointments.

Through the depiction of female characters as a property for the males and who need to remain silent, in addition of depicting men as the nation builders and savers. Their rights and freedom have been limited due to the role given to them as wives and mothers. Additionally, the depiction of the male character as disillusioned and lost as the female in a society that imposes discriminatory practices over the individuals. In *Shame* and *In Custody*, Rushdie and Desai have depicted their view about the gender issue. Rushdie has embodied his gendered position through empowering the males and weakening the females by portraying them as a threat for the citizens, while Desai has shown a similar interest for the sufferance and pain of both men and women as she has depicted the discrimination faced by Deven and Sarla and how each one of them is living a common disappointment in life even though they live in a separate mind-set.

Throughout the analysis, it is proved that the novelists have held an opposite stance in the gender dilemma. Both novelists have come from similar societies, yet Rushdie has created male characters who practice various shapes of domination, including violence, extramarital affairs, mental and physical oppression. Hence, Rushdie has appeared at reinforcing the patriarchal prejudices. However, Desai has created a man who goes through so many problems as well as dilemmas, including failure at his parental duty of providing his family the financial needs, disrespectful attitudes from people surrounding him like students and friends. In addition, she has created a woman who experiences a huge disappointment in her life as she is faced with a completely different one of that she aspires for, as well as being the only responsible parent for the care of her son. As a result, Desai has appeared at taking a neutral position in the gender dilemma and in fact, she has given equal interest for both men and women's pain in the society.

This thesis can be a starting point for further research and studies. It has provided important information about patriarchy and the issue of gender inequality in the postcolonial

Indian society. Salman Rushdie has reinforced the patriarchal attitudes in his novel, while Anita Desai has given equal chances at depicting how patriarchy and inequality between the genders influence the life of both men and women in the same society.

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Résumé

La société indienne est considérée comme l'une des plus patriarcales au monde. L'inégalité des sexes y est fortement pratiquée. Pour traiter cette question de genre, un certain nombre d'écrivains indiens anglophones ont jeté la lumière sur ce phénomène. Chacun à son manière, car certains soutiennent le patriarcat et d'autres sont neutres. Salman Rushdie semble donner un genre à la nation dans son roman *La honte* (1983), par le biais de ses personnages masculins, principalement Omar, tandis qu'Anita Desai adopte une position non genrée dans son livre *En garde à vue* (1984), en donnant les mêmes degrés d'oppression et de lutte aux hommes et aux femmes par le biais des personnages de Deven et de Sarla. Par conséquent, en s'appuyant sur la théorie du *Genre et de la nation* de Nira Yuval-Davis, sur l'ouvrage "Feuds familiales : genre, nationalisme et la famille" d'Anne McClintock et "Théorie sociale cognitive du développement du genre et de la différenciation" d'Albert Bandura et Key Bussey, cette thèse vise à démontrer comment les deux romanciers envisagent la question de l'inégalité des sexes. Salman Rushdie adopte une position sexiste, car il soutient le patriarcat sur les femmes en donnant à son protagoniste Omar le pouvoir de s'imposer à sa femme Sufiya et aux femmes qui l'entourent. Cependant, Anita Desai crée des personnages, un homme et une femme qui sont tous deux déçus et blessés dans leur vie en incarnant un couple marié, Deven et Sarla, qui partagent une douleur commune, chacun de son côté.

ملخص

يعتبر المجتمع الهندي من أكثر المجتمعات الذكورية. حيث تنتشر فيه المساواة بين الرجل والمرأة. وللعامل مع هذه المسألة، ساط عدد من الكتاب الهنديين الناطقين باللغة الانكليزية الضوء على هذه الظاهرة. كل على طريقته، حيث بعضهم يدعم النظام الذكوري والبعض الآخر حيادي. ينظم سلمان رشدي في كتابه "المر (1983) على أنه مع التمييز الجنسي من خلال شخصيته الذكورية الرئيسية و الممثلة في عمر، في حين نتخذ أنينا ديساي في كتابها "تحت الوصاية (1984) موقفا غير متحيز من خلال إعطاء درجات مختلفة من الظلم وكذلك الكفاح للرجال والنساء من خلال شخصيتي دينين وسارال، وهكذا اعتمادا على نظرية زيرا يوفال دافنيس الجنس و الامة، و نظرية آن ماكلينوك تحت عنوان "النزاعات العائلية: نوع الجنس، القومية والسر"، و نظرية ألبرت باندورا، وكاي بوساي المسماة "النظرية الإدراكية الاجتماعية للنزعة والتميز بين الجنسين"، يهدف هذا البحث إلى إظهار نظرة الروائيين إلى قضية عدم المساواة بين الجنسين. سلمان رشدي اتخذ وضع متحيز، حيث أنه يعزز سلطة الرجل على الأنثى من خلال إعطاء بطل روايته عمر القوة لكي يرضها على زوجته صوفية والإناث من حوله. لكن أنينا ديساي مثلت رجل وامرأة على حد سواء، حيث أن كالمهما قد خاب أمهما وأونيا في حياتهما عبر تجسيد زوجين دينين وسارال ينشأ طران أما مشتركا، كل على حدى.