

Tribhuvan University

Dismantling Fairytale Representation of Women in *Shame*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English,  
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, for Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in English

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## APPROVAL LETTER

This thesis entitled **Dismantling Fairytale Representation of Women in *Shame*** by Dilli Kumar Sharma has been submitted to the Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## Abstract

Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame*, through reconfiguring the traditional fairytale plots, subverts the stereotypical images of women as the weaker race of humanity always in need of guidance and to an extent domination of the male counterparts. The novel takes and appropriates a fairytale pre-text and renders it into an anti-patriarchal narrative that goes beyond the cultural gender constructions of women as essentially inactive, lacking in volition and action, and always seeking to gain favor of the males as a strategy for survival. Fairytales as a rule depict women as the beauty endangered by the beast and therefore in need of the succor of the brave good men. But the novel in question drastically deviates from this stereotypical representation of women by conferring upon them agency, volition, and the beastly power for violence.

The novel *Shame* partakes of the process of questioning the patriarchal oppressions of women and sets a premonitory tone that such oppression are likely to breed occasional violent outbreaks in the familial and social lives of the people, irrespective of their gender. The very fact that Rushdie's novel has given an equal or even more important treatment to the female concern testifies to the proposition of the thesis that *Shame* is a novel written with a feminist awareness challenging the established notions of gender roles, limitations and expectations. The feminist agenda of the novel is seen in its giving the central and sympathetic space to the experiences and stories of its female characters rather than to the male ones.

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