

Shame as Recognition of the Self:

Critical Inversion of the Postcolonial shame through Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*

Atchaya L.

Register Number: 24PGE002, Department of English

Lady Doak College, Affiliated to Madurai Kamaraj University.

ABSTRACT

The postcolonial interpretation of shame largely focuses on it as a fractured residue of colonial domination which is closely aligned with inferiority, humiliation, and inadequacy. While most of the recent research on Gurnah's fiction focuses on the themes of exile, trauma, memory and hybridity, this research paper narrows down into the theme of shame as one's footsteps into the recognition of the self. Shame tests the man's ability to withstand the flashing colonial trials forced onto them. By doing so, shame becomes an activator of resistance, even when an individual is reduced to an object of ridicule. Predominant approaches of existing research treat shame as a psychological wound and a symptom of fractured subjectivity. This research paper aims to reveal the idea of shame as a tool for recognition of the self through the dissection of Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea*. Rather than viewing shame as a symbol of victim-hood, it strives to uncover shame as a rejuvenating tool for recognizing the true self of an individual. By situating within the framework of Shame Resilience Theory (SRT), this paper views shame as a potential site for self-awareness, and as an activator for resistance.

Keywords: Shame, Recognition of the self, Activator of resistance, Ontological shame, Linguistic shame.

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