

## TRANSLATION OF ALLUSIONS AS A PROBLEM OF CULTURAL TRANSFER (BASED ON THE NOVEL *SHAME* BY SALMAN RUSHDIE)

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**Abstract:** This article examines the translation of allusions as a key problem of cultural transfer within literary texts, focusing on the Armenian and Russian translations of Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame*. The analysis is carried out using intertextual, comparative, and linguacultural methods, which allows us to identify the main strategies for conveying intertextual references. Allusion is a multi-faceted stylistic device that involves the activation of phenomenological precedents relating to literature, mythology, the Bible, history and political events. The challenges of translating allusions concerning Indian mythology and the very complicated political and cultural context for Pakistan necessitate more extralinguistic competence on the part of a reader and the translator. It has been established that adequate transmission of allusions is possible only with a comprehensive approach combining linguistic and cultural-historical knowledge. The results can be useful in the theory and practice of translation, as well as in studies of intertextuality and linguacultural studies.

**Keywords:** allusion; cultural transfer; intertextuality; intertextual references; postcolonial literature

### 1. Introduction

In this article, allusion is considered as an intertextual inclusion consciously used by the author, which performs a stylistic function, activates implicit meanings in a literary text, and enriches it in content by referring to a precedent name, precedent statement, literary, mythological, historical character, well-known cultural fact, etc. Translation of allusions in a literary text includes several stages: detection of the allusion, establishment of its source and meaning, recognition of the meanings embedded by the

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author through the use of allusion, and transmission of these meanings in the translation. In this case, the translator must accurately determine the extent to which the author's background knowledge and the readers' background knowledge coincide, and then use translation techniques that allow the implicit meanings embedded by the author to be conveyed to the reader. Particularly difficult for a translator are cases when allusions have a nationally specific character and do not evoke similar associative connections and evaluative connotations for the reader of the translation.

The material for the study was the novel *Shame* (1983) by Salman Rushdie. The choice of material is due to the individual style of Rushdie, a multicultural author who charms the reader with a mixture of different codes, cultures, languages, traditions, and ideologies. This novel is a complex intertextual canvas, saturated with references to precedent phenomena that are associated with both the cultural and historical heritage of the East, in particular Pakistan, and are directly related to the culture and history of the West, linking together European and Eastern thought. Decoding the colossal number of all sorts of allusions that Rushdie deliberately uses in the novel *Shame* is of particular interest and complexity. Translating such allusions requires the translator not only to have a deep understanding of the source text but also to be able to adapt cultural codes for a new audience.

## 2. Origins and Functions of Allusion

According to the theory of intertextuality, the direct presence of one text in another is created with the help of various references, including quotations, allusions, and reminiscences. In the words of R. Barthes, now considered classic, "Every text is an intertext; other texts are present in it at various levels in more or less recognizable forms: texts of the preceding culture and texts of the surrounding culture. Each text is a new fabric woven from old quotations..." (Barthes 1989: 417).

The concept of allusion, as a manifestation of intertextuality, represents one of the most complex, controversial and multifaceted problems of modern linguistics. The study of the concept of 'allusion' in many European languages began as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. However, active research and formulation of the theoretical basis for the phenomenon itself began only at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The term 'allusion' itself comes from Latin and initially meant any play on the meanings or sounds of words (Latin *allusio* verborum 'wordplay' - *alludere* 'to play, joke, laugh, hint' - *ludere* 'to play' - *lusio* 'game'), where the immediate etymon of the word was the late Latin '*allusio, -onis*' – 'toy' (Britannica n.d.). Subsequently, the term 'allusion' acquired the meaning of 'a hint' (in contexts such as *obscura allusio* 'obscure hint'). Studying the course of historical development of this concept, Bloom (1975) defines the term 'illusion' as a synonym for the concept of 'allusion.' In the time of Bacon (1561-1626), this term was used to refer to any symbolic similarity in allegory, parable, or metaphor, so criticism singled out 'allusive' poetry along with 'descriptive' and 'representative' poetry. And only from the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, according to Bloom, did the only correct meaning of allusion develop as an indirect, hidden reference that contains a hint. The German literary subject dictionary gives the following interpretation of the

concept of ‘allusion’: “Allusion (Lat.): a reference, a conscious hint at persons, situations, or works from literature, history, mythology, etc., used to clarify or enrich a text” (Wilpert 1969). According to Israeli literary scholar Ben-Porat, literary allusion contains an embedded directional signal or marker that can be identified as an element that belongs to another independent text (Ben-Porat 1976).

According to Perri, “an allusion is a device for the simultaneous activation of two texts.” (Perri 1978: 295). The purpose of using allusion is to enrich an elementary statement and the entire work with accompanying knowledge and experience (Cushman & Greene 2012). In this case, an allusion plays the role of an economical way of updating history and literary tradition. “Allusion: an indirect or passing reference to some event, person, place, or artistic work, the nature and relevance of which is not explained by the writer but relies on the reader’s familiarity with what is thus mentioned” (Baldick 2008: 9). Therefore, the allusion that the authors use can be either a well-known fact and correspond to the background knowledge of the average reader, or it can be highly specialized, the meaning of which can be understood by readers of a certain circle.

According to English-language dictionaries of literary terms, the most complete classification of types of allusion consists of: 1) allusions: references to recent events (topical allusion); 2) personal allusion: references to facts from the writer’s biography (personal allusion); 3) metaphorical allusion, the purpose of which is to convey accompanying information; 4) implicit allusion, which imitates the style of other writers (imitative allusion); 5) structural allusion, which reflects the structure of another work (structural allusion) (Baldick 2008).

One of the main functions of allusions is to activate certain layers behind the text in the reader’s mind and present the author’s text in external contexts that are consonant with it, drawing attention to individual stylistic decisions, while the author’s text is included in a complex system of cultural associations and comparisons. Since the culture that surrounded the writer during his life inevitably leaves an imprint on his works, the author himself, unconsciously or consciously, uses its achievements in his work. Cultural experience is celebrated in a variety of forms, primarily in the form of texts.

Thus, there are many definitions of allusion, but they all, one way or another, agree on the interpretation of allusion as an indirect reference to some fact (person or event), assumed to be known, while the range of references varies from historical events to the use of hints, various kinds of allegories, omissions; from mentioning episodes and characters of literary works to biblical prayers and mythological plots; from references to facts of the past to facts of modern life of society. The most important characteristic of allusions is their cultural conditioning. Allusions function as ‘cultural markers’ that require background knowledge from the reader for adequate decoding (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2006). Allusions often use information that is not available to every member of a cultural and linguistic community (Irwin 2001: 287, 289). In this article, allusions will be considered as implicit references to textual and non-textual facts that evoke certain associations, based on the extralinguistic knowledge of the author and reader.

An allusion, therefore, does not simply refer to another text, but brings the evoked text together with the allusive text in such a way that it changes the interpretation of the

receiving text. Ben-Porat describes four stages of allusion interpretation: the first stage involves the reader's identification of the marked element in the allusive text as related to or closely connected with the referenced text. The second stage is the identification of the other text - the marker motivates the reader to recall the earlier text. The third stage is a change in the initial interpretation, i.e. the interaction of the two texts (the one referenced and the allusive text) with different contexts leads to a new interpretation; in the fourth stage, the evoked text is activated as a whole to interact with the allusive text (Ben-Porat 1976; Hylen 2005: 45-46).

In this article, we rely on the classification proposed by Tukhareli. The researcher presents a semantic classification of allusions: 1. proper names – anthroponyms, which include zoonyms, toponyms, theonyms, etc.; 2. literary, mythological, historical, religious, and political and other realities; 3. echoes of quotations, common sayings, contaminations, reminiscences (Tukhareli 1984: 16-17). Cuddon interprets allusion as an indirect reference to a work of art or an artwork, a character, or an event. It is a way to draw the reader's attention to the author's intentions. Allusion can enrich the text with associations, thereby giving the text even more depth (Cuddon, 2013). Allusion is a kind of 'conductor' that connects the past with the present, bringing into the new text all those associations, ideas, additional connotations, and shades of meaning inherent in the source text, thus enriching the semantic content of the artistic statement. These types do not exhaust the possible variants of allusions, but they help to navigate the issue of how one text refers to another.

### **3. Translation of Allusions as a Transfer**

Translation of allusions is one of the most difficult tasks in translation practice. It causes difficulties not only for novice translators but also for experienced professionals. Conveying allusions in translation is especially important for literary works, where allusions can be of great importance for understanding the plot and characters. Thus, the development of effective methods for assessing the completeness of the transfer of allusions in translation is an important problem for translation theory and practice. Allusion, as a characteristic intertextual phenomenon, creates challenges for translators who face the need to convey hidden quotes and meanings in translation, while preserving the style and emotional coloring of the original.

The extralinguistic determinacy of allusive units dictates the need to take into account socio-psychological aspects when studying them. Allusion arises as a result of assessing objects of the surrounding reality, comparing and drawing an analogy with any facts, processes, or persons in the distant and recent past; therefore, when considering the principles of its functioning, it is necessary to take into account its axiological aspect.

An allusive word, like any other word, cannot be considered simply as the name of an object or phenomenon from the reality surrounding a person. Passing through the consciousness of a person, it acquires some specific features characteristic of a given national public consciousness.

The latter is especially pivotal to take into account in the process of translation. A text that is as close as possible to the original should be created based on equivalently selected meanings of words and the ability to recognize various shades of lexical units, as well as knowledge of customs, habits, subtleties of relationships, and the psychology of the people who speak the language. To put it another way, merely translating an allusion into another language is insufficient; the effect created by its use in the original text must be maintained. This presents a number of issues for translators as well as linguists and lexicographers. Since allusions function as elements of a cultural code that require decoding, their translation becomes an act of intercultural semiosis. The translator's task is not just to transfer words but to mediate between cultures. Allusions, idioms, and culture-specific references often require adaptation rather than literal translation to achieve functional equivalence (Baker 2018).

After decoding, or identifying the cultural code and determining its comprehensibility from the target audience's perspective, the translator then needs to put a plan in place to transmit the allusions with the least loss of meaning. Leppihalme (1997) consents that a cultural barrier can prevent the understanding of an allusion, unless the receivers are sufficiently biculturalized. Allusions in translated messages are conveyed through cultural mediation as well as linguistic transposition. Depending on how well-versed the target audience is in the source culture, the translator must decide whether to keep, replace, explain, or omit some or all of the message. It seems to us that the transfer of allusions can be summed up as the mediator's task of conveying in the translation hidden references to cultural, historical, literary, or mythological phenomena that may not be an option to the bearers of another linguaculture.

Allusion translation techniques should be selected based on the main requirement: an allusion is translated by an allusion (direct translation) to preserve the pragmatic components of information. This should be the priority, and only after making sure of its impossibility and appropriateness in a given context, should another path be sought. For example, if there is a close equivalent in the target culture, then it is advisable for the translator to use the technique of replacing it with a cultural analogue or to provide a descriptive translation (explication). An allusive analogue is used when the allusion has a full-fledged correspondence in the target language that is independent of the context and has the same denotative and connotative meanings concerning semantic content, stylistic correlation, metaphorical nature, emotional-expressive coloring, component composition, and lexical-grammatical indicators. Most often, this technique is used in the translation of biblical, mythological, and literary allusions.

The mixture of different codes, cultures, languages, traditions, and ideologies is an essential feature of the individual style of Rushdie, as a multicultural author. His experience of interaction with different cultures allows him to depict the features of the modern eclectic postmodernist worldview. According to Rushdie, "a new novel is emerging, a post-colonial novel, a de-centred, transnational, interlingual, cross-cultural novel" (Rushdie 2000: 57). The novel *Shame* is one of the most famous works of the British writer of Indian origin Salman Rushdie. This book is based on true events of the modern history of Pakistan, but the author himself calls it "something like a fairy tale in a new way." In the novel *Shame*, allusions play a key role, creating a multi-layered intertextual layer.

The novel is imbued with the influence and symbolism of Iranian culture, reflecting Rushdie's desire to expand the narrative's cultural boundaries and connect Pakistani reality with a shared Eastern civilizational heritage. Allusions to Omar Khayyam, Ahura Mazda and the Zoroastrian tradition demonstrate the profound influence of Iranian spiritual thought on the novel's artistic world, emphasizing the duality of human nature and exploring the idea of the hybridity of Eastern identity.

One of the most striking challenges facing the translator of postmodernist fiction is intertextual allusions, especially those that refer to well-known bodies of Western philosophy and science. Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame* is full of such references, which function not simply as decorative references but as semantic nodes constructing a polemic between rational knowledge and cultural mythology, between identity and its repression. Decoding and translating the colossal number of allusions that Rushdie deliberately uses in the novel *Shame* is of particular interest and difficulty. The text of the novel contains both explicit and implicit references to elements of Eastern and Western fairy tales, legends, myths, elements of historical, literary and autobiographical order, social phenomena, cultural monuments, etc., where, as the author himself comments, everything becomes mixed with everything. The process of translating such works turns into a kind of philological research, the result of which is often the text of the translation, dotted with references and comments. At the same time, allusive elements in the text can be systematized depending on the nature and origin of the sources to which the author refers. In this regard, it seems necessary to consider the specifics of literary allusions as one of the key means of creating intertextual connections. Literary allusions play a significant role in fiction by borrowing and using images, names, phrases, and excerpts from famous works. The author revives them in a new context that corresponds to the realities and ideological foundations of modern society, forcing the reader to perceive and analyze these moments in relation to the allusive mirror world of a wide variety of works of world literature (Ilyashenko 2014: 179).

Rushdie uses *literary allusions*<sup>1</sup> both as the main and additional means of characterizing the heroes of the novel. His goal is to build parallels between the borrowed image and its character, to ensure the irony of images, and to generate new meanings and vivid associations. The analysis of cases of using allusive references to literary works will be considered in the following examples.

The exiled Czech writer Kundera once wrote: 'A name means continuity with the past and people without a past are people without a name.' But I am dealing with a past that refuses to be suppressed, that is daily doing battle with the present; so it is perhaps unduly harsh of me to deny my fairyland a title. (p. 87)

Տարագիր չէի գրող Կունդերան մի անգամ ասել է. «Անունն անցյալի շարունակություն է ենթադրում, իսկ առանց անցյալի մարդիկ անուն էլ չպիտի ունենան»: Բայց անցյալը, որի հետ զործ ունեմ, այնպիսին է, որ չի կամենում

<sup>1</sup> All excerpts discussed in the text are taken from the original English edition of *Shame* (1983) and its Armenian (*Amot*, 2020) and Russian (*Styd*, 2023) translations, with the page numbers provided next to each excerpt. Full bibliographic details can be found in the References section.

ճնշվել, օրավուր պայքար է մղում ընդդեմ ներկայի, ուստի չափազանց անողորմ կլինի, եթե հրաժարվեն իմ երևակայական երկրին անուն տալուց: (p. 135)

«Любое название, — указывает чешский писатель Кундера (ныне эмигрант), — означает неразрывную связь с прошлым, а народ без прошлого — безымянный народ.» Но прошлое, с которым приходится иметь дело мне, не так-то легко похоронить. Оно каждодневно с боями прорывается в настоящее, и чересчур жестоко отказывать моей вымышленной стране в названии. (p. 23)

In this fragment, the author appeals to the thoughts of the Czech emigrant writer Milan Kundera, emphasizing that the name functions not only as a nominative sign but also as a symbol of historical and cultural continuity. This raises the issue of historical memory as a constituent element of both national and individual identity. Salman Rushdie focuses on the tense interaction between the repressed past and the current present, which illustrates the complex mechanisms of identity formation and resistance to dominant historical narratives - a problem that is central to the structure of the narrative.

A comparative analysis of the Armenian and Russian translations of this fragment highlights the features of the reproduction of the intertextual allusion to Milan Kundera, reflecting the differences in the translation approaches and the degree of preservation of the cultural and semantic multilayeredness of the source text.

In the original text, Rushdie mentions Kundera briefly and without explanation, counting on the cultural awareness of the reader (his/her background knowledge). The Russian translation, while preserving the main idea and vocabulary, resorts to the strategy of explanation (explication), integrating a brief explanation into the main narrative (*Czech writer Kundera (now an emigrant)*), emphasizing Kundera's emigrant status and thus making the text more 'transparent' for the reader. Thus, the Russian translator adds clarification so that the reader can relate to the cultural reference.

In the Armenian translation, the name of Kundera is footnoted, and you may also read the note, an explanation, without breaking the narrative. The translator does not merely uncover the meaning of the allusion but places it in a wider cultural and philosophical matrix. In both translations, this intertextual complexity of Rushdie's text and its philosophical and cultural burden, are retained, even though the translation may be a challenging reading for an uninitiated reader.

These features become particularly apparent when examining the allusion in light of Ben-Porath's interpretive model. In the English original, the first stage (identification) is accomplished through the mention of Kundera's name, which immediately activates the cultural and philosophical context of European thought on memory and identity. The second stage (attribution to the source) is realized through direct quotation, introducing the reader to the author's reflections in Kundera's *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting*. The third stage involves a reinterpretation of the quotation: Rushdie contrasts his 'past that refuses to be repressed' with Kundera's understanding of historical continuity, creating a new semantic tension between oblivion and resistance. The fourth stage unites both texts (Kundera's and Rushdie's) into a single intertextual space, where allusion becomes a means of understanding the historical experience of postcolonial societies.

In the Armenian translation, the same model manifests itself differently. The first stage (the mention of “տաքազիւր չէի գրող Կունդերան” [“exiled Czech writer Kundera”]) actualizes the motif of exile and cultural isolation, strengthening the existential subtext of the allusion. In the second stage, the source of the quote is presented literally and in the third, the semantic reinterpretation occurs through the juxtaposition of “անցյալի շարունակություն” [“continuation of the past”] and “անցյալը, որի հետ գործ ունեւ, չի կամենում ճնշվել” [“the past I am dealing with does not want to be suppressed”], emphasizing the internal struggle between tradition and modernity. In the fourth stage, the allusion is integrated into the philosophical structure of the text, transforming into a reflection on national identity, close in spirit to the Armenian historical experience.

In the Russian translation, the first stage of identification is also based on the mention of Kundera, but the added clarification “ныне эмигрант” [“now an emigrant”] expands the semantics of the image, shifting the focus from philosophical to socio-political issues. In the second stage, Kundera’s quote is perceived not as a philosophical maxim, but as an aphoristic judgment woven into the narrative flow. The third stage is realized through the confrontation between past and present, interpreted through the prism of historical conflict and the author’s personal responsibility. In the fourth stage, the allusion connects personal memory and collective history, reinforcing the theme of the impossibility of oblivion.

Thus, each translation implements the four stages of allusion interpretation in its own way. The English translation through the philosophical interplay of Kundera’s and Rushdie’s texts, the Armenian translation through an existential understanding of exile and historical experience, and the Russian translation through historical and psychological clarification. Taken together, these differences show how the same literary allusion is refracted in different cultural contexts, while maintaining the function of a semantic mediator between the past and the present, between memory and self-identification.

As for the kinds of allusions, historical allusions occupy a special place. They are not only meant to contribute to the artistic, thematic texture of the text but also to activate the associative thinking of the reader, leading to an additional semantic layer, since the reader can retrieve outside from these paratexts. However, in contemporary postmodernist literature and culture, a more complex and multi-layered type is increasingly encountered: *historical-literary allusion*. It is formed at the intersection of history and its artistic representation: historical events and figures are not understood directly, but through their refraction in literary works. Such an allusion, whether in a play, novel, biography, or other creative medium, includes the methods of understanding a historical fact in the field of interpretation in addition to referring to it. As a result, historical-literary allusion allows the writer to interact with both history and its cultural interpretations while operating at the line between fact and fiction. This kind of reference best illustrates how the past is still present in the consciousness of modernity, albeit not in its original form but rather in the form of cultural texts that were derived from it.



The great French revolutionary hero Danton, who will lose his head during the ‘Terror,’ is making a rueful remark. ‘... But Robespierre and the people,’ he observes, ‘are virtuous.’ Danton is on a London stage, not really Danton at all but an actor speaking the lines of Georg Büchner in English translation; and the time is not then, but now. (p 253)

Ֆրանսիական հեղափոխության մեծն հերոս Դանտոնը, որն իր գլուխն «Ահաբեկչության ժամանակաշրջանում» կկորցնի, ավստասանքով նկատում է....«...բայց Ռոբեսպիերն ու ժողովուրդը, – ասում է, – առաքինի են»: Դանտոնը լոնդոնյան բեմում է, իրական Դանտոնը չէ, դերասան է, որ Գեորգ Բյուխների անգլերեն թարգմանությունն է խաղում: Դեպքերն էլ այն ժամանակ չեն, հիմա են կատարվում: (p. 383)

Великий французский революционер Дантон, которому в годину террора суждено было лишиться головы, с грустью замечает: «...все же Робеспьер и народ добродетельны.» Говорит он это со сцены лондонского театра, точнее, не сам, а актер, и не свои слова, а драматурга Георга Бюхнера в английском переводе, и говорится это не в те времена, а сегодня. (p. 67)

A sophisticated network of allusions drawn from literary, historical, and cultural-philosophical contexts can be found in the provided fragment. The main character of the text is the French revolutionary Georges Danton, whose life story serves as both a point of reference to a particular era of history and a starting point for contemplation on the nature of historical memory and how the past is portrayed in popular culture.

In both translations (Armenian and Russian), the allusion is conveyed generally accurately, but with a number of significant stylistic and pragmatic differences. The Armenian translation uses the technique of explication: the concept of “Ահաբեկչության ժամանակաշրջան” [“period of terror”] is capitalized, which emphasizes the status of the event as a unique phenomenon enshrined in historiography (the era of mass repressions during the Great French Revolution). The addition of the word ‘period’ further clarifies the reference. This historical allusion is accompanied by an explanatory footnote “մեծ հեղափոխության ընթացքում (1793թ. սեպտեմբերի 5-ից 1794թ. հուլիսի 27-ը” [“during the Great Revolution (from 5 September 1793 to 27 July 1794)”]. This approach allows the reader to make preliminary preparation to understand what period is being discussed and thereby activate the allusion.

The Russian translation uses the expression “в годину террора” [“in the year of terror”], where the word ‘terror’ is not marked as a historical term: it is presented with a lowercase letter and without explanation, which gives the expression a general metaphorical connotation and reduces its accuracy. The absence of a footnote with an explanation minimizes the cognitive clarity of the allusion: the reader may not identify ‘in the year of terror’ with “Reign of Terror” and fail to grasp the historical and political subtext. This creates a semantic gap between the author’s intent and the perception of the text in translation. Thus, the Armenian translation demonstrates an interpretative approach: it not only conveys the content but also unfolds the cultural and historical context. The Russian translation, on the contrary, uses a reductive approach: the allusion remains without explication, is formally conveyed, but is not

activated as an element of cultural memory. As a result, its intertextual potential is not fully realized.

These differences are especially clearly revealed when analyzed through the model of interpretation of allusions. In the English original, the first stage (allusion recognition) is triggered when the reader is mentioned, Danton and Robespierre, whose names instantly activate the reader's cultural-historical memory. The second stage (correlation with the source) occurs through a direct link to Büchner's play, indicated in the text. At the third stage (modification of the meaning), the historical scene finds a new context. the action is transferred to the modern London scene, turning the past into a performative metaphor for the present. Finally, the fourth stage (integration of new meaning) culminates in a philosophical conclusion about the eternal recurrence of revolutionary ideas and how history becomes a theater of repetition.

In the Armenian translation, the first stage (the mention of Danton in connection with “Ահաբեկչության ժամանակաշրջան” [“The Era of Terrorism”]) activates not only the knowledge of the fact, but also the emotional-historical memory of the Armenian reader, for whom the topic of revolutions and repressions has its own cultural parallels. The second stage, the connection with the source, is strengthened thanks to the mention of “Գեորգ Բյուխների անգլերեն թարգմանությունն է խաղում” [“Georg Buchner’s English translation is playing”], which fixes the intertextual nature of the scene. The third stage (semantic transformation) manifests itself in the juxtaposition of time plans “այն ժամանակ չեն, հիմա են կատարվում” [“they are not then, they are happening now”], and the fourth stage — in the integration of allusions as reflections on the repeatability of historical cycles and human delusions.

In the Russian translation, the first stage of recognition is realized through the mention of Danton and Robespierre, but without specifying the historical period, which weakens the connection with the real context. The second stage (correlation with the source) is limited to the mention of Buchner, not creating a clearly expressed metatextual effect. At the third stage (semantic rethinking), the translation intensifies the emotional tone and tragedy, and the fourth stage ends the interpretation with a philosophical note. The past is perceived as an inescapable part of the present—not merely as a cultural representation, but as a moral lesson.

Thus, in the English text, the allusion realizes a historical-philosophical synthesis, in the Armenian - a cultural-memorial and existential accent, and in the Russian - an ethical and psychological one. Z. Ben-Porat’s model helps to see how each translation activates different levels of perception (from the rational-historical to the emotional-moral) while preserving Rushdie’s general idea of the theatricalization of history and the inevitability of its repetition.

Among the various types of allusions found in literary texts, *religious-mythological* allusion occupies a special place. It is a reference to religious ideas, divine figures, mythological narratives, and sacred symbols rooted in collective memory. Religious-mythological allusion becomes especially significant in the contexts of loss, exile, and search for identity, where the holy is often opposed to the political or existential.

Farah had a simple answer. ‘My stupid father is a type who goes on dreaming after he has woken up. He thinks one day we will return to where we have never been, that damn land of Ahuramazda, and this no-good Irani frontier is the closest we could get.’ (p. 43)

Ֆարահի պատասխանը համոզիչ էր. «Հերս սարսաղի մեկն է, արթուն ժամանակ էլ է երազներով ապրում: Հույս ունի, որ մի օր վերադառնալու ենք էնտեղ, որտեղ երբեք չենք եղել, Ահուրամազդայի զահրումար էլ երկիրը, ու Իրանի հետ էս անիմաստ սահմանն էնտեղ հասնելու ամենակարճ ճանապարհն է: (p. 70)

У Фарах нашелся простой ответ:

— Отец у меня — мечтатель. Сон и явь у него перемешались. Он спит и видит эту дурацкую землю предков, хотя мы там никогда и не были, а здесь, на иранской границе, к ней все-таки ближе. (p. 12)

In this passage, Salman Rushdie draws on Iranian motifs to emphasize the universality of the Eastern mythological code, accentuate the dualism of human nature, and reveal the idea of cultural synthesis that underlies the novel's artistic concept. The author employs an allusion to the figure of Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity of the Zoroastrian pantheon, who personifies order, truth, and wisdom. On the one hand, the mention of Ahura Mazda activates the ancient Iranian religious context, historically significant for the region, with its sacred geography and the idea of the ‘land of light.’ On the other hand, the character’s statement ironically distorts the sacred meaning: the land sanctified by the name of the deity is called “damn land,” and the idea of return itself is utopian. The mythopoetic reference to the figure of Ahura Mazda creates an image of a non-existent homeland associated with ancient order and light, but in the context of the narrative, this image appears distorted and lost. The existential function of the expression “return to where we have never been” introduces a paradox that transforms a religious allusion into a philosophical metaphor of lost identity. The return becomes a symbol of an illusory search for meaning and belonging.

Analyzing the religious and mythological allusions in this fragment from the point of view of translation, it is necessary to emphasize the difference in the approaches of the Armenian and Russian translators to the transfer of the sacred and culturally loaded context. In particular, we are talking about the mention of Ahura Mazda, the supreme deity in Zoroastrianism, symbolically associated with the ancient Iranian religious tradition.

The Armenian translator preserves the religious and mythological allusion, conveying the combination of the sacred name (Ahura Mazda) and the negative assessment (Ahura Mazda - damned) creating an ironic tension that violates the traditional perception of the holy image. It is crucial to note that in the Armenian edition, the translator accompanies the mention of Ahura Mazda with an explanatory footnote “Ահուրամազդա (Ահուրա-Մազդա) - զրադաշտականության գերագույն աստվածը” [“Ahura Mazda (Ahura-Mazda) – the supreme god of Zoroastrianism”]. Thus, even a reader unfamiliar with the religious and cultural context is provided with a key to interpreting the allusion, which reflects the intention to preserve and explain intercultural information.

In the Russian translation, the entire religious and mythological reference is missing. The phrase “Он спит и видит эту дурацкую землю предков” [“He sleeps and sees this stupid land of the ancestors...”] replaces the sacred topos (“the land of Ahura Mazda”) with an everyday formulation (“the land of the ancestors”), thereby eliminating not only the religious dimension, but also the ironic contrast between faith and disappointment. Moreover, the Russian text lacks any footnote or attempt to compensate for the loss of meaning and explain the possible meaning of the mythological context.

From a translation point of view, here we can observe the techniques of omission (complete elimination of the allusion and related concepts) and simplification (shifting the emphasis: from the mythological to the everyday and generalized – “stupid land” instead of “the land of Ahura Mazda”). As a result, the text has lost its intertextual richness: the allusive connection with the Iranian religious tradition and Zoroastrian heritage has disappeared; there is no compensation (neither the main text nor the footnotes restore the lost semantic layer). Thus, it can be concluded that the Armenian translator preserves and actualizes the religious-mythological allusion through direct mention and explanation, as long as the Russian translator, probably for adaptation and simplification, completely abandons it. This leads to a significant semantic shift and impoverishment of the interpretative potential of the text. In the context of studying the translation of allusions, such a case demonstrates the importance of balancing between the readability of the translation and the preservation of the cultural richness of the original.

Applying Ben-Porat's model of allusion interpretation allows us to see how the mechanism of allusion perception differs in each version.

In the English original, the first stage (recognizing the marked element) is accomplished through the mention of the name Ahura Mazda, which immediately signals a sacred context. The second stage (identifying the source) refers the reader to the Zoroastrian tradition, requiring a certain cultural awareness. In the third stage (the interaction of contexts), a semantic transformation occurs: the sacred symbol is contrasted with the character's everyday reality, becoming an ironic sign of a lost ideal. Finally, the fourth stage (activating the evoked text as a whole) expands the interpretation to the level of a philosophical reflection on the impossibility of returning to sacred sources.

In the Armenian translation, the first stage of recognition is fully preserved due to the direct mention of the name Ahura Mazda. The second stage is reinforced by a footnote, which facilitates the attribution of the allusion to the religious source. The third stage (semantic transformation) is realized through a combination of the sacred and the ironic “Ահուրամազդայի զսիրումսն երկիրը” [“Ahuramazda's disgusting land”], creating tension between faith and loss. In the fourth stage, the allusion is integrated into the broader philosophical and cultural context of the narrative, preserving the spiritual subtext but devaluing it in the modern world.

In the Russian translation, the first stage (recognition) is impossible: the name Ahura Mazda is absent, and therefore, the religious context is not activated. The second and third stages (the correlation and interaction of texts) are lost, since the source of the allusion itself disappears. The fourth stage, which in the original and Armenian texts

forms a philosophical conclusion about a crisis of faith and identity, is replaced by the mundane connotation of “ancestral land,” devoid of symbolic depth.

Thus, when compared according to Ben-Porat’s model, the English original and Armenian translation demonstrate a full cycle of allusive interpretation, where sacred and contemporary levels interact, whereas the Russian version interrupts this process at the initial stage, transforming the religious-mythological code into an everyday statement. This clearly demonstrates how translation decisions directly influence the degree of activation of intertextual connections and the depth of semantic perception of the text.

Among the various literary allusions, the *historical-political* allusion is especially important, appealing to events that had a significant impact on historical, political, and social development. Unlike purely historical reminiscences, the historical-political allusion not only reminds us of the past but also accentuates its interpretation through the prism of power, violence, ideology, and collective memory. It is especially expressive in combination with mythological or archetypal subtext, as is observed in the analyzed fragment.

And sounds from further away like whistles, the glow of fires, shrieks. Where is she, Shakil wonders, will she come now, or when? How will it end, he muses: with the mob surging into the palace, lynchings, lootings, flames - or in the other, the stranger way, the people parting like mythological waters, averting their eyes, allowing her through, their champion, to do their dirty work: their Beast with her fiery eyes? (pp. 277-278)

Ավելի հեռվից հասնում են սուլոցների, կրակի բոցերի ու ծղրտոցի ձայներ: «Որտե՞ղ է նա, – Շաքիլն է մտածում, – հիմա՞ է գալու, թե՞ երբ: Բնչպե՞ս կավարտվի այս ամենը, – մտորում է: – Ամբոխը կխուժի պալատ, Լինչի դատաստան, կողոպուտ, հրկիզում, թե՞ մի ուրիշ, առավել տարօրինակ ձևով՝ մարդիկ առասպելական ջրերի պես կփեղեկվեն՝ աչքերը մի կողմ դարձնելով ճամփա կտան նրան՝ իրենց չեմպիոնին՝ իրենց հրաշյա Հրեշին՝ իրենց փոխարեն կեղտոտ գործն անելու: (p. 418)

А где-то вдали — свистят, жгут костры, перекликаются. Где ж Суфия Зиновия? Придет ли она сегодня? И если не сегодня, то когда? Чем все кончится? — размышляет Омар-Хайам. Ворвется во дворец толпа? Его забудут до смерти, резиденцию разграбят или сожгут? Или по-иному: люди, словно библейские воды, расступятся, отведут взоры и пропустят Ее, их воительницу. Пусть исполняет за них всю грязную работу, пусть Зверь с огненными глазами служит им.... (p. 73)

In the fragment of the novel under consideration, the reader is presented with an image of growing popular anger, embodied in a metaphorically rich scene: a crowd gathers at the walls, shouts, threats, and the sounds of fire are heard. Against this background, the thoughts of the hero Shakilla give the scene not only a personal but also a symbolic dimension. These reflections contain a complex historical and political allusion, coupled with elements of mythopoetics. The central point is the reference to lynching, mentioned as a possible end to popular anger: “lynchings, lootings, flames....” This formulation reproduces the traditional model of extrajudicial reprisal,

common in various historical contexts, but especially associated with the American South of the 19th century, where such actions were mass and institutionalized forms of violence. The term ‘lynching’ comes from the concept of ‘Lynch Law’ (public murders and torture of people, without trial, investigation, and with particular cruelty). ‘Lynch Law’ was practiced in the United States against blacks after the Civil War. However, in this context, it is not just a historical cliché, but a symbol of the destructive elements of mass justice, in which the line between justice and revenge is erased.

Another important element is the description of the behavior of the crowd, which at the decisive moment may not break into the building, but on the contrary, part like mythological waters to make way for a figure designated as the “champion,” the “Beast,” or the chosen one to do the “dirty work.” Here we find the archetypal motif of sacrifice or expulsion of evil, when society projects aggression and guilt onto a single subject called upon to commit violence in their name. This motif is essentially mythological, but in this case, it functions in close connection with the political dimension: the crowd, deprived of direct action, delegates the function of repression to a figure of exceptional morality. Such a multi-layered historical-political allusion in this episode performs not only the function of artistic expression, but also sets an interpretative framework for understanding the nature of power, violence, and collective guilt. It demonstrates how a literary text is capable of simultaneously reflecting a specific historical and political experience and conveying timeless archetypes of social behavior.

The analyzed fragment of the literary text demonstrates a significant discrepancy between the Armenian and Russian translations in the methods of conveying the historical and political allusions. The Armenian version uses the expression “Լինչի դատաքննություն” [“Lynch’s trial”], which is an obvious reference to the phenomenon of extrajudicial killings, entrenched in the political and cultural discourse as a symbol of mob violence. This allusion functions as a powerful intertextual marker, actualizing the images of spontaneous justice, the rejection of institutional norms, and the assertion of chaos as a form of collective revenge. In the Russian translation, the content-rich and socioculturally marked allusion is replaced by a neutral statement — “его забьют до смерти” [“they will beat him to death”]. In this case, the translation strategy of omission is used, in which a culturally significant element of the original text is excluded without adequate compensation. Despite the preservation of the general semantics of the episode (the threat of violence from the crowd), the historical and political context associated with the symbolic load of the concept of ‘lynching’ is lost. This decision may be motivated by the desire to avoid terminology that is incomprehensible or alien to the Russian-speaking reader. However, it should be emphasized that such an omission leads to a loss of meaning, since it eliminates the possibility of interpreting the scene in a broader political and historical context. This is especially important given that this allusion in the source text is not accidental, but indicates many other images that refer to the political mechanisms of violence and its mythologization.

Thus, as a result of translation, not only is a reduction of a separate concept that occurs, but also a decrease in the allusive density of the statement. The Armenian version retains a high degree of semantic and intertextual richness, remaining closer to

the source text, while the Russian-language text demonstrates a tendency towards simplification due to the exclusion of a culturally marked element and its non-equivalent replacement.

This distinction becomes particularly revealing when examining the episode through the lens of Ben-Porat's model of interpreting allusions. In the English original, the marked element "lynchings" activates the cultural memory of 'Lynch Law,' and the interaction with the image of "mythological waters" creates an ironic synthesis of the historical and mythopoetic layers, where the salvific biblical motif is transformed into a symbol of destruction. In the Armenian translation, the first stage of identification is manifested through the expression "Լինչի դատաստան," which reinterprets violence as a sacred act of retribution. The combination with the image "առասպելական ջրերի պես կփեղեկվեն" ["They will flow like mythical waters"] enhances the ritual nature of the scene, transforming it into an archetype of sacrifice.

The Russian translation, by contrast, shifts the emphasis to the existential plane: weakening the historical allusion, it heightens the psychological tension and interprets the mythological image as a sign of internal crisis and hopelessness.

So, each text implements the four stages of Ben-Porat's model in its own way: the English through the ironic clash of history and myth, the Armenian through the sacralization of violence as a ritual of retribution, and the Russian through the psychologization of the mythopoetic image. This comparative perspective allows us to see how a single allusion acquires different semantic dimensions in different cultural contexts, while preserving the common symbolism of collective madness and destructive forces.

An analysis of the examples examined reveals how the choice of translation strategies is not a purely technical decision, but rather reflects broader cultural and ideological attitudes toward S. Rushdie's text and the phenomenon of intercultural dialogue itself.

Explication, most actively used in Armenian translations, functions as an intercultural mediator. Explanatory footnotes, clarifications, and explanations of allusions (for example, references to the Reign of Terror or explications of the meaning of the name Ahura Mazda) demonstrate the translator's desire not only to preserve but also to actualize the cultural, historical, and religious context. This strategy reflects the educational function of translation, where the goal is to make intertextual connections accessible to readers not native to English or Western cultures. Translation thus acts as a form of cultural dialogue that strives to preserve the multilayered nature of the original. Omission, characteristic of Russian translation, is particularly noticeable in the case of the religious and mythological allusion to Ahura Mazda. This technique reduces intertextual richness and simplifies the semantic field. The absence of a sacred element and the refusal of explanations indicate a focus on a linear, narrative readability of the text, where the ideological focus shifts from the cultural and religious dimension to the social and everyday. This reflects the tradition of adaptive translation, where conveying the narrative and emotional aspects is more important than preserving complex cultural codes. This methodology may reflect a pragmatic or ideologically neutralizing approach: a desire to make the text universally understandable, but at the cost of losing its polyphony and symbolic tension.

Domestication is evident in the Russian version of the statement about Kundera, where the addition of an explanation (now an émigré) shifts the emphasis from the intertextual allusion to a socio-political characterization. In this case, the strategy is aimed at ‘appropriating’ the text to the cultural codes of the target audience: the translation adapts Kundera’s image to familiar ideological contexts — the figure of the exiled writer, symbolizing the fate of the intellectual under conditions of unfreedom. As a result, the cultural and historical context of the original (a European reflection on memory and identity) is transformed into a political and ethical context relatable to Soviet and post-Soviet readers.

Thus, the cultural space of Salman Rushdie's allusions is extremely diverse: mythology, the Bible, literature, history, politics, etc. The task of the translator is to feel, recognize in the narrative moments containing allusive information, and objectively convey to the reader the meanings encrypted in them.

#### 4. Discussions

The conducted analysis of two translations of Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame* into Armenian and Russian reveals key differences in the strategies for interpreting and conveying allusions, which constitute one of the most challenging aspects of literary translation of a polyphonic and multifaceted postmodern text. Both versions convey the rich, multilayered nature of the original work, but do so with different emphasis, reflecting the specific cultural and ideological contexts of each culture. The analysis revealed a wide variety of allusion sources, spanning literary, historical, political, and religious-mythological spheres. The text’s allusions are predominantly *historical-literary* (30%) and *religious* (24%), emphasizing the significance of the cultural-historical and spiritual context. *Literary allusions* account for 20%, while *mythological ones* account for 16%, introducing an additional layer of intertextuality and symbolism. This distribution demonstrates a balanced combination of historical-cultural, religious, and artistic dimensions, ensuring the work's multilayered nature and depth.

The Armenian translation emphasizes interpretive openness and cultural continuity while preserving the complexity and multilayered nature of the original. It makes extensive use of footnotes and explications, which contribute to the expansion of intertextual space and help the reader delve into the historical and cultural context, blurring the boundaries between different layers of meaning. This approach creates a model for perceiving memory, identity, and Rushdie’s mythopoetic world, linking the text to national notions of sacred, historical, and intellectual experience.

In contrast, the Russian translation tends towards ideological neutralization and rationalization of the text. It is characterized by a focus on stylistic brevity, achieved through a reduction in cognitive and intertextual richness, as well as internal explanations integrated into the main narrative. This approach facilitates interpretation, reducing the burden on the reader, and often leads to a reduction in the cultural and allusive connections of the original. As a result, the Russian translation transforms intertextual and mythopoetic layers into elements of a linear narrative, reflecting internal notions of the need for a rational and neutral transmission of content, with less



emphasis on expanding intertextual space. This analysis also confirms that the choice of translation strategies shapes different patterns of text perception: the Armenian translation strives for explication and cultural continuity, expanding the intertextual field, while the Russian translation tends toward reduction and focuses on stylistic order and clarity, often at the expense of the depth of cultural connections and allusive layers. Ultimately, these differences illustrate that translation is not only a means of conveying content but also an act of culture and interpretation, in which national notions of sacred, historical, and intellectual experience are manifested.

## 5. Conclusion

The study of the allusive structure of Salman Rushdie's novel *Shame* and its interpretation in translation demonstrates that allusion as an intertextual mechanism is a key tool for the formation of a multi-layered artistic space saturated with cultural, historical, and philosophical meanings. In a postmodern text, allusion ceases to be a simple reference and becomes a way of understanding identity, memory, and the power of narrative, functioning at the intersection of literary, historical, religious, and mythological discourses.

In the context of cultural and linguistic mediation, the translation of allusions requires from the translator not only linguistic but also hermeneutic competence. The translation of allusive fragments becomes an act of interpretation and reconstruction of cultural codes, in which the original text enters into a dialogue with other semiotic systems and mental attitudes of the target culture. In this regard, the translation of allusions cannot be reduced to a direct equivalent: it requires adaptation, explication or other strategies that ensure the preservation of the intertextual potential and communicative function of the original expression.

In the context of translating a postmodernist text, the phenomenon of allusion transfer is of particular importance, as a process of moving culturally conditioned references from the original coordinate system to the coordinate system of the target culture. Such a transfer requires not only an accurate reading of intertextual connections but also their reformatting in the conditions of a different cultural paradigm, which makes the translation of allusions a space for semiotic and cultural transfer aimed at creating a functional and aesthetically equivalent perception in a new linguistic and cultural context.

A comparison of the Armenian and Russian translations reveals broader patterns of cultural transfer, demonstrating how linguistic and ideological constraints shape each translation culture's approach to postcolonial texts. The Armenian translation pursues a strategy of interpretive openness, preserving the polyphony and cultural hybridity of Rushdie's narrative. This approach reflects the translational culture inclined toward dialogue and the continuity of cultural codes. In contrast, the Russian translation tends to rationalization and ideological moderation, resulting in a more unified and 'domesticated' version of the text. This difference demonstrates that translation in the context of postcolonial literature functions not only as a linguistic act but also as a

space where broader cultural, ideological, and historical dynamics of meaning-making are reconsidered and correlated.

An analysis of the allusions in the novel *Shame* sheds particular light on the translator's role as a mediator of intercultural semantics in postmodern literature. The translator emerges not as a neutral conduit of transmission, but as an active interpreter and selector of meanings, making conscious linguistic and pragmatic decisions that reformat the semantic relations between the source and target texts. Such decisions (from the choice of explication or omission to the formation of comments and footnotes) determine which culturally loaded codes will be preserved, modified, or lost. Consequently, the translator not only conveys content but also shapes the reader's interpretation, acting as an agent of cultural transfer and bearing significant aesthetic and ethical responsibility in translating the polyphonic nature of postmodern narrative.

In addition, the difference in translation strategies (generalization, explication, concretization, commentary, etc.) has a direct impact on the reception of the text, the degree of its interpretative openness, and the depth of interaction with the reader's consciousness.

Without taking into account intertextual connections, without familiarity with the real artistic and aesthetic context of the work in translation, its perception by the reader is incomplete, therefore the problem of translation commentary in the case of using allusive information in the text should be comprehensively studied, and the basic principles of its creation should be developed, which is a further prospect of the study. The classification and typology of allusions is of particular importance, since different types of allusive inclusions impose different requirements on the methods of their representation in translation. Promising areas for further research seem to be: corpus analysis of Rushdie's translations, experimental study of the perception of allusions, and the development of a methodology for commenting on culturally specific references.

As a result, the translation of allusions in the book *Shame* seems to be a multifaceted intercultural act that incorporates the text into a new cultural context, redistributes meanings, actualizes cultural memory, and transmits information. This demonstrates that translating a postmodernist work is not only a philological endeavor but also a type of cultural mediation in which the translator actively participates in the transfer and recoding of intricate semiotic systems as a co-author and interpreter.

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### Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no ethical issues or conflicts of interest in this research.

**Ethical Standards**

The authors affirm this research did not involve human subjects.

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