

# **TRANSFORMATION OF METANARRATIVES: A POSTMODERN ANALYSIS OF *BURNT SHADOWS***

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Contemporary Pakistani literature incorporates postmodern sensibility of the present time as it belongs to South Asia that is a region quite vulnerable to political, religious, social and cultural conflicts due to its strategic position in the world. Postmodern fiction challenges the modernmaster narratives of cast, creed, nation, faith, culture, knowledge, justice, science and colonialism. The great postmodern theorist and scholar, Jean Francois Lyotardin his *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1979) refers this condition as “incredulity towards metanarratives”.The current research study explores the postmodern treatment of master narratives in two novels i.e. *Burnt Shadows* written by Kamila Shamsie. Postmodernism provides the theoretical background of the study while textual analysis is opted as the research method.*

**KEY WORDS:** Postmodernism, Meta-narratives, Jean Francois Lyotard, English fiction, South Asian literature.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Postmodernism, as a theory or movement, cannot be defined in clear cut terms as it itself negates the concepts of absolute definitions and fixedtruths. Historically, the term postmodernism was used for the first time by Arnold Toynbee in his *A Study of History* (1947).Mainly, it is because of the philosophies of postmodern theoristsw hichremainsopersonal and different from each other thatitseems vague to define the term. Infact, postmodernism is not a separate movement, rather it is linked with modernism as Lyotard states, “I have said and will say again that ‘post-modernism’ signifies not the end of modernism, but

another relation to modernism.”<sup>1</sup>Postmodernism, as a movement, gets skeptical towards metanarratives as a research article entitled *Rupture of the Meta-narratives: A Post-modern Interpretation of Camus’s The Outsider* states, “We have now lost the ability to believe in meta-narratives” claims Jean-François Lyotard, who coined the term “Postmodernism” that first entered the philosophical lexicon in 1979, with the publication of *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*” (Sadalge, 2013, p.69). The superficial and literal meaning of metanarrative is ‘high-level story’, or ‘big story’, as ‘meta’ means ‘about’ and ‘narrative’ is a story. Infact, these are the stories which define all aspects, perspectives, and theories in relation to a society, and every other philosophy was actually examined in the light of these existing narratives. Linda Hutcheon, a postmodern philosopher and scholar, comments, “In Lyotard’s view, a metanarrative is meta in a very strong sense. It purports to be a privileged discourse capable of situating, characterizing, and evaluating all other discourses” (quoted in *Feminism/Postmodernism*, 2013, p.22).

World War Two (1939-1945) was a main historical event that generated a conflict in the existing modern philosophy of metanarratives. The huge massacre of almost 70 million people shattered all myths of justice, peace, liberty, democracy, civilization and science. Similarly, the massive destruction caused due to the Hiroshima Nagasaki atomic bomb attacks, September 9/11, colonialism, Paris attacks and all other bloody conflicts questioned the narratives of science, progress, justice, enlightenment, liberty, imperialism, war and humanism. It was proved that these narratives could no longer stophunger, disease, conflicts and poverty; instead, humanity was pushed to the periphery. It is because of these narratives that there prevailed more anxiety, chaos, disorder, disbelief and distrust in the world.

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in *Postmodernism and economics*, Journal of Post Keynesian Economics Summer 1991, Vol 13, No 4.

The second most important historical event that catalyzed the beginning of postmodernism is the rapid advancement in the field of science, post 1950's era. Computer was made, and launched successfully in 1951, experiments in the cloning started in 1952, satellite was introduced in 1957, and the internet was invented in 1969 in America. These technological advancements transformed the ways of life and the approaches, behaviours and mindset of the people. There remained no difference between reality and science; moreover, it undermined and challenged the existence of spiritualism. The negative use of science to oppress humanity was viewed skeptically by the societies which tended to incline on the peaceful means of acquiring solutions to the conflicts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

South Asia has produced some of the globally recognized English fiction writers especially in the regions of Pakistan and India. These writers are well read and appreciated in the international literary market such as Muhammad Hanif, Bilal Tanweer, Mohsin Hamid, Uzma Aslam, Moni Mohsin, Bina Shah, Kamila Shamsie and Bapsi Sidhwa. These authors write about the issues of their region, in a way, to protest at the dim state of society as well as to make the international reader aware of their current cultural, social and political affairs. The current study focuses on the widely popular novel *Burnt Shadows* written by Kamila Shamsie. She is a Pakistan born and Britain based English fiction writer of young generation. Her novels deal with the ongoing political, cultural and social issues of Pakistan particularly and global world generally. She, herself, belongs to a literary family especially her mother, Muneeza Shamsie, holds a prominent position as a renowned journalist and writer. Kamila Shamsie, the writer of seven novels, was born in Pakistan in 1973. Her literary work is well recognized, and she has also won several major prominent literary awards including the highly esteemed *Pitras Bukhari* award by Government of Pakistan, lately in 2010. As a resident, she has moved and adjusted to different regional, national and cultural contexts i.e. from Karachi to Britain and from Britain to New York (especially at the time of writing *Burnt*

*Shadows*). Therefore, her novel *Burnt Shadows* reflects upon her very own hybrid cultural, social and geographical experiences.

*Burnt Shadows* is based on contemporary issues of South Asia particularly and of the global world generally. Shamsie, in an interview, says that Pakistan or problems of Pakistan cannot be seen in isolation because whatever is happening in this country is due to whatever is happening in Afghanistan, U.S, India or any other global country. In her opinion, this is the sole reason that made her to highlight the broader global historical, social and political conflicts related to the regions of South Asia particularly Pakistan and west. The novel also expresses the impact and destruction of certain historical events in terms of the magnitude of the serious aftereffects, on Pakistan. In another interview, Shamsie expresses her deepest concern when she says that, “There’s so much that hasn’t been written, whether it’s the 71 war, the nuclear tests, or what happened in Karachi in the 90’s, the Baluchistan stuff which no one has touched yet (Cilano, 2007, p.157).” She agrees to the fact that though, due to low literacy rate, the readership of English fiction in Pakistan is very low but still she prefers to write in English because she has command over this language, as well as she wants to address the global audience.

Postmodernism, being an extension of modernism, exhibits some common stylistic features in fiction, but different in content. Modern fiction is based on philosophy of enlightenment, coherence, order, fixed truth, dualism, rationality and science while postmodern literature does not adhere to these traditional literary concepts. The master narratives such as marxism, colonialism, science, truth and knowledge are replaced with mini-narratives which explore certain relative cultural and historical worlds. Postmodern fiction embodies that how local narratives, validate the voice of subaltern and neglected history; moreover, these fill the existing gap in official historical record. Metanarratives give legitimacy to totalizing stories that claim for universal acceptance, while mininarratives draw legitimacy from local contexts as “In postmodernism, unlike modernism, we are not dealing with any scientific

rules, but it is the absolute incredulity toward Metanarrative, which became popular, mostly after the Second World War (Hooti & Torkamaneh, 2011, p.40).” *Burnt Shadows*, as postmodern fiction, embodies certain characteristics such as; post war nostalgia, non-linear narration, temporal displacement, hybridity, globalization, spirituality, historiography and transformation of grand narratives. Moreover, it challenges the narrative of linear, absolute and objective history as it represents the episodes of different historical experiences happened in different time spans ranging from Japan to Pakistan, Afghanistan and finally New York. Moreover, it is the novel that reflects the influence of the prevailing stereotypes between West and Islamic world in the wake of 9/11 tragedy. It represents plural identities which challenge these fixed notions as well as deconstruct the conventional post 9/11 western discourse to present a counter narrative that initiates a dialogue between the West and East (Islamic World)

## **DISCUSSION AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS**

*Burnt Shadows* is divided into four sections, with different time and space allocations for each part. The titles of sections are, ‘The Yet Unknowing World: Nagasaki, 9 August 1945’, ‘Veiled Birds: Delhi, 1947’, Part-Angel Warriors: Pakistan, 1982-3’, and ‘The Speed Necessary to Replace Loss: New York, Afghanistan, 2001-2’. According to Shamsie, *The Yet Unknowing World* is the ‘most dramatic change’ because this section completes in almost four hours starting from air raid siren till the bomb is dropped on 9<sup>th</sup> August.<sup>2</sup> The story of the novel starts from Nagasaki, where the protagonist; Hiroko Tanaka, teaches German language in a school. She meets a German man named *Konrad*, who is in love with the people of Japan but unfortunately, his loyalty is suspected due to his foreign nationality. John Macleod criticizes this traditional understanding of nationality in his book *Beginning Postcolonialism* states that; “Nationalism is an obsolete idea to unite people, for uniting people, myth of nationalism must be in accordance with all the dwellers living

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<sup>2</sup>Interview: “Shadows of History”, Dawn, Islamabad, April 26, 2009.

within a country's boundary" (qtd by Nadeem & Hashmat, 2015, p.66). Therefore, according to Macloed, Konrad should be considered as an official citizen but he is discriminated but ironically he gets love from ordinary people. Similarly, Hiroko develops a warm relation with him when he requests her to translate some English reading material into German language and to which she agrees. In their regular meetings, they both get close to each other irrespective of their different national/political backgrounds. Finally, they decide to get marry, but Nagasaki tragedy happens in the form of atomic bomb attacks and Konrad dies. Hiroko survives with the signs of burntbird's shadows printed on her back because of the dress that she was wearing on that very unfortunate day.

The novel further laments on the aspect that how nationalism causes destruction at the cost of humanity, for instance it crafts the characters who symbolize the people from other nationalities who lived in Nagasaki and had their roots there since ages, but after Second World War, they were subjected to forceful migration to avoid unwanted consequences. Similarly, Konrad is also marginalized due to his German nationality though he witnesses and appreciates the ongoing cross cultural integration in Nagasaki. Through his character, Shamsie introduces her readers to the lively city of Nagasaki, as the text *Burnt Shadows* writes that 'When he sailed into the harbour of the purple-roofed city of Nagasaki in 1938 'he felt he was entering a world of enchantment (p.6).' He also appreciates a photograph in which Japanese and Europeans are shown in good and friendly terms. Infact, Konrad's German nationality never blinds his mind, rather he feels happy to know about intercultural marriages between Japanese and Whites. There is no superiority given to any culture in superior/inferior or high/low binaries and Shamsie treats both the parts equally as Shakouri, Sheikhy and Razabeigi assert in their study entitled *On the Plausibility of Postmodernism* that "Lyotard argues, all narratives can exist together, side by side; in a sense, no one can insert its domination into the other unilaterally (2015, p.72)." In the similar way, Konrad greets people of different nation, region, cast and creed equally. He likes everything about Nagasaki such as the people, language, English newspapers and inter-cultural integration. He finds

that cultural differences in Nagasaki owe a celebration, rather to make them as an excuse for generating conflicts. On the other hand, Hiroko who keeps on moving in different countries feel nothing awkward as she states, 'but I'm at home in the idea of foreignness (p.141)'.

Text highlights the way the characters reveal and defy the existence of stereotypical hatred present in the minds of the people, who belong to rival nations, cultures or religions. Harry, an American and also a CIA employee, comes to Pakistan to meet Sajjad as they both have deepest regards for each other since former's childhood time. This friendship of Sajjad with an American becomes the cause of his murder as he is killed due to the fact that he works for CIA that is an agency that works for the interest of America. This barbarous act speaks volumes of the traditional mindset of people of Pakistan who think that all Americans are anti-Muslim or anti-Pakistan as text states, 'every Pakistani assumed that all Americans in their country were CIA operatives (p.162)'. It represents the belief that anyone in Pakistan who shares a friendship with an American is considered to be breaching the loyalty towards his own people. Similarly the character of Harry contradicts this very assumption when he gets cozy with Pakistanis, text writes;

He stopped at a traffic light, and the man on a bicycle who stopped beside him leaned slightly towards Harry's open window, his head nodding in appreciation of the music from the car stereo. Harry ejected the cassette and handed it to the man. The man took the cassette, his tentativeness suggesting he could't believe it was really meant for him, and directed the question 'Amreekan?' at Harry. When Harry nodded, the man stuck his pinky finger into one of the holes around which the tape spooled and held it up with expression of amazement, turning his hand this way and that as if admiring an engagement ring (p.169).

Beside the characters of Harry and Hiroko who are non-Muslim, the novel embodies the fact that the followers of Islam are not always anti-west as Islam is stereotyped as a religion that teaches fundamentalism, terrorism, hatred and intolerance against non-Muslims. Shamsi resists

this traditional image of Muslims as ‘terrorists’ as Claire Chambers in *British Muslim Fiction* agrees to this very point when she states that, “Analysis of spoken words and literary production of writers of Muslim heritage reveals an entirely countervailing image of pluralism, tolerance, sophistication, and hybridity (2012, p.28)”. Infact, the novel constructs plural identities of Muslims through various characters like Sajjad, Raza, Hiroko and Abdullah. Though, all these characters represent different personality traits individually but the text highlights the presence of fundamental human goodness in them which contradicts with that of their officially defined identities such as patriotic, nationalists, Muslims or anti-Muslims etc. Test contests the idea of terrorists who, by wrong interpretation, kill humanity on the pretext of Islam as it states, ‘It was just one Afghan with a gun who never stopped to think of Harry Burton as anything but an infidel invader whose death opened up a path to Paradise (p.347).’ It is a perception, generated by few fundamentalists that if one kills a non-Muslim invader then he will be awarded a rank at seventh or the top place in Paradise. Abdullah expresses his misconceptions with reference to many matters but Kim clears his misunderstandings when she asks Abdullah,

Have you read the Quran?

Of course I have.

Have you read it in any language you understand?

I understand Islam, he said, tensing.

‘I’ll take that no. I’ve read it- in English. Believe me, the Quran says nothing of the sort(p.346).

At other instance, Hiroko (non-Muslim) finds Sajjad (Muslim) a gentle human being; therefore, she, by choice, embraces Islam and marries him. Similarly, Sajjad, a Muslim, does not force his religion on his would-be- bride *Hiroko* rather he accepts her the way she is; along with her culture and tradition. The character of Raza; another Muslim and son of Sajjad, is portrayed as a helpful and humane fellow towards others, especially when he helps the innocent Abdullah to have a successful escape from police.



The novel challenges the grand narrative of war that has always been legitimized on the basis of its utility in attainment of justice, peace and liberty among the conflicting nations. Kamila Shamsie writes about personal and historical experiences of the characters, in the wake of war, and the novel depicts the worst side of destruction caused by war. In fact, the very title of the novel i.e. *Burnt Shadows* protests against the destruction caused by atomic bomb attack that occurred in Nagasaki on 9<sup>th</sup> Aug 1945 and it proved to be a horrible decision, ever made by the concerned government. The title suggests that not only the human bodies were ignited but their shadows too were burnt due to the high heat and radiations emitted. John Bester in his novel *Black Rain* (1971) records the same pain caused due to Nagasaki bomb attacks as he writes, "Those who were not killed outright were taken, their bodies burned raw all over (1969, p.12)." After their marriage, the couple moves to Turkey in order to avoid partition conflicts of 1947, and, ironically, their romance flourishes in a conflict ridden world around them. In the end of the novel, after Sajjad's death, Hiroko leaves for America in order to get an escape from 'another nuclear war' as she hears that Pakistan makes an ongoing nuclear plan to reply India's nuclear atomic explosion.

The text shows that Shamsie represents the miserable experiences of world wars, Hiroshima atomic bombs, September 9/11, colonialism, and imperialism from the perspective of subaltern or victim. Through documenting these historical tragedies, she makes the readers aware of the massive level of destruction that was, ironically, legitimized at the name of progress. After effects of historic tragedies have been recorded by many writers, but the capture of multiple historical events in different geographies is unique in *Burnt Shadows*. Shamsie is quite sensitive towards the fact that novel, as a form of art, is not at all detached from real world. In an interview, she says that 'a novel is an artifact, a work of art but, on the other hand, it's a work of art that is placed within a world of consequences (Cilano, 2007, p.160).' The protagonist of the novel named Hiroko is placed in a world of consequences as she is a bomb survivor, and she experiences episodes of historical tragedies comprising of different time span starting from Nagasaki to New York. The

novel records her life experience in multi-national, multi-regional, multi-cultural and multi-lingual contexts. She, by fate, is exposed to three different continents of the world, but she adjusts and molds herself in all the different set ups. The study traces that she does not remain stick to one single identity even in the backdrop of migration and globalization, rather she forms a postmodern fluid identity.

The novel delineates further on this very aspect of identity, as textual analysis reveals that different characters shed off their religious and national identities to form fluid states. It presents a colorful bowl containing the characters belonging to diverse nations, ethnicities, languages and cultures of four regions ranging from Japan to Subcontinent, Pakistan, Tokyo, Afghanistan, Italy, and it ends in New York. Textual analysis reveals that Henry; the son of James and Elizabeth, ironically, feels stranger in England (his own English land) and wants to be back, 'he wanted to be home, in India (p.57).' The novel suggests that by raising tolerance, a society can achieve harmony as it says, 'Konrad had been right to say barriers were made of metal that could turn fluid when touched simultaneously by people on either side (p.82).' At other instance, Sajjad breaks the cultural barriers and goes against the stereotypical system of arranged marriages in one's own family or roots, and he marries, by his own choice, to a Japanese woman Hiroko. As a result of their hybrid fusion, their son Raza inherits and happily adopts the characteristics of German, Japanese and Pakistani cultures. This fusion, in the wake of postmodern globalised world, challenges the notion of *Clash of Civilization* proposed by Samuel Huntington. His theory, not only, made the nations realize about their cultural superiority and absoluteness, but it also divided them into the binaries of superior/inferior or high/low.

*Burnt Shadows*, as a postmodern fiction, challenges the authority of science that, in modern era, it is there to decide when and where one is going to die. Human history shows that scientific discoveries, in form of fatal weapons, have caused irreversible destruction to humanity. A research article entitled *Epistemologies of Postmodernism* states;

“Postmodern science is theorizing its own evolution as discontinuous, catastrophic, non-rectifiable and paradoxical (Benhabib,1984, p.43)”. The novel laments at the tragic historical event of atomic bomb that was dropped in Nagasaki in 1945 and it had burnt everything even the creeping insects. It reveals that Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombs were the options taken by U S government in order to save killings of their own soldiers, who would have been died if the war would have been physically fought between the armies. Infact, West carried all the destruction in the name of progress, enlightenment, civilization and white man’s burden. Through Hiroko, the text exposes American’s selfishness and self-centered approach when she states that; “the American with gentle face said the bomb was a terrible thing, but it had to be done to save Americans lives’ (p.62). Another study, entitled *A World Destroyed: Hiroshima and its Legacies* also agrees on the fact, that it was a move taken to save killings of U.S soldiers, it says that how ‘could any responsible commander-in-chief send so many young men to die on foreign shores when an alternative like the atomic bomb was readily at hand (Sherwin,2003, p.279).’

The patriarchal domination, since history till now, has remained a reason of gender conflict in south Asian countries including Pakistan and India particularly. Hiroko, as a postmodern subject, challenges the notion of male domination which reduces a woman to an objectified entity. She, alone, travels across continents and James expresses his utter surprise at her adventures. She treats his reservation when she too asks him abruptly that, ‘Can’t women travel alone in India? (p.46).’ Besides her, another female character Ilse also represents a marginalized female, in male dominated patriarchal society, and text shows that she is made to suffer at the hands of her husband James. Firstly, on the basis of her British and German nationalities, she is treated as ‘other’, and secondly, her incapability to pretend artificial in her husband’s ‘sophisticated’ English society alienates her. She reveals her disgust over her marginalized state when she says, ‘Women enter their husbands’ lives, Hiroko – all around the world. It doesn’t happen the other way round. We are the ones who

adapt. Not them. They don't know how to do it. They don't see why they should do it (p.98)'.

The novel, through different characters, presents a critique on imperialism; another grand narrative that divided humanity for its own selfish motives. Edward Said defines, 'imperialism is an act of geographical violence (qtd in Women's Voices: The Presentation of Women in the Contemporary Fiction of South Asian Women, 2002, p.4).' Sajjad Ali; a Muslim resident of Delhi, shows his disgust over the physical and visible changes made by the imperialists, he comments that Dilli (Dil or heart) is before colonization, while later the name changed to *Delhi* that reflects the transformed and colonized city. He states that, 'Delhi: city of the Raj, separations and demarcations (p.33).' The novel gives an ironic representation of colonizers, and it exposes their selfish motives behind their fake claims of liberty, justice and civilization. At other instance, Sajjad romanticizes the glorious history of his ancestors, when they all including Ilse, James and Hiroko visit 'QutbMinar'. He tells them that Turks, Arabs, Mongols came to India as conqueror, but they lost their identity to assimilate and finally, they became Indian. He further adds that when English came they maintained their separate identity as English from England only. He protests when he says, 'Why have English remained so English?(p.82).' The character of James embodies colonial superiority when he promises Sajjad to get him a job, but in fact; he does not materialize his commitment later on. He wants Sajjad to remain under his domination forever and, in this way, he maintains the distance between colonial/colonizer. Similarly, Harry (James' son) promises Raza to help him get admission in foreign university, but like his English colonial father, did not materialize it. Ilse (James' wife) feels hatred for Sajjad especially when her son, Henry, gets close to Sajjad. Burtens want their son to be groomed up in English society to avoid the possible effect of Indianness. Being intimidated due to this closeness, Burtens send their son to England for his studies.

Multi-lingual expression in the novel celebrates the fusion of local and global languages; moreover, it also negates the concept of Standard

English language. The novel treats different languages like Urdu, German, Japanese, English and Afghani equally, and in a true postmodern sense. There are various characters who show a strong passion to learn and speak these languages. Hiroko, after losing everyone in Japan atomic bomb attack, moves to subcontinent to stay with Konrad's half sister Ilse (Elizabeth Burten) who is married to an English lawyer James Burten. Here, Hiroko meets Sajjad; an employee at Burtens, and she hears him speak Urdu that fascinates her to the extent that she requests him to teach her this language. Her deep love, respect and Urdu lessons reject the narrative of superior, colonial or imperial language. She faces objection from James Burten when he suggests her that there is no need to learn Urdu because it does not have value in English environment. The superiority complex of English man (James) is shown from his behavior when he rejects all other languages and holds English superior only. Hiroko feels suffocated in this confined English environment and she takes rescue in Sajjad's simple world. She tells him, 'I could find more in your world which resembles Japanese traditions than I can in this world of the English (p.90).'

*Burnt Shadows* incorporates local and global languages in such an innovative way that connects different cultures together. The use of different local words and terms depict the cultural uniqueness as Sajjad uses the word 'muhalla' that stands for a gathering of different families who share their occasions, ceremonies, grief and pains with one another. This word has its English alternative 'community or town but then the connotative sense is lost. Initially, upon hearing this word, James could not understand then Sajjad translates it into English, but he is quite surprised to find that James does not recognize such commonly used local Urdu word. He asks James that an Urdu local person can write in English language but why an English writer cannot write in Urdu. Textual incorporation of words like chai, sutairu, hongxao, qahweh, café, gehve, coffee, kofi, Hindoostan, Bismillah, maulvi, aba, kitsune, mubarik, sayonara show the conscious amalgamation of different languages, to show a pleasant variety. During partition 1947 event minorities in different areas were marginalized in respective regions as 'other', as

Tarun states in *Witnessing Partition: Memory, History and Fiction* that, “The ‘Ganga-Jamni, Indo-Islamic cultural amalgam produced over centuries of mingling of cultures was severely damaged by partition violence’ (2016, p.6).”

*Burnt Shadows*, as a postmodern fiction, is based on different discourses such as politics, history, religion, gender and science. It is historical, romantic, postmodern science fiction, psychological, cultural, anthropological, feministic and political. This multidisciplinary fusion rejects the conventional categorization of disciplines as Kellner states that, “Postmodernists, like critical theorists, thus tend to subvert boundaries between disciplines and draw upon a sometimes bewildering variety of disciplines, discourses and positions (1988, p.241).” As all the sections of the novel discuss events of different time and space, therefore it makes the narration non-linear, a true postmodern characteristic as Wood in *Beginning Postmodernism* (1993) states, “Postmodernism’s obsession with fragments or fractures is a resistance to the totalizing system which seeks to explain everything under a single rubric (p.14).” It presents different versions on various historical tragedies, such as when Hiroko shares her experience with Ilse, she says ‘do you know they were going to bomb Kokura that day instead? But it was cloudy so they had to turn around to their second target – Nagasaki (p.99).’

## CONCLUSION

The study shows that the detailed textual analysis of *Burnt Shadows* traces postmodern characteristics which pose a challenge to the grand narratives such as colonization, imperialism, rationalism, history, culture, truth, stereotypes and science. Kamila Shamsi sensitizes the global readers about the historical fact that any progress that is made on the basis of human destruction has never been fair or justified. The novel retells the tragic history in order to mourn the destruction caused by science while, at the same time, it reflects upon the hopeful and positive approach adopted by human societies irrespective of nationalistic, cultural and religious differences between them. Moreover, the thought

provoking text reveals that how multi-national, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-cultural interaction between diverse communities spreads humanity, and that too, ironically, under the shade of war. Trans-national relations defy the traditional concepts of bloodline relations, patriotism and nationalism; moreover it also proves that humanity has no boundaries. As a postmodern fiction and being a fusion of different disciplines, *Burnt Shadows* puzzles the readers about its own status as the text conforms to not any specific genre. Overall, it is a novel enriched with postmodern philosophy that in turn generates enlightenment and self-awareness in the readers.

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