

Postmodernist Occasions: Language, Fictionality and History in South Asian Novels

By
Ayesha Ashraf

MA English Literature, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University Quetta, 2006

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Submitted By: Ayesha Ashraf

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English Literature

Name of Discipline

Prof. Dr. Munawar Iqbal Gondal

Name of Research Supervisor

Signature of Research Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Safeer Awan

Name of Dean (FOES)

Signature of Dean (FOES)

Maj. Gen. Muhammad Jaffar (R)

Name of Rector (for PhD Thesis)

Signature of Rector

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I Ayesha Ashraf

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ABSTRACT

Thesis Title: Postmodernist Occasions: Language, Fictionality and History in South Asian Novels

This dissertation aims to explore postmodernist occasions in Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, Amitav Gosh's *The Glass Palace*, and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* by employing the theoretical lenses of Jean Francois Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon. The research draws its interest to explore the postmodernist occasions in the selected texts regarding language, fictionality, and history. Through textual analysis, this study critically scrutinizes the novels in the light of Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction in order to investigate the multiplicity of histories. It explores the subversion of grand narratives of science, war, identity, nationalism, professionalism, history and faith through the idea of language games proposed by Lyotard. Moreover, it evaluates the strategies incorporated in the texts that reflect postmodern language that is ironic and flexible enough to carry the contextulised sensibilities. The research reveals that the selected novels as metafiction reject the ideology of modern fiction though they still retain some of its aspects. This dissertation is divided into seven chapters comprising of introduction, literature review, theoretical framework and research methodology, textual analysis (three sub chapters) and conclusion. It is a qualitative, exploratory and interpretive study. Since it is a qualitative research, therefore textual analysis has been used a research method in order to read language, fictionality, and history in the selected texts. As this study aims to trace the postmodernist occasions in the selected novels, it is likely to contribute to the production of knowledge in English literary studies.

Keywords: Meta-narratives, Historiographic Metafiction, Fictionality, Language games, South Asian Novels.

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DEDICATION

I, very humbly dedicate my research work to the beloved Prophet **Muhammad** (Peace Be Upon Him), the ever best teacher for the mankind.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter briefly examines the background, development, and the key features of postmodernism as a literary movement. It discusses the theory from a general to a particular perspective with reference to South Asian English fiction. It further highlights the thesis statement, research objectives, research questions, delimitation, rationale of the study, and chapterization. Moreover, the research methodology used for this study is also specified. It also provides the significance of this research. In short, this chapter gives a brief overview of the theory and the focus of the present study.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Postmodernism, as a literary movement, emerged in 1970s, and, in a broader sense, it influenced literature, philosophy, culture, art, and architecture. It appeared as a reaction against the realistic mode of narration that was dominant in the nineteenth century. However the radical change that was seen in English fiction after World War One reflects modernist, while literature produced after World War Two is, generally, known as postmodernist literature. In fact, literary postmodernism emerged as a reaction against high modernism and it greatly influenced art. Postmodernism, in the recent decades, has evolved as an international phenomenon that cannot be limited to any particular geographical location, rather its trend has globally influenced every aspect of life. Hena Maes-Jelinek defines, “Postmodernism too is inevitably international, not just because we now live in a globalized world and even literary trends spread quickly but because the conditions of crisis which led to Postmodernism in the first place prevail everywhere” (65).

Postmodernist literature is related to modernist literature in terms of its subversion of modern essentials as “post’ in ‘postmodern’ implies that it is a modification of the modern” (Malpas 7). It is an intellectual discourse that negates the concept of a stable, reliable and universal reality. However, many theorists, philosophers and thinkers define it differently, David Harvy in his *Condition of Postmodernism* describes, “Postmodernism, by way of contrast, privileges ‘heterogeneity and difference as liberative forces in the redefinition of cultural discourse” (9). It manifests a skeptic attitude towards the truth claims of various grand narratives of Enlightenment philosophy. Accordingly, postmodern literature makes an innovative use of certain literary techniques, such as, parody, irony, self-referentiality, incorporation of mininarratives and multiple identities. Andreas Huyssen defines, “Postmodern fiction has come to contest the modernist ideology of artistic autonomy, individual expression, and the deliberate separation of art from mass culture and everyday life” (53).

The present study seeks to explore literary postmodernism, that is further divided into two categories i.e. metafiction; that deals with stylistic experimentation of narrative like irony, pastiche, generic blend and self-reflexivity. The second one is cultural postmodernism that manifests disbelief towards narratives of race, nation, gender, class and history. The most influential books on literary postmodernism are Linda Hutcheon’s *A Poetics of Postmodernism* and Brian McHale’s *Postmodernist Fiction*. Both these literary critics give a rigorous, clear, and exhaustive analysis of literary postmodernism along with the description of its philosophical as well as stylistic manifestations. However, both literary modernism and postmodernism keep some of the very basic differences as Brian McHale in *Constructing Postmodernism* refers it as, “a shift of dominance from epistemology to ontology” (8). Postmodern philosophy has impacted world literature including American, British, Canadian, French and South Asian in terms of representation of various national and international issues in an experimental style.

The region of South Asia includes countries such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Maldives and Nepal. Its total population is about one fourth of the world’s population, that makes it popular as well as the most densely populated geographical region in the world. It comprises of different ethnic and racial groups such

as Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, and Christians. It has rich literature in local, national, and international languages. Pakistan and India, especially, are known for English literature, that they produce, as it represents various issues related to national and global issues. Postmodernism brought a change in South Asian English fiction in 1990, and it was manifested in the form of revolt against master narratives of Indo-Pak Partition, World War Two, law, science, language, history and Enlightenment. Its influence is very much visible in the works of novelists including Shashi Tharoor, Salman Rushdie, Upamanyu Chatterjee, Vikaram Seth, Arunditi Roy, Amitav Ghosh and Ruth Pravar Jhabwala. These Indian fiction writers are the makers of new pattern in writing novels with postmodern thoughts and emotions. On the other hand, Pakistan has produced globally recognized writers such as Bapsi Sidhwa, Uzma Aslam Khan, Kamila Shamsie, Muhammad Hanif, Sara Suleri, Mohsin Hamid, Bina Shah, Bilal Tanweer and many other writers. English fiction produced by these writers captures sociocultural and political diversities of the region. The textual representation of the past has always been a concern of those South Asian English novels which were produced in post-Partition 1947 period.

1.3 KEY THEORISTS

The term “postmodernism” has been used by various theorists, but the present study specifically is based on the theories of Jean Francois Lyotard, and Linda Hutcheon. Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), a 20th century postmodern critic, and a key thinker, was born in Versailles, France. His notable contributions are three books namely *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* also known as the Bible of postmodernism (originally published in 1979 and translated into English in 1984), and *Just Gaming* (1985) and *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute* (1988). His works explore various themes and topics, such as, aesthetics, politics, power, language, law and philosophy.

Linda Hutcheon, a Canadian scholar, and a postmodern theorist, was born in 1947. She became the third Canadian woman who was successfully elected as president of MLA (Modern Language Association) in 2000. Her famous works include *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989), *A Poetics of Postmodernism*,

History, Theory, Fiction (1988), *Irony's Edge* (1994), *Narcissistic Narrative* (1980) and *A Theory of Parody* (1985). All her books reflect her philosophy related to postmodern fiction in terms of its certain characteristics and practices. Currently, she is serving as a professor of English in University of Toronto.

Both the selected theorists, for my study, question the status of knowledge in present day's postmodern condition. Some other theorists and prominent critics of postmodernism are also mentioned in this study due to their similar concerns with my selected theorists and relevant perspectives.

1.4 THE SELECTED NOVELS

The present study explores the presence of various postmodernist occasions with respect to language, fictionality and history in the selected novels of Muhammad Hanif, Amitav Ghosh and Kamila Shamsie. Amitav Ghosh, a Bengali English fiction writer, was born in India, in 1956. His father, Shailendra Chandra Ghosh, was a colonel in the army, therefore, he, along with his family had moved to different countries. In this way, he got the exposure to several countries including Bangladesh, Iran, India, and Egypt. During the Partition of subcontinent, his family went to live in Calcutta. Besides intensive travelling, he holds a remarkable academic record as he earned his D. Phil from Oxford University, in social anthropology, in the year 1982. He taught English at Queens College New York, and Harvard University. For a short period of time, he worked as a journalist with the famous *The Indian Express*. Though he wrote a great work on journalism, but his huge bulk of articles and essays was recognized in 1980's.

His novels include *The Circle of Reason* (1996), *The Shadow Lines* (1998), *The Glass Palace* (2000), *The Calcutta Chromosome* (1995), *The Hungry Tide* (2004) and *Sea of Poppies* (2008). His non-fiction work includes *Incendiary Circumstances* (2006), *The March of the Novel Through History: The Testimony of My Grandfather's Bookcase*, *In an Antique Land*, *India's Untold War of Independence*, *Countdown* (1999) and *The Imam and the Indian* (2002). His works achieved several prestigious national and international literary awards. His first novel *The Circle of Reason* got the Prix Medicisetranger Award, while *The Shadow Lines* received the Sahitya Akademi Award, and *The Calcutta Chromosome* was honoured with the prestigious Arthur C. Clarke

Award. *The Hungry Tide* and *Sea of Poppies* were shortlisted for the Man Booker award and they won the Dan David Prize as well as Vodafone Crossword Book Award.

River of Smoke was nominated for the Man Booker Prize, and Indian government honored Ghosh with Padma Shri award, in 2007, for his literary contributions. *The Glass Palace* won Commonwealth writers award and a grand prize for fiction at Frankfurt eBook awards, it also won fifty thousand dollars as a prize. In the year 2001, Ghosh withdrew *The Glass Palace* from commonwealth prize, and he received no award for it. His refusal to accept “Commonwealth Writer’s Prize” created much debate, though later, he wrote a letter to the organizers of the event and expressed his reservations over the use of the term ‘commonwealth’. He disapproved the prize for another reason too, that commonwealth prize did not consider those writers who have written in their regional languages. His rejection reflected his disapproval against power, authority, and divisions.

Kamila Naheed Shamsie is the daughter of renowned journalist Muneeza Shamsie, and she was born in Pakistan, in 1973. She was inspired by two famous novelists, that is, Attia Hussain and Begum Jahan Ara, who were her aunt and grandmother respectively. She did MFA from University of Massachusetts Amherst. She represents the contemporary generation of Pakistani English fiction writers. Her novels include *In the City by the Sea* (1998), *Salt and Saffron* (2000), *Karatography* (2001), *Broken Verses* (2005), *Burnt Shadows* (2009), *A God in Every Stone* (2014) and *Home Fire* (2017). Her works deal with various issues based on the narratives of nation, faith, culture, social groups, history, politics, and religion. Due to her dignified literary efforts, she was honored with “Patras Bukhari Award” by Government of Pakistan. In 2013, her name was added in the Granta list of world’s twenty best young novelists. Her famous novel *Burnt Shadows* was nominated for “Orange Prize for Fiction”. Currently, she resides alternatively in Britain, U.S, and Pakistan. Being a citizen of three countries, she is fully aware of the status of political, cultural, historical, and social issues of these regions.

Muhammad Hanif was born in Pakistan, in 1964. He did graduation from University of East Anglia. Initially, he joined PAF but left after completing his training as a pilot officer. He then joined journalism and served as head of BBC Urdu London. He

has written some of the famous plays for stage and radio and a feature film *The Long Night* (2002). His novels are *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* (2008), *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) and *The Baloch Who Is Not Missing And Others Who Are* (2014). The themes of his novels revolve around social, political, religious, historical, and cultural issues of Pakistan. His fiction is generally compared with that of Saadat Hasan Manto, Joseph Heller, and Salman Rushdie's work. His novels have been translated into sixteen languages. *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* was nominated for the "Welcome Trust Book Prize" in 2012, and for "DSC Prize for South Asian Literature" in 2013. Currently, Hanif resides in Karachi, Pakistan.

I have selected these texts on the basis of their representation of subversive language, postmodern fictionality, and plural history. The study does not claim that these works are fully representative of postmodern philosophy, but it contends that, in one way or another, these novels blur the borderlines between language, fictionality, and history. Moreover, these novels are socially, politically, and historically connected with the global world, and they are contemporary as the movement (postmodernism) itself. The selected novels through self-reflexivity and parody represent postmodern fictionality as they mark certain thematic and stylistic transformations, and undermine the ideologies of modern writings.

The selected works represent diverse narratives on various historical events, such as, World War Two, Cold War, Nagasaki 1945, and the Partition. Contemporary scholars, academicians, students, and novelists write about the Partition, because it is still relevant to the present conflicts regarding both the countries. During British rule, many misunderstandings were developed between Muslims and Hindus and, despite their years-long opposition towards 'divide and rule' strategy, eventually, both the communities collapsed into two. Even after the Partition, instead of working together as newly formed states, both the nations emerged as fragmented, chaotic, and envious towards each other. Similarly, my study explores various other historical events with the help of the tools suggested by Linda Hutcheon in her theory of historiographic metafiction.

1.5 KEY TERMS AND THEIR DEFINATION

I have outlined the following key terms in order to continue a discussion on representation of language, fictionality and history in the later part of my dissertation. Therefore it is pertinent to define these terms that have been constantly discussed in my study.

1.5.1 POSTMODERNIST OCCASIONS

My study explores postmodernist occasions related to language, fictionality, and history in the selected South Asian novels. It evaluates the presence of postmodern philosophy in significant events, instances, and happenings in the novels. The study does not claim that the selected novels are totally postmodern in their philosophy, rather it asserts that, these texts do cause, induce, and produce various such occasions, events, and opportunities at different instances. The study uses the adjective “postmodernist” that is defined by Steven Connor in *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism*, he states, ““Postmodernist” often refers to cultural works that possess stylistics features that align them with postmodernism as a structure of feeling, an understanding, rather than a chronologically defined moment” (98). Such postmodernist instances do happen seldom and they rise at some specific time, as the novels reflect occasions of language games, where certain characters make a move like players of a game, to subvert master narratives. It is also defined as an “interrogation of the notion of consensus is common to all challenges to humanistic thinking that we have come to term postmodernist” (qtd. in Caughie 15).

1.5.2 LANGUAGE

Language is a medium to define, describe, explain, and construct any phenomenon, process or situation, and it also expresses our perceptions and experiences. In postmodern fiction, the reality is linguistically oriented, and it is ultimately related to power-games, in more than one sense. In this way, the language poses a theoretical challenge to the ideology based master narratives of modernism. It performs the role of a platform that seeks some literary revolution, and it is used to challenge and deconstruct the realities, especially, “the Elightenment belief that by understanding the world we can improve the

human condition” (Pinker 39). In modern fiction, language is considered a powerful medium that perpetuates a hierarchical system, through which, master narratives are established to formulate various language games. However in postmodern fiction, metafictional occasions draw attention towards the fictionality and the artistic imagination. Such instances also problematize the relation of fiction with the language and the outside reality. The study also exposes the politics of representation, and it argues that language is predominantly constitutive, and not reflective, as Nighat Ahmed in her study illustrates this aspect of language that unmasks the ideologies. She quotes, “Norman Fairclough, a well-known sociolinguist substantiates this premise and posits the place of language as central in post modernism. In his view, the discourse in modern capitalist societies is structured by ideology, society and institutions (122). The crucial role of language in postmodern fiction plays a vital role in communication as it is evident that many well-known philosophers like Foucault, Wittgenstein, and Derrida have written about the significant functions and strategies of language.

My study captures the postmodernist occasions, in the selected novels, related to paralogical moves in language games in order to challenge various master narratives. Such moves generate mini narratives which do not claim for objectivity, rather they are relative, contextulized, and plural. A master narrative or metanarrative can be defined as the “interpretive frameworks or ways of understanding the world that are claimed to have truth or validity that crosses all spatial and temporal boundaries, true for all people, at all times and in all places” (Hermida 98). It is a manmade notion that validates its position and worth in order to regulate the whole society. Lyotard questions the ‘naturalization’ of various binary oppositions, he remarks, “These ‘metanarratives’ which purport to explain and reassure, are really illusions, fostered in order to smother difference, opposition, and plurality” (qtd. in Barry 83). My study traces such instances where language generates mininarratives in order to subvert metanarratives. These instances prove that, through language, postmodern fiction makes the reader realize about outward as well as inner worlds.

1.5.3 FICTIONALITY

In postmodern fiction, the characters, plot, and the structure demonstrate the use of various unconventional metafictional techniques in order to transform the relationship of language with the reality. Anushman Mondal in *Amitav Ghosh* defines fiction as it is “a word derived from the Latin “to make” (20) and it is a “commonly held belief that fiction is equivalent to unreal or untrue, a position that is common within postmodernism” (20). In this sense, postmodern fictionality discusses fiction within fiction while referring to its own status, and the construction. The text provokes the reader to participate in the discursive representation of the realities that exist only in the form of words. Postmodernist occasions of fictionality incorporate the playful and self-reflexive blend of fact and fantasy in the form of magic realism, dreams, intertextuality and illusions. The selected texts create occasions of fictionalized account of reality that subvert the reader’s understanding of its traditional representation. Watson comments on the postmodern fusion of fiction and reality, he states:

Postmodernism literature extends the techniques of modernism: not only do we find multiple viewpoints, intertextuality, indeterminacy, breaking of genre boundaries, eclecticism, collage, but in postmodern works there is also a deliberate revealing of their constructedness (metafictive techniques) and a delight in games. Postmodern discourses make great use of parody, pastiche, and surrealism, and there is a pervasive use of metafiction. (55)

The word ‘fictionality’ is used here to represent those metafictional practices which are associated with the arrangement of events in order to create the desired effects rather to collect things in a 'made-up' form. It focuses more on the linguistic concerns that represent the non-referential stance of postmodern fiction. It believes that every idea or story (science, history, reality, and politics etc.) exists in narrative form that challenges the truth-claim of history and reality. Fictionality refers to a condition of being fictional, and it involves the artificial construction of various stories related to realities. Bran Nicol states, “In particular, fictionality involves a concern with the relationship between the language and relation of the world of fiction with the real world outside, this is what especially interests postmodern writers” (xvii). My study considers the question of

fictionality as a necessary part in the process of representation of reality of the world. It does not ponder over the simplistic division of fact/fiction but it examines these blurred boundaries. I seek to relate fictionality with historiographic metafiction in order to highlight a problematic relation between the 'purely' literary and the 'purely' referential aspects of fiction.

1.5.4 HISTORY AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

History is a body of knowledge that informs about the past events, and it also represents as well as shapes the present understanding of the past. In 19th and 20th centuries, history and literature were thought to be two separate domains, and the traditional historiography was based on a few assumptions. It was considered as a scientific discourse, a step towards progress and a realistic depiction of the past. A traditional historian, just like a scientist, represents his subjective interpretations and ideological stances. The modern master narratives of war, power, science and progress brought brutality to humanity that was not recorded by modern historians.

Historical events and momentous happenings are one such domain which have been mirrored in the literature mostly through treatises, essays, and of course through novels. The historians' impulse to represent history as continuous, ordered, united, and coherent comes from the human desire to look for continuity and order. History is generally taken as a record of gradual movements in the fields of humanities, societies, and nations, and it is ordered, and based on the idea of progress. The discussion has always remained debatable about the segregation between the disciplines of history and fiction. Aristotle, on the basis of his concept of imitation, believed in this distinction and he considered the nature of history as objective and factual against the imaginative aspect of fiction.

This exclusion was countered in postmodern fiction, and Linda Hutcheon coined the term historiographic metafiction for those works that problematize the claims of objective history. However the fusion of history and imagination in historiographic metafiction points towards the textuality of history. It also asserts that whatever is available about the past is in the form of a written text. These novels reconstruct the past and fill the gaps left by traditional version of history. They record personal and collective

histories and provide the reader with plural perspectives. They challenge the conventional certainties of ‘truth’ which were claimed by the traditional historians. This postmodern skeptical approach to history gives way to multi-narrative relativist description of the past. The term “Historiographic” stands for a critical view of history and its discourse, while metafiction is the use of certain techniques that demonstrate that history is a discursive construction and not something that exists naturally. It started with the publication of *Don Quixote* that was written by Spanish Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra’s in the seventeenth century. Later on, *Tristram Shandy* written by Laurence Sterne introduced it in English literature in the eighteenth century, and then it was picked up by other renowned novelists such as Vonnegut, Hawkes, Bartheleme, Burroughs, Pynchon, Coover and Fowles. It argues that we can know our past through intertextuality, memory, self-reflexivity and parody. Literary critics and writers such as Scholes, Waugh, Barth, and Hutcheon explored the fictional construction of the reality and history. Hutcheon appreciates *The French Lieutenant’s Woman*, written by John Fowles, as a historiographic metafiction as it problematizes history and fiction both through techniques such as parody and self-reflexivity.

This study applies Hutcheon’s theory of historiographic metafiction to explore the selected novels in order to trace fictionality as well as historicity. The selected works give a new dimension to the style of production as well as the reception of history. These novels draw the reader’s attention towards the process of creating the product. They present different perspectives on historical events, and, in this way, they problematize the grand narrative of objective history. They present a postmodern counter-Enlightenment approach by presenting multiplicity of histories in a sense conveyed by Lyotard.

1.6 THESIS STATEMENT

The selected novels, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, *The Glass Palace*, and *Burnt Shadows* highlight certain postmodernist occasions by simultaneously representing various historical, religious, political and cultural realities. These texts seem to exhibit a postmodern response to fixed notions by replacing them with plural and relevant mininarratives. The texts explorably challenge the metanarratives of science, progress, justice, war, and law. The selected texts also problematize the distinction between

traditional and fictional history. The postmodernist theorizing (s) of Francois Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon are likely to be useful in reading the texts to trace various postmodernist occasions with respect to language, fictionality and history.

1.7 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The present study is based on the following research objectives:

1. To investigate the ways in which postmodernist occasions are traced in the selected novels.
2. To explore the occasions depicting paralogical moves against the established metanarratives in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.
3. To trace out various instances to explore postmodern fictionality in *The Glass Palace*.
4. To examine *Burnt Shadows* in terms of its rejection of traditional history by various postmodern tools.

1.8 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research will be conducted keeping in view the following questions:

1. In what ways are the postmodernist occasions traced in the selected texts?
2. What are the strategies employed in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* that subvert the concept of grand narratives through paralogical moves?
3. How does *The Glass Palace* highlight postmodern fictionality and challenge the representation of reality?
4. How does *Burnt Shadows* play out the idea of historiographic metafiction vis-à-vis traditional historical discourse?

1.9 DELIMITATION

The current study is delimited to explore postmodernist occasions in the novels *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, *The Glass Palace*, and *Burnt Shadows* from the perspectives of language, fictionality and history only.

1.10 RESEARCH PLAN

Chapter breakdown follows Introduction, Literature Review, Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology, Textual Analysis and Conclusion. Textual Analysis chapter is divided into three chapters i.e. language, fictionality, and historiographic metafiction. The “Introduction” chapter develops a brief understanding of postmodernism, its history and evolution. This chapter also introduces Jean Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon, as postmodern theorists, in order to make a context for theoretical application in the later part of this study. The chapter further gives a detailed introductory note on the selected novels. It also includes thesis statement, research objectives, research questions, delimitations, and significance of the study.

The second chapter “A Review of the Existing Literature” consists of a review of the secondary sources and criticism regarding the selected novels. It contextualizes as well as justifies the topic of the present research to identify the gap in the current body of knowledge.

The third chapter “Theoretical Framework and Research Methodology” presents the methodology of the study. It explores the selected theorists’ views on specific characteristics of postmodernism. It further describes and explains the selected procedure of the study and it explains textual analysis, as a research method.

The chapter four, five and six consist of textual analysis and each sub chapter evaluates postmodernist occasions of language, fictionality and history in the selected novels.

The final chapter is “Conclusion” that briefly concludes the overall study with the description of the findings, suggestions, and recommendations for future research. The final chapter summarizes the findings in relation to the proposed research objectives. It describes each aspect with respect to the selected novels. It ends with some suggestions and recommendations for the upcoming researchers.

1.11 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The present study explores postmodernist occasions regarding language, fictionality and history in the selected south Asian novels. This study has used the words

“South Asian Novels” in the title for the fiction written by Indian and Pakistani English authors. Though this might sound reductive that the entire South Asian fiction has been reduced to Indian and Pakistani English novels, but the argument, for using South Asian novels, is that Indian and Pakistani literature dominates South Asian literature, and makes a considerable part of it since fiction coming from other South Asian countries makes a small bulk in comparison with Indo-Pak fiction. Therefore, Indian and Pakistani novelists are generally considered to be representative of South Asia. Moreover, it does not make sense that, this research study should take fictional works from all South Asian countries, that is why English fiction coming from Indian and Pakistani Anglophone novelists comfortably be called South Asian, since we cannot deny the geographical location of both the countries as South Asian. The novels selected for this study, undoubtedly, demonstrate the particular ideology of their respective authors as well as the region.

1.12 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This particular study is unique as it highlights the efforts of the selected novelists to create a sense for cross-cultural, cross-national and interfaith harmony in the wake of contemporary world of barriers and prejudices. It is also significant because it seeks to generate some awareness among the readers about their role as where they stand and what they can and should do for the betterment of humanity.

This study is also very important because it discusses the selected fiction in terms of different aspects like language, fictionality and history that highlights that postmodern fiction is much more than just a work of fiction. It counters the political and historical realities through language and fictionality. It shows that language can depict the realities, and, at the same time, it can challenge them too. Similarly, this study is unique as it brings into light the blend of metafiction and history to revise historical discourse that presents an alternative version to already existing official discourse.

The study will help the researchers, teachers, and the students of English literature know the impact and influence of global postmodern phenomenon on South Asian English fiction in general and Indo-Pak English fiction in particular.

Next chapter reviews the existing literature in order to contextualize the present study and also find out the gap that this study aims to fill. Moreover, it aims to locate the present study in the broader socio-cultural postmodern debate in order to validate the present research.

CHAPTER 2

A REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LITERATURE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter intends to contextualize the present study and find gaps in the existing research scholarship. It is divided into four sections. First section tries to contextualize this project with the secondary sources related to theory and its practices. The sources consulted in this section include books, research articles, essays and few doctoral dissertations. The second section critically analyzes the previous studies conducted on fiction from the point of view of similar theoretical perspectives, so that my study gets located in the available research. The third section provides a general critique on South Asian English novels from my research perspectives, and situates my selected texts in South Asian tradition of Anglophone fiction writing. Fourth and last section critically analyzes the previous arguments and studies conducted on my primary texts, so that I can find out the gaps within the existing body of literature.

2.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In order to systematize my review, I have divided it into four distinct sections. The review of scholarly studies is categorized as following:

- I** Historical development of postmodernism
- II** Postmodernism in academic debate
- III** South Asian English literature
- IV** A review of the secondary sources

(I)

In this section, I have reviewed some very important works regarding historical development of postmodernism, its practice, and some important works of fiction. These sources are relevant to my study as their main focus is development of language,

fictionality, and history in postmodern literature. The very first source that I intend to review is *Beginning Post-Modernism* (1999), a remarkable work by Tim Woods, that traces the chronological development of postmodernism. Woods also establishes the theory's relationship with its predecessor, that is, modernism. He remarks, "The prefix 'post' suggests that post-modernism is inextricably bound up with modernism, either as a replacement of modernism or as chronologically after modernism" (6). He argues that any new age emerges due to certain historical changes in the existing thought practices. Similarly, postmodernism can be traced by looking at its various manifestations in the fields of art, literature, music, economy, and history. He suggests that it makes the most sense when it is viewed in contrast to the Western cultural development, which took place from 17th till 19th centuries (also known as modernism). Moreover, the close similarity, between both the movements, makes these inseparable from each other, hence, leaves no distinct parameters to define them individually. Woods considers that Charles Jencks is the pioneer among many other prominent theorists, such as, Fredrich Jameson, F.R Leavis, and Jean Buadrillard. He quotes Dick Hebdige's definition of postmodernism as it is "the de-centring of the subject, an incredulity towards metanarratives, the replacement of unitary power axes by plurality of power, the implosion of meaning, the collapse of cultural hierarchies" (Woods 2). He then refers to Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, who use the term "rhizome" (structure of a root) to define postmodernism due to its vast influence on almost every field of knowledge. Woods further suggests, "From the inception of the term in Arnold's Toynbee's *A Study of History* (written in 1934, and published in 1947), the term has accumulated contradictory meanings" (Woods 6).

According to Woods, modernism started in the 18th century "from about 1910 until about the beginning of the Second World War" (7). He remarks that the special characteristics of modernism were reason, meta narratives, logical coherence, scientific rules, law, evidence, order, science, democracy, liberation, enlightenment, and objective truth. He is of the view that Bacon, Malebranche, G.W.F Hegel, Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Descartes are considered the originators of modern philosophy. They believed on the idea that human beings can control and reshape the world by using reason and logic. Later on, their faith, on reason, failed due to the huge disasters as a result of Holocaust, Belsen, Nagasaki atomic bombing, and Auschwitz. Woods argues that anti-realist and

anti-reason philosophy emerged in the wake of such disastrous happenings, he states, “Such questioning suspicion of the Enlightenment is principally associated with the works of Jean Francois Lyotard “for whom postmodernism is an attack on reason” (9). Wood’s study is relevant to my research as it provides a detailed background of postmodernism, and its evolution as well as its continuous relation with modernism. Though, this study highlights the metanarratives and Enlightenment, but its focus is mainly on the theorizing. It does not relate it with fiction, while my study fills this gap by depicting a postmodern response to these master narratives of reason, science, law, reality and justice in the selected South Asian fiction.

Stephen Hicks’ *Explaining Postmodernism: Skepticism and Socialism from Rousseau to Foucault* is another important work that portrays a chronological account of the historical development of postmodernism, and it highlights its relation to modern philosophy of metanarratives. Like Woods, Hicks too believes that the essentials of modern philosophy were proposed by Rene Descartes, Francis Bacon, and John Locke. These thinkers believed on reason and individualism, instead of supernaturalism, and they regarded human wisdom as a way to know the world. Hicks explains that modern philosophy reached at its peak in the Enlightenment era, and Isaac Newton in Physics and Mathematics, Antoine Lavoisier’s *Treaties on Chemical Elements* and Carolus Linnaeus’s *Philosophia Botanica* laid the foundations of these fields of knowledge. He claims, “As the Enlightenment grew in power and prestige in England and France, an emerging Counter-Enlightenment gathered its forces in the German states” (Hicks 27) and this attitude brought a transformation in the reception of grand narratives. He believes, “Postmodernism is the end result of the counter Enlightenment attack on reason” (27). To give a clear picture, he draws a comparison between the modern and postmodern age as follows:

Postmodernism’s essentials are the opposite of modernism’s. Instead of natural reality—anti-realism. Instead of experience and reason—linguistic social subjectivism. Instead of individual identity and autonomy—various race, sex, and class groupisms. Instead of human interests as fundamentally harmonious and tending toward mutually-beneficial interaction—conflict and oppression. Instead

of valuing individualism in values, markets, and politics—calls for communalism, solidarity, and egalitarian restraints. Instead of prizing the achievements of science and technology—suspicion tending toward outright hostility (14).

Hicks believes that Immanuel Kant was the first anti-reason thinker, who attacked the narrative of reason, and its claim to progress. Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason* argues that Enlightenment notion of reason is based on the sense perception that varies from person to person. Kant emphasized that it is not the object alone that produces the knowledge while, in fact, the “knowing subject” (Hicks 34) digs the reality on the basis of his/her own distinct identity. After Kant, there were few renowned German philosophers, such as, Nietzsche, Hegel and Heidegger, while Richard Rorty emerged in America. Like Kant, Heidegger proposed that reason is constructed subjectively, and his philosophy inspired Foucault, Wittgenstien, Dewey and Derrida in developing their concepts. Hicks claims that Hegel has got a significant position in the postmodern debate, because of four important principles that he has suggested. These principles state, “Reality is entirely subjective creation; Contradictions are built into reason and reality; Truth is relevant to time and place, and The collective, and not the individual, is the operative unit” (qtd. in Hicks 50). According to Hicks, all these four premises were founded as a result of the rejection of the dominant philosophy of Enlightenment. He claims, “Postmodernism rejects the Enlightenment project in the most fundamental way possible-by attacking its essential philosophical themes” (14). He believes that in the field of law “Critical Legal Theory” and “Legal Pragmatism” paved the way for rejection of master narratives of objectivity with reference to court system and it considered it as “law as a weapon” (17). Hicks analysis is directly related to my study as it explains the shift from modern essentials to postmodern subversion of these fundamentals. However, I find that Hicks has viewed postmodernism from the perspective of German and American philosophers while my study explores the postmodernist occasions through the lenses of French and Canadian theorists, who are the real pioneers of the theory. Generally, his study is useful to my research argument that is based on the dismantling of Enlightenment notions in the selected novels. However he does not discuss in detail the subversive strategies that postmodern fiction employ against Enlightenment notions, my

study seeks to fill this gap by focusing on irony, self-reflexivity, paralogical moves, and intertextuality explored in the selected primary works.

The Cambridge Companion to Postmodernism edited by Steven Connor is a significant work to understand the origin of postmodern theory, and it elaborates with the help of some important novels, which incorporate its various important characteristics. Connor divides his detailed study into ten chapters. He identifies four different phases of postmodern movement, that is, “accumulation; synthesis; autonomy; and dissipation” (1). The first stage starts from 1970s to 1980s and it is known due to Jean Baudrillard’s and Daniel Bell’s works. In this phase, Charles Jencks was known due to his innovative architectural style, and Ihab Hassan for his postwar writings, while Jean-Francois Lyotard was regarded for his philosophy of subversion of metanarratives. The second phase begins by the mid of 1980’s, and it goes till 1990’s, and it is known by the publication of Fredric Jameson’s landmark essay “The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism”. Connor suggests that his essay paved the way for the future debates regarding postmodernism in its third phase of development that started in the 1990s.

According to Connor, the fourth phase of postmodern critical theory begins by the end of 1990s, and it is continued till present. He contends that this phase brought many significant changes in the fields of economics, social life, and politics. He in a chapter titled “Postmodernism and literature” discusses literary postmodernism that is essentially narrative as the focus shifted from poetry to fiction. He considers Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Thomas Pynchon, John Fowles, Carlos Fuentes, John Barth, A.S Byatt, Angela Carter, and Salman Rushdie as postmodern fiction writers. He argues that, in these novelists’ works, language does not represent any single reality, rather “Postmodernist texts turned modernist worries about the limits of language into a chattering polyglossary” (Dix 70). He contends that these novels challenge the dominant master narrative of science that claims freedom and progress, and the “Enlightenment belief that the acquisition of knowledge contributes” (148). He considers Thomas Pynchon’s *The Crying of Lot 49* as one of the best example of a postmodern novel. Connor’s work is a detailed guide book about the theory and its practice, but his discussion is limited to

American fiction only, while my study locates some very crucial postmodernist features in the selected South Asian novels.

Hywel Dix's *Postmodern Fiction and the Break-Up of Britain* is a useful critique of postmodern fiction with respect to British culture. Dix describes that postmodernism, initially, emerged in Britain in 1960s. He contends that new architectural art combined high class and mass culture, and, in this way, it reacted against the class segregations which were maintained in modern literature. He illustrates his argument by quoting Charles Jencks, who in *What is Postmodernism* explains that postmodern art, be it literature or architecture, has the capacity to combine various disciplines, and forms. He asserts that such novels "cut across literary genres and combined such separated types as the historical romance, comedy, detective story, and philosophical treatise" (qtd. in Dix 29). Dix, like Jencks, believes that postmodern fiction differs from the exhausted tradition, and it emancipates the reader from his traditional role, of being a passive reader. He contends that it also subverts the modern hegemony of science, that failed to resolve the society's ills, rather it enhanced them.

He regards few novelists as postmodern including Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Italo Calvino, Umberto Eco, Carlos Fuentes, and E. L. Doctorow. He remarks that, these writers blend various genres, and fuse high culture with the popular. He claims that one of the factors responsible for shift from modern to postmodern fiction is war. It was "Britain's post-war history" (21) that British fiction, generally, focused to represent. Dix in a chapter titled "A Borderless world" regards dismantling of metanarratives as a crucial trait of postmodern novels. He argues that the British novelists, such as, Kate Atkinson and A. S. Byatt both contest the master narrative of nationhood that forms the basis of modern nations. He refers to Jeanette Winterson's novel *Boating for Beginners* that was published in 1985, and it challenges a biblical story by making it's parody. Winterson situates the Holy Land in present day Yorkshire, and he represents that Noah is accompanied by Bunny Mix who is a romantic novelist. In other words, the novel debunks few of the biblical narratives and their general perception.

In the same way, Dix explores *Cloud Atlas*, another novel by David Mitchell, that was published in 2005. It is divided into six short sections. Each part deals with the subversion of a metanarratives of science, war, justice, individualism, and knowledge. It

is based on the story of a young man Zachry, whose tribe is captured by the Kona. The novel presents the benefits of scientific progress, but it reveals that “Their superior knowledge and technology have enabled them to survive apparent catastrophe, but have also denied them access to the traditions, folk tales, oral narratives and religious sentiments” (117). Dix suggests that this novel satirizes the Korean empire’s project of human’s cloning that intended to increase the man power. He believes that this representation of cloned humans as mere mechanical devices to perform some functions reflects the dehumanization that was done in the name of scientific advancement. Dix relates this novel with Ray Bradbury’s *Fahrenheit 451*, that also involves some cloned characters or fabricants who are used as workers in the restaurants. Dix’s study explores the postmodern response against metanarrative of science, war, nationalism in British fiction. However, he does not focus on replacement of these metanarratives through the lenses of Lyotard’s philosophy of mininarratives and language games. Though he discusses postmodern parody and generic blend in British fiction, but he does not focus on the false/paralogical moves which are crucial to subvert the established rules. My study seeks to fill this gap through detailed textual analysis of South Asian English novels.

In *The Cambridge Introduction to Postmodern Fiction*, Bran Nicol provides a detailed overview of American postmodern fiction. He defines, “Postmodernism was originally coined in the 1940s to identify a reaction against the Modern movement in architecture” (1). He regards that, later, it was picked up by American cultural commentators like Leslie Fieldler and Susan Sontag, in 1960s, who described it as a ‘new sensibility’ in literature, that rejected or modified modernist attitudes and techniques. Nicol considers the incident of President J. F. Kennedy’s assassination, in 1963, as a turning point in the evolution of postmodernism. He considers that, in fact, realism forms the basis for evolution of modernism as well as postmodernism. Realist fiction is based on the idea of mimesis that means ‘imitation’, or representation of reality as it is. This mode of fiction claims, “Art and literature can reproduce aspects of the real world” (Nicol 18) so that a reader learns from it, as such depiction will help him to avoid idealistic or fantastic tendencies. Such novels include Tolstoy in Russia, Flaubert and Balzac in France, and George Eliot and Dickens in England. Nicol further suggests that

the key turning point that formulated a shift, from realistic mode to modernist writing, was used by the slogan 'make it new' that was coined by poet Ezra Pound.

Nicol mentions that the peak period of modernist literature lasted from 1890 to 1930. Later on, a shift appeared as he remarks, "To adapt Lyotard's famous statement, we could define postmodern fiction as writing which is shaped in some way by an incredulity towards realism" (19). Nicol explores Anglo-American fiction writers who were, initially, identified as postmodern included Donald Barthelme, John Barth, Robert Coover, John Hawkes, Thomas Pynchon, William Gass, Kurt Vonnegut, and David Foster. Nicol supports the idea of postmodern fictionality by citing the example of John Fowles's *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, that was published in 1969. He believes that it is a parody of realistic fiction, as in first twelve chapters, the author focuses on the characterization, but "then all of sudden interrupts the action to inform the reader that his story is all imagination" (Nicol 22). He asserts that as Fowles lived in the age of Roland Barthes and Robbe-Grillet, so he did not follow the traditional model of a novel.

Nicol gives another example of Leopold Bloom, a character in *Ulysses*, written by James Joyce. The novel consists of eighteen chapters, and it is connected with other novels, such as, *Gravity's Rainbow*, *Odyssey* and *The Passion of New Eve* through a significant postmodern device of intertextuality. Brian Nicol's study is crucial to my research as it explores the shift from modern fiction to postmodern fictionality, and it emphasizes on the techniques of intertextuality and imaginative self-reflexive construction. He explores these postmodern devices from a general perspective without specifying a clear understanding, as different theorists have different opinions. However my study provides certain defined theoretical angles, to explore these techniques, in South Asian English novels. Moreover I relate these tools with language, fictionality, and history depicted in the selected fiction.

Bennett and Royle, in their edited version of *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory Literary*, present a detailed depiction of master narrative of war with respect to English literature. They argue that, literature, since its beginning, has depicted war, and it is evident from the first word of the most celebrated poem, Homer's "Iliad" announces the rage of Achilles as its topic. They believe that, in fact, "What is

striking about such a beginning is its keen enthusiasm for war, a celebration of war” (272). They begin their essay by discussing Alfred Lord Tennyson’s poem, ‘The Charge of the Light Brigade’, that was written in 1854. This poem is based on the Crimean War (1856) in which 400 British soldiers were killed. Bennett and Royle contend that Tennyson portrays war as a narrative that stands for justice, and progress, and “the poem seems to glorify the actions of those compatriots who fight and die in war, even – or especially – in the context of a futile, misguided, suicidal military manoeuvre” (270). Though the poem, in second stanza; line twelve, mentions that an officer has made some silly decision and due to that everyone has to suffer, however, Tennyson is not interested in highlighting his error.

Bennett and Royle further argue that the modern literature glorified war to a maximum extent, but this approach shifted in the wake of World War Two. They support their claim by referring to Wilfred Owen’s poem “Futility” that is based on the sympathetic concern for the dead soldier rather appreciating his soldierly skills. This new perception marked a significant shift in the focus from “the public, nationalistic celebration of military heroism of the nineteenth century” to “a more contemporary appreciation of the significance of private sorrow and a resistance to the futility of war, any war, all war” (272). Like other studies that I have viewed so far in this section, Bennett and Royle also challenge the legitimacy of science, that made war easy, and more violent, than ever before. Their argument strengthens my study that explores the destruction caused by metanarratives of science and war. However, their main focus is subversion of these narratives in poetry, and my study explores the representation of dehumanizing effects of war in south Asian English novels.

Brian Edwards’ work *Theories of Play and Postmodern Fiction* compares the self-reflexive approach in postmodern fiction with the modern novel. Edwards divides his study into two sections, and, in the first part, he discusses the theories of linguistic playfulness to explain the function of literary texts as cultural productions. The second part highlights the significant styles with reference to few examples of postmodernist Western fiction. He remarks that, initially, linguistic playfulness was not appreciated by the literary critics and the great thinkers, such as, Plato, who in his *Republic* proposed

that poets should be banned for using playfulness. However in twentieth century, a shift in literary practice was observed in the works of Roger Caillois, Johan Huizinga, Jacques Ehrmann, Robert Rawdon Wilson, James Hans, and Bernard Suits. Edwards believes that these writers questioned the binary oppositions of reality, seriousness, and reality. He pursues his argument by referring to more visible transformation of language in the writings of Wittgenstien, Derrida, Nietzsche, Wittgenstein, Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida. He highlights that, their “perspective on language emphasizes instability against the restrictions of simple matchings (in processes of signification) and fixed meaning” (xii). He further argues that, this resistance against the modern literary norms “particularly with respect to language and meaning” (xi) paves the way for innovative linguistic playfulness that embodies the discursive construction of knowledge. He contends that, this word play questions the conventional notions of fixed truths and binary oppositions. He quotes few examples from English fiction to demonstrate postmodern fictionality and linguistic playfulness.

He considers Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow* a fine example of postmodern fiction, that decenters as well as subverts the conventional fiction by incorporating parody. He refers towards another novel *Letters*, written by John Barth, in terms of its playful language and intertextuality. He relates intertextuality in *Gravity’s Rainbow* and *Letters* with Robert Kroetsch’s *What the Crow Said*, to prove his argument that, postmodern novels comprise of a world of texts. Edward’s critique highlights the aspects of self-reflexivity, parody, and intertextuality that cause postmodern fictionality. However he does not link these tools with historiographic metafiction, that focuses on literary as well as fictional aspects of these techniques. My study aims to fill this gap in south Asian novels.

Keith Jenkins in his *The Postmodern History Reader* examines the shift in historical discourse under the influence of postmodern theory. He believes that, “most historians and certainly most of those who might be termed “academic” or professional “proper” historian have been resistant to postmodernism” (Jenkins 1). He remarks that, traditional historiography claims that it records historical truth the way it has actually happened. Jenkins quotes Munslow, who states, “History is about the process of

translating evidence into facts” (qtd. in Jenkins 6). Jenkins argues that traditional historiography claims to attain an unbiased, disinterested, and impartial position. It does not consider the personal tales and experiences of individuals, rather, it focuses only on specific groups such as the government, opposition, institutions, enemy, or separatist parties. An official historian deliberately keeps himself invisible from the discourse in order to establish a sense of impartiality and objectivity. Jenkins claims that postmodern approach towards metanarrative of history contested this hegemony of the traditional historical discourse. He strengthens his argument by referring to Hayden White, who calls this shift as end of the claims of official history. Jenkins believes that the modern metanarrative of history, as progress, ended in failure due to the rise and fall of Nazism. He states:

History whose end is signaled by postmodern thinking and it really is history per se that radical postmodernism threatens with extinction. The optimum conditions for the creation and sustaining of history now lie behind us, and we should now embrace a non-historicising postmodernism. (ibid. 2-9)

He believes that postmodern historiographic metafiction incorporates elements of fantasy and imagination which add color to the narration of historical past. These novels deal with the major historical events of twentieth-century, such as World War II, Nagasaki atomic bombing and Cold War. Jenkins’ study strengthens my research argument in terms of exploring the subversion of metanarrative of history in postmodern fiction. However, his concern relies on the presence of imagination and fantastical elements in such novels whereas my study explores self-reflexivity, memory, and irony, in South Asian novels from the specific lens of Linda Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction.

Like Kieth Jenkins, Robert Kiely in his *Reverse Tradition: Postmodern Fictions and The Nineteenth Century Novel* explores the significant distinctions between modern and postmodern fiction. Kiely draws a critical analysis of the shift that took place in nineteenth century between modern and postmodern fiction. He argues that postmodernism offers continuity to modernism, and both the movements have some similar concerns. He states, “The link to Modernism, to the past, is ambiguous. What is happening now in literature sometimes can look Modern, or newer or older than Modern”

(8). He develops his argument by relating fiction with the representation of history in both the movements, and he identifies that modern fiction tends to imitate the past. He suggests that a visible change was observed, by the mid of twentieth century, as a result of the damage caused by technology and science. It also changed the thinking pattern of fiction writer as well as the reader. He argues that postmodern shift marks a difference in approach towards the representation of past. He refers to the development of “variety of manufactured objects” (2) in the form of various buildings, which replaced and renewed the ruins of history. He contends that, before this shift, universities, libraries, and museums used to record the past from their angle of interest, and “institutions have always done this, just as nations have always made war” (3). He mentions few authors who are known as famous postmodern fiction writers in 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. He states:

In the early phases of literary postmodernism, three of the most innovative and influential writers of fiction, Samuel Beckett, Jorge Luis Borges, and Vladimir Nabokov, despite obvious and important differences, had in common their disinclination to write referential, representational, expressive prose. (6)

Kiely suggests that these writers contest the mere imitation of past events, and they did not accept a perfect representation. He believes that this postmodern shift transformed the role of author as well as the reader, who does not want to adhere to a passive reading and dictation of history. Instead, his reading potential is enhanced when it is challenged, interrogated, and provoked, and he wants to notice some “fictional device” (6). Kiely argues that the literary response towards different tragic world events, such as, nuclear explosions, holocaust, and industrial exploitation has been received differently, in different phases of postmodernism. He views that “Early postmodernist like Beckett, Borges, and Nabokov seem to sigh for the exhausted survivor, and later female postmodernists like Morrison, Erdrich, and Honk Kingston speak for the survivor as a powerful bridge” (Kiely 32). He appreciates their works as they mark a beginning in postmodern historical fiction. His critique is valuable to my study because it draws a clear line of demarcation between representations of history in modern as well as postmodern fiction. However Kiely does not relate the subversion of metanarrative of

history in the light of destruction caused by war, colonization, democracy, science and law, and my study specifically seeks to explore these aspects in South Asian novels.

Christine Harrison and Angeliki Spiropoulou's "Introduction: History and Contemporary Literature" can be considered an important analysis in order to explore the influence of postmodernism on fictional representation of history. They argue that this transformation is based on the inspiration taken from post-structuralism and "postmodern 'incredulity towards metanarratives'" (4). The authors contend that the contemporary postmodern theorists, such as, Hayden White, Dominick La Capra, Paul Ricoeur, Hans Kellner, Keith Jenkins, and Alan Munslow have questioned history "in its mainstream realist, empiricist, objectivist, documentarist, lower case, liberal/plural expressions" (4). They remark that, Hayden White, a postmodern historian, in *Tropics of discourse: Essays in Cultural Criticism* recommends history as *emplotment*. He problematizes the originality of historical facts as he states, "history is no less a form of fiction than the novel is a form of historical representation" (qtd. in *ibid* 5). Christine Harrison and Angeliki Spiropoulou believe that "In his groundbreaking *Metahistory* (1973), White had effectively problematized the putative 'objectivity' of historical writing as well as the truthfulness of facts, by foregrounding the narrative nature of historiography" (6). They analyze his other works, such as, *The Content of the Form* and *Figural Realism*, and support their argument by explaining that he relates historiography and literature with the philosophies of postmodern theorists including Jameson, Foucault, and Ricoeur. These theorists believe that postmodern approach challenges the traditional history in order to deconstruct the division of totalizing discourse.

Harrison and Spiropoulou pursue their argument by referring towards few other postmodern critics, who link history and fiction, and, in this way, challenge the division between these two disciplines. They contend that, like White, Kellner is another renowned literary critic who acknowledges the discursive nature of historical discourse, he calls them "literary creations" (qtd. in *ibid* 5). Similarly, Alun Munslow, a British historian, in his *Deconstructing History* "highlights the essentially literary nature of historical knowledge" (qtd. in *ibid* 5). Likewise Roland Barthes, a French literary critic, in his study titled "The Discourse of History" refers to the disciplines of fiction and

history as discursive medium. Harrison and Spiropoulou conclude their study by referring to Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction that combines fictionality with historical discourse. They argue:

However, such literature reveals that the past always comes down to us in some narrative form, showing up fictional characters or poetic subjects as intertextual fragments or voices. And, at the same time, the denaturalisation of the subject and a univocal past effected in most contemporary historical literature throws into relief subjects and voices repressed by official history, leading to the latter's own revision. (9)

This study validates my research argument that postmodern historiographic metafiction blurs the boundaries between fiction and reality through imaginative and discursive construction of the events. However, Harrison and Spiropoulou overlook the impact of historiographic metafiction with respect to South Asian fiction, and my study attempts to fill this gap.

Simon Malpas' *Jean Francois Lyotard* offers a very useful analysis of Lyotard's philosophy that has inspired a debate in the field of humanities and literary studies. Malpas explains Lyotard's key ideas and he attempts to justify the significance of Lyotard's notion of dismantling metanarratives. He states, "Lyotard's analyses of narrative structure, aesthetics and the politics of language make him an important thinker for anybody with an interest in contemporary Literary Studies" (3-4). He starts his discussion with the analysis of *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* that is a major contribution in the postmodern debate. He claims that Lyotard explored the ways that how highly advanced societies use to treat science, education, technology, development, and research studies. He believes, "The central question of *The Postmodern Condition's 'report on knowledge'* is thus, how are the lives and identities of people constructed by contemporary structures of knowing?" (Malpas 18). He further argues that Lyotard opines the idea that one day the major countries will no longer fight for resources like gas, coal, and oil, but they will wage war for knowledge.

Malpas remarks that Lyotard gives the example of History, Psychology, and Sociology as master narratives, because they tell the stories about the past, and human

beings. He negates any idea of objectivity and totality associated with the science, as he is of the view, that every scientific discourse is a narrative/story. He further illustrates that even mathematics has to explain their equations and findings in the form of narratives. He proves that such narrative form of explanation is pertinent to a human society, because it helps us to explain about ourselves and share our experiences. Malpas refers towards a significant idea of “language games” that stands for various rules which function behind the working idea of different metanarratives. He concludes his argument by asserting that it is very difficult to sum up Lyotard’s philosophy, because it is so diverse and , at the same time, it is related to various fields of knowledge. This study is helpful for my study in a sense that it highlights the theoretical insights of Jean François Lyotard with respect to subversion of metanarratives and language games. However, Malpas discussion is limited to the description of theory and he does not illustrate Lyotard’s philosophy with the help of any literary example. In this respect, my study applies Lyotard’s theoretical principles, on the selected novels, in order to demonstrate the role of language in subversion of metanarratives.

Post-Modernism and English Literature is a remarkable collection of essays written by various authors, edited by M.K Bhatnagar and M.Rajeshwar. It explores different features and theorizing of postmodernism with respect to some important works from Indian English fiction. Bhatnagar and Rajeshwar’s book is based on twelve essays written by different authors in a chronological manner starting from the introduction, genealogy, crucial features, philosophy and subversive strategies. The first essay “Post-Modernism – An Introduction” is written by the editor himself, that is, Dr. M.K Bhatnagar. Bhatnagar introduces the postmodern literature as “it deliberately goes about violating all expectations” (1) because it is playful, skeptic, and unconventional in a sense that it cheats the reader by presenting anti-closure instead of a clear resolution. He considers Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children* as a fine example of postmodern novel, as it takes liberty to play with exact historical facts such as “the date of Mahatma Gandhi’s murder” (2). He thinks that the novelists, such as, John Fowles, Beckett, David Lodge, Iris Murdoch, Nabakov have contributed a good number of novels in from the perspective of postmodern debate. He argues that the language of a postmodern novel is subversive that poses questions against the reality and constructs multiple realities. He

contends that in postmodernist fiction, the reality is represented with the help of fantastical elements, “Consequently the late twentieth century has seen in post-modernist writing a revival of the fantastic on an unprecedented scale” (5). Bhatnagar concludes his brief essay, by suggesting that, postmodernist fiction is different from poststructuralist literature as the former does not claim for any kind of meaning while the later believes in some degree of meaning. His essay is related to my study as it highlights the important aspects of fictionality, language and playfulness that my study also invokes. However, his analysis is limited and provides a general overview while my research presents an indepth analysis of the primary texts with respect to significant perspectives of language, fictionality and history.

“Fiction as Philosophy: Subversive Strategies in Shivarama Karanth’s *Mookajji’s Visions* is another essay by M. Rajeshwar, that explores the challenging strategies employed by the novel. He is of the view that Karanth protests against hegemonistic dogmas, manipulative social structures and perpetrators of injustice. Rajeshwar believes that Karanth presents the idea that “We had to fight the birth of belief systems, religious myths and social institutions, their crystallization into dogmatized and oppressive formulations and their reinforcement over the centuries” (128). Rajeshwar argues that the characters of the novel believe in visions and fantastical elements and this attitude subverts the binary of science/imagination. Mookajji is one of such characters, who is “unfettered by traditional values and expectations of society” (129). She also possesses some uncanny power that makes her predict future, and she keeps on moving between the notion of reality and illusion. She does not believe on religious myths and “Although Mookajji does not profess to be an atheist, she has a clear perspective on God” (130). Rajeshwar concludes her study, by referring to some other characters, who are decentered and challenge the existing metanarratives of faith. He contends that it is a novel that represents the absurdity of postmodern age, and his stance is related to my study. However, I find that he seems to overlook to discuss metanarratives of professionalism, identity and war that my study discusses. He just provides a brief overview of metanarrative of religious myth in the selected novel and does not explore various truth claims that the novel seems to shatter. My study aims to fill this gap.

In this section of Literature Review, I have focused on the critical explanations of postmodernism as a theory and its practice in the light of few great works of fiction. This discussion highlights certain significant features of postmodernism, similarities, and differences in its practice. I have focused my discussion keeping in mind the concerns of language, fictionality, and history in postmodern fiction.

(II)

In this section, I seek to critically analyze the existing research scholarship that has been conducted so far keeping in view the same theoretical underpinnings that my study invokes. The very first review is based on Dhanya Joy's "Paralogy of Petit Narratives: a Lyotardian Reading of James Cameron's *Titanic*", that explores the subversion of metanarratives through language games. James Cameron's movie was released in 1997, and it was widely appreciated in the whole world for its revision of tragic historical incident of the sinking of a huge ship. Joy quotes Klages who claims:

Postmodernism, in rejecting grand narratives, favors mininarratives, stories that explain small practices, local events rather than large-scale universal or global concepts. Postmodern mininarratives are always situational, provisional, contingent and temporary making no claim to universality, truth, reason or stability. (qtd in Joy 34)

She argues that the characters Jack and Rose subvert the language games of love, class system, Christianity, and capitalism. She believes that metanarratives organize certain language games, that claim for validity and legitimacy. She believes that, Jack, as a postmodern subject, believes in "petit narratives" that shape our lives" (31). Jack's approach attracts Rose who is fed up of formalities, of high status, and they both fall in love. Unfortunately, their relationship ends due to Jack's tragic drowning, and it symbolizes a mini narrative against the metanarrative of love. Joy claims that the characters from different classes (high and low) intermingle, on the ship, and, in this way, the movie "transgresses the distinction between "high art" and "low art" and reconsiders the past with irony. Thus *Titanic* is a postmodern text based on a modern theme" (33). The movie installs as well as subverts the social hierarchies, such as, at one side, there are separate cabins for rich class people where workers are not allowed. Joy argues that

Titanic subverts these class distinctions as it depicts that a girl leaves her very rich fiancé for a poor boy, and she appreciates his individual worth, and prefers him over money. She takes this decision, of loving a poor boy, on the basis of her own satisfaction, and she does not adhere to any specified norms, and her behavior represents paralogical moves in a language game of established hierarchies. Both the characters are independent in their thinking as well as decision making power, and they do not seek approval for their actions from the authorities.

Joy believes that Rose does not remain stick to the narrative of love, rather she moves on in her life, even after losing Jack. Joy suggests that her decision reflect on the idea that postmodern language games are the only workable strategy, for everyone, in the present state of knowledge. She remarks that *Titanic* (ship) is also a metanarrative due to its huge shape, size, and strength, and it “hailed as the crowning glory of twentieth century science, carried the title “unsinkable” (Joy 33). The drowning of *Titanic* dismantles the claims of science, by exposing its failure. Joy’s study is relatable to my study, in the sense that, it touches very significant idea of paralogical moves in language games that exposes the ideologies working behind the grand discourses. However, Joy’s actual focus is limited to only two matenarratives, that is, capitalism and science, and she explores their subversion through the perspective of limited characters while my study argues that every character is already a part of any language game by approving it or disapproving it. Moreover, her study is conducted on a different genre (a movie) that reflects the idea that language games prevail in all kind of discourses. My study gives a new angle to this lens of language games as it explores the subversion of metanarratives in the selected works of South Asian fiction.

Syed Javad Habibi’s research study titled “Democracy as Simulacrum: Incredulity towards the Metanarrative of Emancipation in Ian McEwan’s *Saturday*” also explores the subversion of metanarratives from the perspective of Lyotard’s philosophy. However, Javad’s study is different from the previous research as his only concern is to trace the subversion of metanarrative of emancipation, while Joy, explicitly, focuses on language games. The novel *Saturday* was published in 2005, and it is set in London. It demonstrates the massive rebellion that happened against the United States’ invasion of

Iraq, in 2003. Javad argues that the novel fictionalizes the terrorized life of the main character, Henry Perowne, who, by profession, is a brain surgeon. The narrative reveals a brutal side of democracy that is no more an emancipatory slogan behind the invasion of Iraq. Javad claims that this speculative mode generates few questions about the legitimacy of democracy and various governments. He believes, “The smorgasbord of political outlooks that McEwan orchestrates in this novel are there to provide the contrast context to project democracy (129). He also fictionalizes the political figures and the historical events, such as, “Bringing Tony Blair as a character, referring to George W. Bush’s administration or integrating the burning issues of the last decade including the Iraq war, Al-Qaeda and post 9/11 incidents or the Middle East crisis in an account of one day of the Perownes’ life in *Saturday*” (129). Javad contends that, one crucial question, that haunts the characters, is reflected when “McEwan opens a passage for a fundamental question, “Is this what we ‘really’ mean by democracy and freedom? (129). He concludes his study, by asserting that, the dominating narrative of democracy is used to gain a hegemonic control, and spread terrorism. He finds that the novel *Staurday* is a true embodiment of failure of democracy that has led to many wars as well as destructions, in the world. He claims that the characters suffer from anxiety and paranoia, due to the horrors of bombings and numberless killings, done by military forces. However Javad’s observations reflect only one dimension of Lyotard’s concept of subversion of metanarratives, and he overlooks the aspect of language games, that my study explores. In general, his study validates my research argument as it sets a background and presents a limited debate on Lyotard’s philosophy that is a major concern in my study.

Amna Saeed and Zain Fatima in their study titled “Texts within Text: An Intertextual Study of Elif Shafak’s *The Forty Rules of Love*” explore the novelistic representation of history. They apply theoretical framework of Linda Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction and, through intertextuality, they explore the subversion of grand narrative of history. They contend, “*The Forty Rules of Love* is a critical commentary not just upon a historical faction of Sufi tradition, but also on the ideology of Islam as a peaceful religion, promoting religious tolerance and giving liberty of righteous thoughts” (32). Amna and Fatima believe that “In fact, Kerra’s marriage to Rumi, a Muslim scholar, testifies the possibility of religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence of

Muslims with Christians” (39). They remark that the novel *The Forty Rules of Love*, as historiographic metafiction, is ahistorical as it demonstrates fictionality and, “it does employ and install the techniques and traditions of history as well as fiction but not without confusing, abusing, subverting and denying such traditions” (41). They find that Shafaq presents an ironic commentary on the traditional history, and, in this way, postmodern historiographic metafiction becomes self-reflexive and ahistorical. Amna and Zain relate the 9/11 incident with the present much used term ‘islamophobia’, and war on terror. They state:

However, dedicated to dispel the terror of Islam, Shafak (2011) appropriates the moderate version of Islam in terms of Sufism, generally for global and, particularly for the American readers who have been breathing in the atmosphere of paranoia, media disinformation and prejudice against Muslims since 9/11. (42)

They conclude their study by asserting that Elif Shafaq attempts to bridge the gap between Muslim and non-Muslim world by disseminating Rumi’s lesson of patience, peace, and love. This study is relevant to my argument, related to Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* and Muhammad Hanif’s *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, that these texts question the stereotypical images associated with religion. Amna and Zain prove that Shafaq, like Shamsie and Hanif, presents a brighter and peaceful side of Islam and Muslims, that is significant in the present time of misconceptions. These novels shatter the misunderstanding prevailing in the global world about Muslims, as fundamentals or extremists, in the aftermath of 9/11 World Trade Tower attacks. However, Amna and Zain do not focus on the perspectives of self-reflexivity, irony, and double intertextuality in historiographic metafiction, and my study aims to explore the selected novels from these relevant angles.

Saba Zaidi, Mehwish Sahibzada, and Durdana Rafiq in their research titled “Destabilization of power and control: A postmodernist and Marxist discursive analysis of capitalism in *Makers*” explore the fictional subversion of modern metanarratives, and how they are replaced by mininarratives. The researchers contend that Doctorow’s *Makers* is a postcyberpunk novel, that represents the modern age of science, and it also

highlights various discursive issues as well. Through discursive analysis, Saba et al. examine the subversion of grand narrative of capitalism that controls the power, through various socio-cultural systems. The researchers argue that the novel also dismantles the narratives of commercialism, consumerism, hypercasualization, and entrepreneurship. They claim that capitalism “has eaten up the money of the masses from every resource” (118). Moreover, it destabilizes the individuals in terms of their job safety, and, in this way, creates a disastrous effect on the economy. The researchers exemplify the subversion of Disney world, through themes, plot, and characters of *Makers*. They contend, “The deconstruction of consumerism and capitalism is denoted through the dead shopping malls. These dead malls are present throughout the country they are reconstructed into sights for the rides where vendors sell things” (115). They shift their focus, specifically, to the manipulative working policy behind Disney world, as they suggest, “In the hierarchy of power structure Disney is represented at the highest level it is shown as the biggest bidder of consumer culture apart from projected as a racist” (118). They conclude their study, by asserting that, postcyberpunk fiction speaks against the hegemony of metanarratives, by exposing the selfish materialistic language games. They argue that their analysis proves that *Makers* replaces the grand narratives with various little stories. They suggest that it destabilizes Disney world, that is used, as a tool, by various mega business companies in order to control the world. In this way, such companies also control the consumers for their materialistic gains. This study is simultaneously related to my research as it explores the dismantling of master narratives of science, capitalism, and progress, that my research also invokes. It strengthens my research argument by exploring Lyotard’s philosophy in a different genre of postcyberpunk literature, however, it presents a limited view of postmodernist response with an obvious focus on business and consumer culture. My study provides a broader perspective of metanarratives, language games, and paralogical moves which are not only limited to these discussed narratives, but also related to religion, politics, and history in the selected fiction.

In this brief section, I have reviewed the selective existing research studies and I have found that the research from the perspective of Lyotard’s concept of language games has not been conducted to a considerable extent. It also highlights that, although, a

few research studies from the perspective of Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction are available, but they seem to overlook south Asian novels in this respect. In fact, only very few research studies are available which are based on the novels produced by Pakistani and Indian writers, with special focus of postmodern language, fictionality and history. In next section, I seek to provide a general overview of South Asian English novels in order to contextualize my study in the relevant area.

(III)

This section reviews some very significant works on south Asian English fiction with respect to the perspectives of language, fictionality and history. Paul Brian's *Modern South Asian Literature in English* constitutes the very first review, because it is considered a remarkable critique of South Asian English novels, specifically, from Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka. For his analysis, Brain selects fifteen novels written by Rabindranath Tagore, Raja rao, Khushwant Singh, R.K.Narayan, Attia Hussain, Anita Desai, Bapsi Sidhwa, Bharti Mukherjee, Salman Rushdie, Shyam Selvadurai, Rohinton Mistry, Arundhati Roy, Michael Ondaatje, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Manil Suri. He praises these novelists, and argues that South Asia is not the only reason to attract the international readers, rather it is the fiction that attracts them. He states:

Readers often became interested in South Asia in the first place because they liked the books its authors produced. Of course South Asia has a lengthy history of great literary achievement stretching back millennia. Indians were writing masterpieces when most Europeans still lacked a written language. But modern fictional forms like the short story and novel came to South Asia through the British, during the colonial era; for that reason they are often seen as the products of an international culture rather than a national one.(5)

He contends that these writers represent themes like love, family, discrimination, war, and history. Moreover their novels take mixed characters like gangsters, urchins, prostitutes, farmers, saints, small merchants, landlords and industrialists. He thinks that this inclusive approach makes south Asian fiction "a colorful kaleidoscope of fragmented views, colored by the perceptions of its authors, reflecting myriad realities—and fantasies" (6). He suggests that as the region is so diverse, therefore, a reader is supposed

to read more and more in order to grasp the variety of themes, produced by these fiction writers. He believes that one important issue of the region has always been religion, and its representation in fiction. He remarks that South Asian writers are occupied with this issue as “Rohinton Mistry and Bapsi Sidhwa portray the tiny Parsi community, Khushwant Singh depicts Sikhs, and others concentrate on the dominant Muslim, Hindu, and (in Sri Lanka) Buddhist cultures” (6).

Brian believes that, besides religion, class distinction is also a controversial issue as “In traditional Indian society, caste defined much of the individual’s social existence” (12). He quotes the example of Arundhati Roy’s *A God of Small Things*, that represents the plight of untouchables. It depicts that the minority communities are often victimized by angry mobs or sometimes they become the target of law. Brian remarks that, though, through such representation, the Westerners may feel horrified about Indian culture, but, as it is the reality, so there is no other way out. This minority issue has got its roots even before the Partition, and the British rulers enhanced it by their policy of ‘divide and rule’. He believes that, in fact, the Partition of Indo-Pak subcontinent has always remained a serious concern for fiction writers. Brian explores Khushwant Singh’s *Train to Pakistan*, as a Partition novel, because it portrays all the chaos and horrified disintegration of once united communities. He states:

What should have been the joyful culmination of decades of anti-British struggle became a shameful debacle as Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs turned on each other in a fury of religious bigotry. The violence surrounding Partition is the main subject of *Train to Pakistan*, discussed in more detail later” (48).

He argues that the fearful depiction of the Partition does not suggest that Singh is highly pessimistic, rather, he just wants that the readers should not get over patriotic to overlook the atrocities committed in the past. He refers to Singh’s other novel *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* that “concerns a Sikh family in the Punjab during World War II, focusing on the ineffectual and eventually disastrous efforts of a teenaged boy to take up arms against the British” (48). Brian in his essay, on Salman Rushdie’s award winning *Midnight’s Children*, praises the unique representation of the Partition. He remarks that the novel is written in a lively language and “Not only were his stylistic and subject-matter

innovations to be widely imitated, but he inspired others to explore many other styles and themes (129).

Like Khushwant Singh, Bapsi Sidhwa's *Cracking India* (*Ice Candy Man* now) is also based on the representation of violence, that happened during the Partition 1947. She is a renowned novelist from Pakistan, Brian argues that there is a similarity as well as a difference in both *Train to Pakistan*, and *Cracking India* in terms of their representation of horrible division of subcontinent and its consequences. He believes that the difference lies in Sidhwa's portrayal of the Partition from a Pakistani perspective, while Singh portrays it from the Indian perspective. He further argues, "*Cracking India* is based on Sidhwa's own experience of Partition, the violence accompanying the "cracking" of Pakistan off from India in 1947"(104). After analyzing the Pakistani and Indian English novels, Brian evaluate a Sri Lankan fiction writer Michael Ondaatje's *Anil's Ghost*, that was published in 2000, and it represents Sri Lankan civil war in 1980s and 1990s. Brian views that he represents the regional issues like terrorism, Tamil Tigers campaign, suicide bombings, and the assassination of President Ranasinghe Premadasa in 1993. He remarks, "This is the event that is fictionalized as the assassination of President Katagula in *Anil's Ghost*" (179). Paul Brian's study formulates a useful context for my study in terms of presenting a critique of overall South Asian fiction. However, his study does not relate the themes of war, religion, the Partition with postmodern debate concerning language games, fictionality, and history. My study aims to fill this gap.

Bijay Kumar Das in his *Postmodern Indian English Literature* explores the strong influence of postmodernism on literature. He comments that it is difficult to find an exact date for the beginning of postmodern English literature, but a rough estimate can be made. He believes, "To make an evaluation of postmodern Indian English fiction is not an easy task" (Kumar 1). He insists that English Indian fiction should not be limited to only postcolonial English literature, because it has its own independent and distinct identity. He suggests, "We can divide Indian English literature from 1930s to the end of the 20th century into two phases: Modernist and postmodernist, the former beginning with Raja Rao's *Kanthapura* (1938) and the latter beginning with Salman Rushdie's *Midnight Children* (1981)" (2). He enlists the names of some famous postmodern fiction

writers including Amitav Gosh, Arundhati Roy, Anita Desai, Shashi Tharoor and many others. He argues that it is appreciated that Indian writers do write in English because it is “no less ours” (3) language and, in fact, they are widely accepted across the globe as “Indian English writers get recognition abroad before they gain acceptance at home” (4).

Kumar asserts that these writers localize English language by adding various indigenous expressions; he remarks that it is not difficult for the international reader to understand this language. Moreover, they “have succeeded in making Indian English idioms and expressions acceptable to the Anglo-American readers” (4). Kumar further explains that these writers use the techniques of code-mixing and code-switching in order to beautify their language as well as express the feelings and expressions in a localized code. He suggests that this style of using English language, mixed with various other languages, reflects the distinct identity of Indian region. In order to strengthen his argument, he quotes T.S Eliot who remarks, “True literature has something which can be appreciated by intelligent foreigners who have a reading knowledge of the language, and also something which can only be understood by the particular people living in the same place as the author” (qtd in. *ibid* 4). Kumar concludes his study by defending the writers who are blamed for their divided loyalties as he claims:

These writers have almost succeeded in creating a new Indian English idiom by taking recourse to code mixing in their work. Indian English fiction writers in particular have succeeded in making Indian English idioms and expressions acceptable to the Anglo-American readers. (4)

Kumar’s study is relevant to my study as it discusses the important role of language in representation of multiplicity of cultures and local ideas. In this way, it explores that postmodernist literature connects local with the global audience, however, it is limited in its discussion because it only talks about Indian English literature. Moreover it highlights the single perspective of language and seems to overlook its role in fictionality and subversion of fixed realities. My study fills this gap by exploring various crucial roles of language in terms of local expressions and its significance in questioning the fixed metanarratives.

Ayesha Jalal's *The Pity of Partition* explores the representation of the Partition in Urdu literature, especially, Sadaat Hassan Manto's short stories. Jalal appreciates his work, and asserts that it will keep on reminding people of both the countries about the "pity that was partition and the pity that partition continues to be" (207). She is of the opinion that, even before the Partition, there were many conflicts going on within Hindu and Muslim communities. She states, "There is scarcely any evidence to suggest that, in their local and provincial politics, Muslims ever followed the lead of an all-India Muslim political organization until the last decade of British rule" (139). The same conflicts were prevailing among Muslim rulers, who were "Anxious to advance their regional interests, even at the expense of the community (140). Jalal believes in the freedom of expression as she in her *Self and Sovereignty* debates on the issue of artistic as well as intellectual representation. She believes that a writer should better express the subjective and personal loss instead of associating himself with a national level tragedy. Though, her stance of artistic freedom has always been contested by the staunch nationalists, but she maintains her stance. She compares the representation of collective loss versus individual loss, in literature, as she comments:

To some extent the individual and the collective remained imbricated in Muslim poetry and prose even after the formal loss of sovereignty and the onset of 'modernity' in the mid-nineteenth century appeared to encourage the privileging of collective themes through a rapidly expanding print media. (2)

She critically views the textuality of history and she contests the under-representation of individual loss, in the narratives, and also the "oft-cited absence of the individual" (2). She has conducted her research on the representation of politics and religion in Urdu poets, Bengali poets, and Punjabi Sufi poets. She emphasizes that the nationalist stance of these poets in the form of words like 'qaum' (nation) and 'watan' (country) provoked emotions in Hindus and Muslims about their national identity. She examines poetry of the last Mughal King Bahadur Shah Zafar, who represented his own consciousness against the "collective Islamic nationalism" (29). She further contends that Muslims were not united on any single interpretation of Islam and they were confused between their religious identity, and the politics of Muslim identity, in India. She states, "In putting

forward a claim to nationhood, Indian Muslims were decidedly revolting against minoritarianism” (399). They could not arrive at any consensus to nominate their Muslim representative, due to the difference of understanding, of the religion. In fact “Muslims of various classes and sects interpreted the tenets of Islam differently at the level of ideas as well as of practice” (57). Ayesha Jalal’s research on representation of the Partition and religion in Urdu literature is linked to my study that also invokes the same issue in South Asian English novels. However, she focuses on a realistic portrayal of these issues in poetry, while my study is different in a way that it focuses on the fictional construction of the world outside the text.

Similarly, Malashri Lal and Sukrita Paul Kumar in *Interpreting Homes in South Asian Literature* critically analyze the representation of the Partition in English novels. They believe that the fictional representation of the past gives way to the plurality of discourse that challenges the grand narrative of history. They state:

India witnessed such violent dispossessions in 1947 and, on a lesser scale again in 1971, both along the Pakistan border. The literature narrating the Partition is again voluminous and, by now, inter-generational accounts of history have brought amazing density to the memories of loss. Sadat Hassan Manto, Quratulain Haider, Khushwant Singh, Bisham Shahni, Bapsi Sidhwa, to name some few, grappled with the aesthetic articulation of the anguish of forced homelessness that set the tone for pioneering narratives. (ix)

They contend that the official political discourse does not record the Partition from different perspectives, rather it ignored the common man’s traumatic experiences. They appreciate English fiction for giving space to unheard stories, of the marginalized sections. They remark that “almost sixty years later, the memories and the sites of pain are revisited, and with scholarly precision, queries are made about justice and equity” (II). They claim that most of the alternative versions, of the Partition, are based on the stories of minorities and the powerless classes. They believe that almost every section of the society has taken the pains, especially, “Women in South Asia have suffered ethnocidal rape at the time of Partition, during the Bangladesh War, in Kashmir, and in the interminable series of communal riots that have marked the subcontinent’s modern

historical experience”(4). This literary depiction started a debate on the suppressed sections of the society, who faced the national tragedies, without playing any negative part in it. Lal and Kumar argue that, this bitter experience challenges the cause and effect approach as the survivors did nothing to face that much suffering. They sum up their study, by suggesting that, such conflicts cast bad influence on the cultures, relationships, and the concept of ‘home’. This study, to some extent, is beneficial to my research as it is concerned with the fictional representation of the Partition event, however, it does not take into account the specific historiographic metafictional approach to revisit the past through irony, self-reflexivity, and parody. Moreover, the analysis regarding the literary representation of history is limited to the Partition event only, while my study fills explores various crucial historical events that happened nationally and internationally.

Muneeza Shamsie’s “Pakistani English Novels in the New Millennium” presents a brief analysis of various literary works produced in Pakistan. She claims that, in the recent decade, more dynamic English fiction has been produced by the young creative writers. The novelists “including Nadeem Aslam, Mohsim Hamid, Uzma Aslam Khan, and Kamila Shamsie have depicted the brutalization of society against a backdrop of geopolitics” (149). She highlights the efforts of these writers to represent diverse issues related to the region, such as, politics, religious extremism, religious discrimination, honour killing, poverty, conflicts between Pakistan and India, and, lately, Baluchistan issue. She believes that the objectification of women, in Pakistani English fiction, has always been discussed extensively by various scholars. She is of the view that, Pakistani fiction is not limited to the issues related to Pakistan only, but it, also, highlights the racial discrimination that is prevalent internationally. Like Kamila Shamsie, her concern is also based on subversion of global stereotypes associated with Muslims, and she asserts that, “an experience of the USA in the aftermath of 9/11 runs through novels by Hamid, Shamsie and H.M Naqvi” (149).

Shamsie believes that such novels bridge the gap between two worlds of East and West as they generate multiple little narratives. She states, “These new writers not only reveal extraordinary talent but also engage in a discourse which both looks unflinchingly at the problems of a troubled land and celebrates its cultural riches” (166). She concludes

her study, by asserting that, Pakistani English fiction has developed from, initially, a few creative writers to a whole range of young novelists. Her critique validates my research because it highlights the significant role of the Pakistani English novelists, with respect to the challenge, that they pose to the narrative of fixed identification of Muslims in the global scenario. However, her study focuses on general representation, while my research is specifically based on the selected south Asian English novels, from the perspectives of language games, fictionality and history.

In this part of literature review, I have provided a general overview of the South Asian Fiction regarding representation of various themes, which are related to my study. This discussion has set a context to demonstrate the shift that postmodern philosophy has brought in South Asian novels, that will be discussed in textual analysis chapters of my study. The next section is based on the review of secondary sources and it will also determine the research gap to conduct this study.

(IV)

This section, of my literature review, encompasses the specific representation of postmodernist themes with reference to the primary sources of this study. The very first work that I have reviewed is a doctoral dissertation titled “Kamila Shamsie’s Fiction: an Analytical Study of Diaspora” by Asma Zahoor. In her research, she draws a context based analysis of the few selected texts in order to explore the representation of colonial and postcolonial power structures. She claims that, the significant issues of Pakistan and India are history, status of Islam, colonialism, politics, and women rights. She further argues that, Kamila Shamsie, as an insider and outsider, represents the complicated issues of South Asia and the Western world. Few of her novels are solely based on the settings of Pakistan while others revolve around problems related to the global world. Zahoor states, “By and large all Kamila Shamsie’s novels are written in the background of major historical events. Since Kamila Shamsie is well-versed with the world and Pakistan history so she has blended it in her fictional discourse” (40).

Zahoor contends that *Burnt Shadows* challenges the notion of war as it reflects the doubts, ambiguities, absurdities, and disbelief towards it. She regards that, it “is a counter narrative which in post-colonial terms is written as a mode of resistance to the grand

narratives propagated by the powerful Western and American media to justify their War on Terror” (73). She remarks that her novels demonstrate the failure of narratives, such as, Enlightenment, culture, humanity, civilization, progress and the project of colonialism. She states:

Shamsie’s fiction revolves around the identity issues created as a result of the power practices of the colonial and neocolonial power stakeholders and their mindset to perpetuate the power structures. She reflects their impact on the lives of her fictional characters and the course of events their lives take. (14)

Zahoor explores Shamsie’s another novel, *A God in Every Stone*, in terms of its representation of subversion of the metanarrative of war. She suggests that the novel “begins as a love story, but then encompasses different subjects like colonialism, nationalism, war, gender, and archaeology. Shamsie weaves the personal tales with the historical event to great political effect” (40). She considers that Pakistani English fiction represents the plight of Muslim immigrants, especially, in the aftermath of 9/11 incident. Zahoor believes that such representation of mininarratives, in the place of hegemonic master narratives, seems to counter the strong wave of hatred against Muslims in the West. She appreciates the efforts of emerging novelists, she states, “Mohsin Hamid (2007) in *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Shamsie (2007) in *The Broken Verses* highlight identity issues for the Muslims in the West in the post 9/11 world” (40). Her study presents a limited analysis of the subversion of the colonial power, and she does not focus on the idea that, Shamsie breaks the binary oppositions between colonizers/colonized by depicting genuine feelings of love and humanity between them, irrespective of raising issues like nationalism etc. This study is relevant to my study in terms of dismantling of grand narratives of war and identity, but it does not focus on history from the theoretical stand points of Linda Hutcheon, and my study fills this gap by exploring *Burnt Shadows* as a fine example of historiographic metafiction.

Harleen Singh in “A Legacy of Violence: Interview with Kamila Shamsie about *Burnt Shadows*” attempts to know Shamsie’s stance with respect to her fiction, and its representation of reality. Singh expresses her curiosity to know about her choice of a Japanese woman, Hiroko, as a leading voice of her novel *Burnt Shadows*. Like Asma

Zahoor's analysis, Singh also highlights that Hiroko condemns war, and she experiences severe consequences of various wars. She inquires Shamsie about her role and idea behind writing this novel, and, to this question, Shamsie expresses her views about storytelling that it has never been her intention to "de-center" the narratives, rather this de-centering comes to her due her own experience of various interconnected global political events. She states, "In all these years I was moving between the U.K., U.S. and Pakistan and seeing increasingly how attitudes in these countries towards each other were hardening, so inevitably Hiroko's story with its divergent currents started to find an echo in my own present" (158). Moreover, she admits the fact that, in *Burnt Shadow*, she relates the past events with the present, because nothing can happen all of a sudden. While answering a question, she states:

I was aware that conversation about 9/11 tended to treat it as though that date was the Ground Zero of history, as if it occurred in a vacuum, and as someone who grew up in Pakistan in the 1980s, during the U.S Pakistan involvement in Afghanistan and the political support given to jihad as an anti-Soviet tool, I couldn't possibly see things that way. There were earlier stories feeding into the story of 9/11, so there's no possibility I would write a novel that looks at that one date as if history proceeds from it but doesn't precede it. (158)

Singh concludes her study by claiming that it is not only fictionality, that is Shamsie's concern rather she is, also, very much influenced by the socio-political happenings in the global world. Her novels reflect autobiographical approach, and, at the same time, they represent the reality of various historical events. However, while conducting the interview, Singh seems to ignore the idea that Shamsie has depicted Nagasaki atomic bombing attack, without actually witnessing it. Shamsie, in another interview, admits that not all the events that *Burnt Shadows* represents, are based on her firsthand experience, rather she has consulted many history books about World War Two in order to understand this tragedy. This interview is valuable for my study as it highlights the reflection of Shamsie's own life on her work. However, Singh ignores the perspective of fictional recreation of the historical events. This interview also provides an intertextual reference to Shamsie's perspective in relation to her works. The reference towards other

historical texts makes the novel a work of historiographic metafiction that contends that history can be known through texts only. However, Singh provides just a reference to Shamsie's use of intertextuality in her fiction, but she does not relate it with the concept of double intertextuality that is proposed by Linda Hutcheon. My study analyzes the novel in this very aspect in order to depict its intertextual illusions to various literary as well as historical texts.

Gohar Karim Khan, in his research study titled "The Hideous Beauty of Bird-Shaped Burns: Transnational Allegory and Feminist Rhetoric in Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*", takes a similar outlook that Singh has taken in her interview. Karim explores *Burnt Shadows* through the lens of Fredric Jameson's theory of capitalism. He evaluates the novel as a transnational and a political allegory. He also locates alternative themes of nationalism, feminism, and globalization in the text. He relates the representation of various issues to Shamsie's own status of being a citizen of three continents. He argues that, in fact, this multiple citizenship enables her to comment, criticize, and examine the present condition of different societies. For example, her wide exposure helps her to explore the status of women in relation to power structures and she translates her own experience through the character of Hiroko. Karim suggests that Hiroko keeps on fighting against the unjust treatment by various institutions, he argues:

Hiroko poses serious challenges to existing and normative power structures, her physical body serves as a manuscript upon which national and political upheavals are literally and metaphorically transcribed, reflecting the novel's demonstration of women's bodies as sites of conflict between nationalism and colonialism. (Karim 54)

According to Karim, the novel subverts the grand narrative of nationalism but from a specific postcolonial perspective. He argues that it questions the myth of negative identification of Muslims, in the wake of September 9/11 attacks. Though, he admits that it portrays that the characters from rival nations are enjoying good relationships, and, in this way, it makes "readers to access these phenomena from alternative and unfamiliar position" (55). His research, to a larger extent, is related to my study as it dismantles the metanarratives of colonialism and nationalism. However, the focus of this study is limited

as it discusses Hiroko's response only at the expense of the reaction of other significant characters like Raza, Sajjad, Elizabeth, and Konrad who also stand very important in dismantling these narratives. My research captures the distinct responses of all these characters with respect to subversion of grand narratives of science, war, identity, and history in *Burnt Shadows*.

Munazza Yaqoob and Saira Shafique in "Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* as an Intertextual Re-writing of Forster's *A Passage to India*" analyze the use of intertextuality in the selected novel. They refer to theoretical insights of Patricia Waugh and Linda Hutcheon, who view that, "The term intertextuality refers to the presence of a text within some other text" (qtd. in Yaqoob and Saira 477). They argue that intertextuality rejects the idea of closure of a text, because it links it with various other texts. They support their argument, by asserting that, Kamila Shamsie adopts an interrogational approach towards the colonial marginalization. She re-reads and re-writes the colonial texts, to reflect a resistance that exposes the manipulation and exploitation done by the colonial power. The authors contend, "The theory of intertextuality, developed by poststructuralist and postmodern theorists, has become an effective appropriation strategy for postcolonial writers" (479). They remark that Shamsie counters the misrepresentation of the colonized in Forster's text, and she presents a different story. Munazza and Saira believe that the project of colonization has left a bad memory in the memory of the colonized nations, who prefer to turn to any medium to express their anger against the unjust atrocities. The researchers develop their argument as following:

Shamsie has answered back and counteracted to the Forster's novel *A Passage to India* by re-writing the whole storyline, the setting and the characters by following the exact plot. But her story does not end where Forster ends rather she has only discussed his novel in one portion of her novel, and the point where Forster's novel ends, she takes a new beginning. (485)

Munnaza and Saira conclude their study, by claiming that, "Shamsie answers back to every mis-portrayal, and re-writes Forster's novel with a new insight" (485). Moreover, they consider that Shamsie's style of intertextuality enables the reader to become a co-producer of the interpretation. The dialogic intertexts make the reader re-read, question,

and understand the texts, from a new perspective. Their study finds that Shamsie consciously employs intertextual references in order to activate the intellectual side of the reader, that will lead her/him to contest the stereotypical representation of the colonized. This study coincides with the idea of intertextuality that my research uses, but it is framed in the colonial and postcolonial dimensions, while my study explores it through the lens of historiographic metafiction. My study also explores double intertextuality that is related to both literary as well as historical texts, and, in this way, it subverts the demarcation between disciplines of history and fiction.

Shah Zaib and Mustafa Mashori in their study titled “Exploring Postmodern Aspects in Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows*” explore the fictional representation of certain significant historical events. They claim that *Burnt Shadows*, so far, has not been analyzed from a postmodern angle. They suggest that the novel “embodies multiple elements/characteristics of postmodernism including questionable narrator and fragmented characters” (n.p). They further argue that “Pastiche technique, temporal distortion and magical realism” (n.p) are also present in the novel which make it a postmodern work. They analyze the overlapping of history and fictionality and they claim that this novel falls in the category of Linda Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction. Their study highlights that the novel deviates and subverts the traditional metanarrative of history that claims progress and freedom. Shah and Mustafa contend that various characters in the novel reflect distrust towards legitimacy of national decisions, of waging wars, as these tragedies totally disturb their lives. To support their argument, they cite the example of Hiroko, that, she leads a miserable life after experiencing different wars. Shah and Mustafa state, “Being a hibakusha, Tanaka leaves Japan for India, India for Pakistan, and, Pakistan for America in a quest of peace in her life” (n.p). They suggest that, in this way, *Burnt Shadows* questions the narratives of history and war because these bring displacement, loss of identity, and violence. This particular study strengthens my research argument on the basis of common theoretical perspective of postmodern historiographic metafiction. However, the focus of this study is more on the textuality of history while my study presents a depiction of combination of history and fictionality in the selected novel *Burnt Shadows*.

Asma Aftab's "The Dilemma of National Consciousness and the Making of National Culture: An Analysis of the Literary Works by Pakistani Writers" is a doctoral dissertation that presents a critique on Muhammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*. Asma claims that the issues of minorities have always been represented by fiction writers, such as, Nadeem Aslam's *Season of the Rainbirds*, Bapsi Sidhwa's *The Ice candy Man*, Arunditi Roy's *God of Small Things*, Omar Hamid's *The Prisoner*, Shazaf Fatima Haider's *How it Happened*, Maniza Naqvi's *A Matter of Detail*, and Bina Shah's *Slum Child* and many others. She argues that, like these mentioned novelists, Hanif's novels too contest the narratives of nationalism, work, and faith. She claims that his fiction contests the legitimacy of various institutions, such as, military, police, and law. However she considers such representation as an exaggeration, she states:

Hanif is cynical and contemptuous about the whole idea of national ideology in his first novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. As against his first novel which is a comment on Pakistan's political history, his second novel is a commentary on Pakistani culture as represented through the everyday life of a Nurse struggling for her survival in a society that Hanif portrays as violent and misogynist. (245)

Asma insists that such depiction cannot be generalized as it reflects just a glimpse and not the whole reality. She pursues her objection, by claiming that, the situation is entirely different, then, what is presented in the novel. She states, "Hanif mistakenly represents the experience of discrimination and alienation that Alice feels in society, as a signifier for the minorities in general facing a similar experience of marginalization and abuse in Pakistani culture" (246). She further contests that such depiction ignores peace as well as the religious harmony that forms the basis of real culture of Pakistan.

Asma believes that it creates a false impression that Pakistan and its institutions have become a battlefield where Muslims are always dominating the non-Muslim citizens. To her, it seems that Hanif "blows out of proportion and presents it as a generalized reflection of Pakistani society" (248). She further strengthens her argument by referring to empirical evidences, of constitution of Pakistan that ensures religious freedom for every citizen, irrespective of her/his faith. She resists Hanif's depiction, by claiming that the current scenario regarding the Christian community is highly

satisfactory as they are living with dignity and liberty. This study lies in a strong contrast to my research argument that is based on the representation of Alice's simultaneous positions of being powerful and powerlessness. In her study, Asma relates the portrayal of Alice, in Hanif's novel, with national identity while my study explores her contextualized and provisional experiences. However, her analysis is linked to my study because of the extreme position that it takes by perpetuating and imposing the metanarratives of nationalism and law that my study aims to counter.

Samina Azad in her study titled "*Sea of Poppies* and *Burnt Shadows* in the Light of Subaltern Studies" draws a critical analysis of the selected works in the light of subaltern studies. Azad defines that subalterns include lower social class, working-class, convicts, women, children, minority, and slaves. She suggests that they are underrepresented in history and these novels ensure their presence through fictional representation. She explores that Amitav Ghosh and Kamila Shamsie construct various narratives to record the resistance posed by subalterns against the power system. She believes, "Subaltern Studies seek "to develop an alternative to dominant historiography" as well as "to the meta-narratives" of nationalist, colonialist and Marxist theories" (58). She further remarks that these novels project the narratives that challenge, combat, and dismantle the totalized version of history. She states, "*Sea of Poppies* opens in the colonial times of India. The natives suffer not only at the hands of local elites but also by oppression of the foreign rule. Hierarchy, caste system, and unemployment, double their miseries" (59).

Azad believes that Ghosh exposes the manipulation of working class by different upper class characters, such as, Chandan Singh and village lords, who violate and dehumanize Deeti and Kalua. She opines that, in the novel, there are different levels of humiliation, such as, by the English rulers, who are more concerned about the profit that they will earn from opium trade than the welfare of their subject. She states, "Ghosh relates the times of British colonialism and how it affects the poor and the rich segments of the Indian society rewriting the colonial history of India from the perspectives of subalterns" (64). She further claims that, like Ghosh, Shamsie also challenges the dominant narratives of nationalism, colonialism, and war. She suggests that, in fact

“Ghosh and Shamsie recover the stories and histories of so far neglected and forgotten segments of the society belonging to different parts of the world artistically completing the picture with their master and creative strokes” (68). Shamsie represents the havoc that is caused in the form of immense bloodshed, displacement, psychological traumas, identity crises, and anxiety in the aftermath of incidents, such as, Nagasaki atomic bombing 1945, the Partition 1947, War on Terror, and Sep 9/11 world trade tower attack. Azad states:

Burnt Shadows exposes a bomb-shattered and war stricken world in Japan, introducing the reader to the pre and post partition world of India, ending up encompassing the devastated and barren world of Afghanistan after the departure of the Soviets and the problems of possessing Muslim identity in the wake of 9/11. (59)

Azad concludes her comparative study, by suggesting that, both the Indian and Pakistani novelists expose the tragic side of history that does not adhere to the claim of modern historical discourse. She remarks that subalterns are not represented in the traditional history while postmodern novels, such as, *Burnt Shadows* and *The Sea of Poppies* represent this missing section of the society. Her study is significant to my research regarding the representation of multiple narratives that deconstruct the myth of official history as a progressive idea. However, her study is brief as it does not examine history from Linda Hutcheon’s theoretical perspectives that explore the fictional construction of various historical events, and my study aims to fill this gap.

Chitra Sankaran, in *History, Narrative, and Testimony in Amitav Ghosh's Fiction* explores *The Glass Palace* as a fictional eyewitness account of the individuals who were marginalized in the wave of colonial power structures. Sankaran represents the moral and existential dilemmas of various soldiers belonging to Indian subcontinent, and she also exposes their confused loyalties towards the British Rule. She states, “*The Glass Palace* itself is a poignant evocation of the moral conundrums and dilemmas that the colonial powers imposed upon the colonized, in the guise of undertaking ‘a civilizing mission’” (xviii). According to Sankaran, Ghosh’s novel represents the British’s desire for power as it invades Burma, and imposes a forced exile on the Burmese King. It also captures the

influence of this exile on the protagonist Raj Kumar, and his generation. The novel is an anti-war fiction, because “The slow wasting away of Burmese monarch, his daughters’ marriages, the lives of Dolly and her sons, all form distinctive narratives in this book about life, love, and war” (xixi).

Sankaran views that this exile or forced displacement is used as a metaphor in Ghosh’s novels, that reflects the transformation of characters’ personalities. She suggests that, although, Ghosh does not like to be categorized as a postcolonial writer, but “to question the apparent neutrality of all power discourses appears to be a central creative focus of his work” (xxii). He is interested in exploring history as he declares his “allegiance to the fictional rather than the historical aspect of narrativity” (xxii). His novels are a matter of concern for both/ literary theorists/colonial historians, because his imaginary spaces include multiple societies, various time periods, and different spaces. He, in his novels, contests Western grand narratives of science, and cultural imperialism. Sankaran evaluates all of Ghosh’s novels and finds a resistant approach as he states, in fact, “Ghosh’s entire novelistic career seems devoted to challenges borders of every kind and in each subsequent novel this central theme is relentlessly reworked from different angles and using different tools, also contributing to the ironic vision” (xxiv). He concludes his study, by claiming that, *The Glass Palace* touches on the sensitive relationship between empowered Indian diaspora and the marginalized section, and, at first, both the groups keep a distance but, later, they intermingle comfortably. Her study provides a background to my study that explores *The Glass Palace* as a postmodern fiction in order to explore the subversion of grand narratives through irony and parody.

Shanthini Pillai, in her study titled “Resignifying ‘Coolie’: Amitav Ghosh’s *The Glass Palace*” evaluates the strategies which are incorporated by Ghosh in order to focus the marginal section or subalterns in his fiction. Pillai examines various socio-historical texts to demonstrate that, throughout the body of literature, Indian coolies are represented as marginalized and outcast. She highlights their different representation in *The Glass Palace* that empowers them with strength and intellect. She views that Ghosh portrays these subaltern section through their personal stories and individual identities, and, in this way, their subjectivity is restored. This approach counters the colonial

narratives that “throw a general eye over the coolie community as a mass of undifferentiated humanity thereby obliterating their individuality” (qtd. In Sankaran xxiv).

Sankaran in an interview “Diasporic Predicament” poses various questions related to the representation of individual and collective history in shaping the narrative of *The Glass Palace*. He claims that, while experiencing certain national events, Ghosh’s characters undergo a kind of transformation, for instance, Raj Kumar gets displaced as a result of British invasion of Burma, and, in this way, his whole life is changed. According to Sankaran, Arjun is another character who is transformed in the wake of war, and, in fact, he starts harboring negative feelings towards the British rule. Sankaran asks Ghosh about the difficulties to write about colonial violence in colonizer’s language, and, while answering this question, Ghosh states:

Within English there is a constant tendency to whitewash the past, for example, the occupation of Burma is never called the occupation or the brutalization of Burma. In English sources it’s always called “pacification.” Just as today, in Iraq, the Americans call the occupation “peace making,” but it is not. While I was writing, I had to struggle with these words. (4)

Sankaran, in his interview, sums up different issues related to diaspora, and he opines that, Ghosh, as an English creative fiction writer, knows how to struggle against the hegemonic narratives of language, and colonization. He deliberately represents such characters who resist the hegemony of these narratives, and, for this purpose, he gives his own example that, he rejected commonwealth prize award for his novel *The Glass Palace*. His rejection manifests that he does not believe in segregation of nations and people. Sankaran concludes her study at the note that, Ghosh’s unique use of language and characterization form a strong narrative that exposes historical wrongs. Her study is beneficial to my research as it explores the decentered characterization in *The Glass Palace*, however, it overlooks the plural stories related to various historical events. My study evaluates the novel in the light of Linda Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction that captures multiple voices and provides a fictional depiction of the reality.

Abroo Nazar's study titled "Silencing of Subaltern in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*" is based on the exploration of stereotypical representation of marginalized status of women in Pakistani fiction. Nazar argues that fiction stereotypes Pakistani women, and they are depicted as, if they are severely victimized by cultural, religious, and social forces of the society. The selected novels raise voice for all issues, faced by women, related to the patriarchal society of Pakistan, and India respectively. Though, there are, also, present some very powerful women, in this region, with constitutional authority, benefits, and control, such as, Benazeer Bhutto, Zubedah Jalal, Reham Khan, Fehmida Mirza, Malala Yousafzai, Sonia Gandhi, and Sharmila Tagore, but it does not change the ground reality that, the system is still patriarchal. Nazar finds the strategies which are used in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* in order to represent the marginalized status of Pakistani women. She applies Spivak's theory of Feminist Postcolonialism on the text, as she asserts, "When a group is entitled 'subaltern' it cannot be represented. Spivak has altogether rejected the idea of representation of the subaltern. Whenever someone attempts to represent someone else, he is already caught up in 'us'/'them' dichotomy" (268). She argues that Pakistani women live in diverse kind of circumstances and, as a result of this their individual identities cannot be generalized or simplified in a narrow way.

Nazar suggests that Spivak has focused on the politics of representing subaltern through a native informant's point of view, and that, he "is found guilty of a certain kind of epistemic violence which robs them of their individuality thus further silencing them" (269). She believes that Hanif depicts Alice as a marginalized woman due to the ethnic, gender and caste differences, and, in this way, he establishes her inferiority. She claims that, by such a portrayal, "Hanif has further silenced Alice rather than giving voice to this sexed Subaltern" (270). Therefore she appears as an oppressed figure who fails to register her worth and gain her identity. Nazar contends that Hanif has not left any hope to restore the personal identity of Alice, but this is, also, done as a step towards her marginalization. She remarks that other female characters like Zainab, Sister Hina, and Margret Bhatti also symbolize passive women who are trained to accept their lower status, in a patriarchal society. They are beaten, kicked or shot, but they don't raise their voice, and keep on considering men as the final authority. Nazar states, "Pakistani women do not question their place in Hanif's fictive world" (272). She concludes her study, by

suggesting that, such stereotypical representation further silences the women and this approach should not be generalized. She considers this depiction of Pakistani women as faulty, and problematic. Nazar's critique of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* offers a stark contrast to my study as I intend to represent Alice as an embodiment of power who resists prevailing grand narratives through paralogical moves.

“The ‘Melancholic’ Subjects in Mohammad Hanif's *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*” is a useful analysis conducted by Maimoona Khan, that explores the fictional representation of marginalized status of women. In the light of Freud's model, Khan traces the connection between a human's ego, melancholy, and libido. She asserts that, the characters in order to avoid loss of sanity, in this disordered world, struggle to find solace in religion and in the narrative of nationalism. To their shock, any idea ranging from religion to society, unity, and even marriage does not work, and they don't feel any ground to stand on. Khan further asserts that the characters, especially, the central character, Alice, feels insecure and her ego is hurt, and the desire crushed by the society, in which she lives. She states:

While Alice, the central figure of the novel, strives for Eros to thrive, her life is constantly faced with the "destructive instinct". From her own criminal record to her eventual defacement punctuated by instances of love, her life moves between the love and death instinct. The absence of an ultimate center and abundance of anguish makes her fluctuate between pseudo-church rituals and a pretense of a marriage. Alice in her loss of reassurances is a victim of Freudian melancholia. (82)

Khan regards that Alice lives a life of complete hopelessness right from her childhood till maturity. As a nurse, she lives in a constant fear of losing her job, and, on the other hand, her marriage is also in trouble. She considers herself as an object of pleasure for others who are never truly involved with her in a romanticized way. Though “as a Freudian melancholic subject, she exhibits an "impoverishment of the ego" by becoming the 'abject'” (83). According to Khan, Alice, finally, loses her real self where she does not have any ego or the libido, but becomes a victim who is transported to a hidden state. Khan states that, acid attack on Alice, by her husband, registers her existence as

“improper and unclean” (83) and that it is not only due to her social identity, of being the daughter of a ‘choohra’, but also, she feels that her ugly self should not exist anymore.

Khan explores that Teddy Butt, Alice’s husband, remembers his traumatic childhood with his father, who was a very strict PT teacher, and it has got a strong impact on his mind. She argues, “He seeks aggression and aggression is what he gets” (84). His desire of violence is an attempt to secure himself object, and he behaves abnormal because he knows that he is a human being who is least desired. In fact his ego is hurt by his real life experiences that make him a Freudian melancholic, because “his entire life is a hallmark of rejection” (85). Khan comments that, both Alice and Teddy, behave differently because Alice needs social security and Teddy needs money, to live their life. She sums up her study, by suggesting that, the characters “As true melancholic subjects, are completely divorced from objects that promise a place of metanarrative” (85). She believes that Alice’s violent death destroys her ego, and, in this way, completes the Freudian melancholic process. However Khan overlooks various ways, in which Alice demonstrates immense strength in various situations. My study fills this gap by analyzing the novel from the perspective of power and resistance attributed to the character of Alice that makes her subvert the grand narratives of identity, faith, science, and fixed realities.

Muhammad Uzair and Faheem Arshad in their study “Identification of Gendered Discourses in a Fictional Text with a special focus on Gender Construal in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*” analyze the novel from the perspective of gender construction. Their study takes theoretical basis from Sunderland’s interpretative framework that examines a text in terms of its linguistic traces. Uzair and Faheem define discourse analysis as a system of signs that constitutes a pattern that is linked with culture, society, thoughts and mindsets. They view that language and its features, such as, phonology, syntax, and grammar are important to view any discursive construction. Through feminist discourse analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, they explore the discursive construction of gender, and they, also, trace the working of patriarchal discourses in perpetuating oppression and subjugation of women. Uzair and Faheem contend that, in a society, gender is constituted on the basis of stereotypical cultural practices, though, such discourses can be challenged by both the gender groups. They state, that “in a patriarchal society like Pakistan, hence,

it will be worth revealing to analyze the subtle and pernicious workings of language to construct gender in myriad of gendered discourses, permeating the fictional text” (2). Through discourse analysis, they find the phrases which are used in the novel to “represent Alice Bhatti’s exploited and molested daily life. All these acts of physical contacts by unspecified actors reveal the recurrence of male lust and objectivation of Alice” (9). However Alice’s resistance, to gender exploitation, is reflected through her “refusal of male’s advance” (13) They find that the novel constructs the identity of a gender through various discourses in order to expose the male dominant approach of the society, and it brings into light the feminist resistance, against patriarchy. Uzair and Faheem claim:

The study of the representation and construction of gender in Pakistani fiction in English revealed that femininity and masculinity are still by and large informed by the discourses and representations that draw on what could be considered as ‘traditional’ images of Pakistani women and men. (15)

Their study concludes that, though Pakistani creative fiction writers have started projecting women’s issues very recently, yet, there is a lot to be done in order to subvert the traditional hegemonic discourses regarding women. Uzair and Arshad argue that such representation owes much to the sensitive position of the novelists, in the patriarchal society of Pakistan, as they have to perpetuate a bit of traditional discourse in order to remain on the safe side. They seem to ignore the unconventional characterization of Alice in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* where she demonstrates a resistance towards the prevailing rules of patriarchy. My study looks at Hanif’s portrayal of Alice as a strong woman, who is intellectual and highly responsive, and she subverts the patriarchal values by making paralogical moves against the established language games.

Shaheen et.al in their study “Magical Realism as a tool for women empowerment in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Muhammad Hanif” explore the novel in terms of its representation of the female characters. Contrary to the previous research study, here, the researchers view that Mohammad Hanif empowers his protagonist Alice Bhatti, by using the technique of magical realism. They are of the view that, he exposes the hypocrisy of patriarchal Pakistani society, that plays an important role in harassing a woman sexually

and physically. Alice Bhatti is depicted as a headstrong lady, who fights against the traditional religious, cast, and gender differences. She contests the prevailing patriarchal manipulation, and, in this way, she maintains and restores her individual worth. She performs miracles, such as, when she prays for a dead baby and he becomes alive, and, this incident turns the majority of the people into her followers. Shaheen et.al claim, “Hanif gives an uplift to his protagonist through different miracles in the narrative for example unbeatable courage of Christian girl, art of reading faces, her prayer that gives life to a dead baby and her exaltedness as a soldieress of Yassoo” (107).

Shaheen et.al remark that, during her nursing education, Alice was harassed by the Muslim girls who used to call her an atheist and, once, they tried to beat her. They believe that Hanif sketches Alice, as a woman, who is not afraid of any manipulative strategy that is aimed against her, and, “Throughout the narrative Mohammad Hanif attempts to magnify his female character. He makes her prominent by showing her ambitious, calm, and spiritual” (110). The researchers pose a question that how does she know to behave in this way? To answer their question, they suggest it is her personality only, because educational institutes do not focus such things. Moreover, she is helped by the Jesus Christ because such upbringing can be done in home but Alice was having no one in her family other than her father. Shaheen et.al assert that Alice is keenly observed by other characters too, such as, Noor, whose comments develop her character. He observes that her nature is different from a traditional woman, because she does not subjugate to the accepted dominance of male members of family, workplace or the society. Hanif consciously portrays her in such a way that she does not use the words like ‘thank you’ and ‘excuse me’ as she thinks that these may refer to any favor that she is asking for or her weakness. Shaheen et.al state:

Mohammad Hanif’s heroine is wearing this masculine language throughout this narrative. Her language is free from weakness, uncertainty, triviality and unseriousness. He empowers this lady by using such linguistic expressions in the narrative which advocate his feminist agenda too. (111)

They conclude their study by asserting that Hanif’s style of using magic realism is similar to the Latin American author Gabriel García Márquez’s fiction. Hanif creates a world of

fantasy and magic to empower Alice with strength, spirituality, and courage, and he “empowers Alice Joseph Bhatti by giving her the prophetic qualities and mysterious powers” (113). Shaheen et.al claim that their study is significant because it represents the fictional depiction of strong female characters. However, they do not relate magical elements with the subversion of master narrative of reality. They mainly associate the fantastical elements with Alice’s empowered character while my study relates these with her inner strength as well as her ability to contest the notions of science, faith, and identity.

Bina Shah in her editorial titled “Literature: The antidote to the Pakistani identity crisis” explores the literary depiction of the minority community in Pakistani English fiction. She starts her review by referring to Anatol Lieven’s book *Pakistan: A Hard Country*, in which the author focuses on the immense diversity of Pakistan. The author praises Pakistan and its beauty, but he identifies a gross problem, that is, the identity. Shah states, “Formulating identity in Pakistan is a complicated process” (3), she further contends that, historical and religious contexts have always been of crucial importance in the formation of various identities. She describes that religious identity in Pakistan is rooted in Indus Valley’s civilization, Hinduism, pagan religions, Buddhism, Islam (due to invasion by Arabs), and Christianity. The political identity of Pakistan is also influenced by a mixture of rule by Hindu emperors, Muslim Mughal kings, and then the British government as “Pakistanis were Indians until 1947” (5). Shah remarks that identity crises was portrayed in Pakistani English literature, and it was after the Partition 1947 that writers started writing about divided selves. She states, “Post-colonial, post-Partition, and contemporary South Asian literature helped nations newly emerging from the shadow of imperialism and oppression to frame the questions of new identity” (6). She appreciates few Indian novels such as Ahmed Ali’s *Twilight in Delhi*, and Bapsi Sidhwa’s novel *The Crow Eater* in terms of representation of Parsi religious community and its native language. She highlights that Hanif is quite impressed by Sidhwa’s writing style of capturing local words that refer to the minority community. She states:

Mohammed Hanif — whose second novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (2011) traces the life of a Punjabi Christian nurse living and working in modern-day Karachi —

captures the vernacular of the Punjabi Christian community, the Bollywood influenced, oath-laden talk of Karachi's police forces, and the flowery language of the Anglo-Indian Christian clergy. Hanif uses his journalist's ear to listen to the way each of these communities speak to each other, and faithfully to fashion a kind of transliteration which mangles the English language. (8)

Shah laments, at the very fact, that due to multiple religious identities, it has become really difficult for South Asian nations to establish tolerance and peace. She believes that the fictional representation of these issues records multiple narratives that challenge the existing stereotypical segregations. She concludes her editorial, by stating that, fiction writers of Pakistan write about "All of its people: Muslim, Christian, Hindu, Jewish. All of Pakistan's ethnicities, with their quirks and inconsistencies, paradoxes, and contradictions, jostle for space on the page, clamoring to tell their stories in their myriad languages" (10). By the end of her analysis, she claims that fiction is as vast as to accommodate a variety of shades, prevalent in Pakistan. Her review validates my study in terms of its representation of indigenous languages in English fiction and it explores the relation of language with identity formation. However, I find her study very brief and limited, and, in fact, the same aspects of local and pluralized language are explored in my research with reference to the hegemony of Standard English language. My study also exposes the role of language in constructing negative identities and stereotypes with respect to the minority community in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*.

Rasib Mehmood in his PhD dissertation titled "Colonization, Resistance and Transformation: A Postcolonial Critique of *The Unchosen* and *Things Fall Apart*" presents a brief critique on *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* through the lens of feminism. Other than exploring the impact of gender discrimination, on women's behavior and personality, he explores her as an object of sexual desire. He argues that the novel represents Alice as doubly oppressed woman because of her Christian identity in a patriarchal society. He claims, "Hanif's feminist lens throws light on the discrimination of the Pakistani society against a Christian lady, Alice Bhatti" (60). He asserts that Alice's objectification symbolizes the plight of women belonging to the minority communities of Pakistan. He further argues that it is not only the religion of Alice that

marginalizes her, but also the fact that she is the daughter of a sweeper. Her identity is constructed negatively and she is considered an untouchable. In order to support his argument, he quotes Faiza Khan who states, “Hanif’s magnificently acerbic critique of the sorry state of women’s rights in Pakistan is possessed by a Swiftian spirit” (qtd. in Mehmood 60). Mehmood, like Asma, is of the opinion that Hanif represents a woman as powerless against different manipulative forces, working in the society. My research argument disagrees with Mehmood’s claim that, such representation imposes the idea that a woman is weak and oppressed. My study proves that, within the metanarrative of patriarchy, Hanif empowers Alice such as her ability to accurately predict the future events and performing miracles against science.

Bilal Mushtaq in his *Writing Pakistan* conducts personal interviews with Muhammad Hanif and Kamila Shamsie. His interview with Hanif is beneficial to my study as previous studies on Hanif’s fiction have exclusively dedicated their focus on the representation of women. However it is important to know Hanif’s personal stance about his writings. Bilal begins his interview, by posing a very relevant question to Hanif, about his perception on Commonwealth Best First Book Prize that he has received for his debut novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*. Hanif replies, “As a writer if somebody gives you money, you take it. The Commonwealth is one of those organizations that nobody knows what it does. I think it is meant to plan holidays for the Queen” (119). Here, Hanif’s comments can be related to Amitav Gosh’s rejection of Commonwealth prize for *The Glass Palace* as he did not receive the award because he did not like to be categorized into any label. Secondly, Gosh argues that he wants equality for all Indian regional fiction writers, who write in local languages. In other words, both these writers subvert this classification that reminds them of their countries’ marginalization. Bilal poses another very important question regarding representation of Pakistan and its issues, as:

Bilal: Both *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* and *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* deal extensively with disciplinary institutions such as the military academy, jail and a psychiatric ward. Would you like to say something about your interest in these institutions?

Hanif: Yes, I am interested in institutions, in power structures, and how they work and what they do to people who have to work within them. I am interested in people who control them, people who try to subvert them and people who try to change them. (125)

Hanif further explains that he wants to expose the working strategies behind these institutions that exploit people to their maximum. Contrary to the research scholarship, that regards Hanif's novels as misrepresentation of female characters, Bilal is of the view that actually he portrays women as "an engine of change in Pakistani society" (128). He asks another significant question about Hanif's non-fiction work titled "The Baloch Who Is not Missing and Others Who Are" and its link with global Human rights agencies. Hanif answers, "That is rubbish. There is a whole intellectual industry based on human rights, and I am violently opposed to that. I think they are culpable as much as any war criminal is" (131). He is of the view that these institutions do nothing to secure a powerless human being rather they work on their selfish motives only. Bilal's interview is quite relevant to my study as I (in chapter 4) have analyzed the subversion of metanarratives in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* through language games and Hanif's perspectives have strengthened my research arguments. However, Hanif, in his interview, only mentions the institutions and their strategies to gain power, but he does not suggest any formulation of mininarratives. My study fills this gap and it presents an extended study of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* in order to expose the strategy of mininarratives that dismantles various metanarratives.

Similarly Kamila Shamsie, like Muhammad Hanif, writes about history, politics, gender, and status of Islam in the global world. Bilal seeks to explore the working philosophy behind her novels in a personal interview conducted with her. He praises her concerns as he states, "Shamsie's fiction frequently explores the concerns of Karachi's upper middle class. She has dealt with the Partition of the subcontinent, President Zia-ul-Haq's Islamization of Pakistan in 1971" (Shamsie 135). He further explains that she talks about local as well as global historical events as he states, "Her latest novel *A God in Every Stone* is set in the Peshawar of 1915 and deals with the British Raj" (135). He

poses a very relevant question to Shamsie about her intertextual choices that she incorporates in her fiction. I quote:

Bilal: The character of the poet in *Broken Verses* appears to be partly based on Faiz. To what extent is your English fiction writing informed by Urdu poetry?

Shamsie: Of course, for *Broken Verses*, Faiz was particularly important. (136)

Their conversation shows that Shamsie's writing is inspired by Agha Shahid Ali and Faiz Ahmad Faiz, and, through their intertextual references, she creates a link between English fiction and Urdu literature. She regards that Urdu literature is very important to understand the region, its culture, and its people. Bilal asks her about her national identity and she answers him by referring to her revolt against all the grand narratives, particularly, working in Pakistan. She comments, "Don't think I am a British person. I am a Pakistani and if it doesn't conform to your stereotype may be you need to rethink your stereotypes. Certainly I do that" (149). By the end of her interview, she mentions that still English fiction is lacking in many ways as it does not represent the atrocities that are committed in Baluchistan. Her interview is quite relevant to my study as it discusses her inspiration behind her fiction that covers themes like history, nations, politics, and human rights. However he does not ask her about the connection between intertextuality and history or historical texts, a very important phenomenon in historiographic metafiction, that my study attempts to examine by employing the tool of double intertextuality.

Ab Majeed Dar's study "Postmodernism in Amitav Ghosh's Novels" examines the influence of postmodernism on Ghosh's fiction. Dar argues that postmodern fictionality is present in almost all of Ghosh's novels, and it is employed through the use of strategies like magical realism, temporal displacement, and multiple realities etc. He contends that, "Amitav Ghosh is one among the postmodernists" (Dar 180) as he revolts against the master narratives of nationalism and war. Dar explains that in *The Shadow Lines* Ghosh demonstrates a strong friendship between the characters belonging to East and West. These characters are Nice Prince, Tridib and May, and their strong friendship promotes globalization. He evaluates Ghosh's other novel *The Glass Palace*, as a story of a businessman Rajkumar whose happiness dies with the death of his son in a bomb blast attack, done by Japanese. He contends that "Self-reflexes and confessions characterize

the fictional works of Amitav Ghosh” (181). He claims that Ghosh challenges the modern scientific advancements that have disturbed the human society, and the green environment.

According to Dar, Ghosh’s novels expose the selfish motives behind the narratives of progress and civilization. He remarks, “In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh routes the debate on eco-environment and cultural issues through the intrusion of the West into East” (182). He further relates the novel with the past as, “Being a portrait of history and document of nation, the novel can be read in historical perspective” (186). He relates Ghosh’s fiction with irony, an important tool in postmodernist fiction, and how it treats the tragic history of Second World War, the Partition 1947, and Burma’s invasion humorously. He further explains, “In *The Glass Palace*, Amitav Ghosh weaves the character of Queen Supayalat and Arjun with a tinge of irony” (184). Ghosh incorporates the techniques of nonlinear timeline and memory to reconstruct the past, and he makes the innovative use of English language, by using different words from local languages through code-mixing and code switching. Dar quotes Tabish khair who in his *Amitav Ghosh: A Critical Companion* comments, “Ghosh is very careful in his use of English and vernacular transcriptions. He develops a conscious and rich tradition in Indian English fiction, a tradition that includes R.K. Narayan and Shashi Deshpande. (108)

Dar sums up his study, by admitting that, it is difficult to accurately define postmodernism due to its ambiguity and vastness as a literary movement. He asserts that it is “not having concrete definition yet is a blooming and ongoing area” (187). He admits that, due to the various perspectives of postmodernism, his study is not sufficient to locate all the characteristics in Ghosh’s fiction. However Dar does not relate language of the novel with dismantling of metanarratives of science, capitalism, colonization, and war. My study intends to explore Ghosh’s novel from this perspective.

Mansing G.Kadam’s “Amitav Gosh’s *The Glass Palace*: A Post-colonial Novel” is a valuable analysis in terms of its representation of issues related to post colonialism. Kadam explores the novelistic depiction of nostalgia, identity crises, exploitation, loss of culture, and displacement in *The Glass Palace*. He refers to significant critics and theorists like Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak for their concepts related to colonialism.

Kadam argues that, in the recent years, there has been seen a development in the production of postcolonial literature, that is getting the central attention now as compare to its earlier status of being a peripheral art. He believes that Indian English fiction, in particular, writes about its distinct multicultural social setup, taste, aesthetics, and values, which are independent of British literature. He further argues that Ghosh explores the individual experience of his characters with reference to culture, history and nationalities. He contends that, in all of his novels, there are similar issues explored, such as, questioning binaries, multiculturalism, and individual history of loss and trauma. This common strand of representation in Ghosh's fiction owes much to his own philosophy of equality and justice.

Kadam, like Bilal, refers to Ghosh's rejection of commonwealth award for *The Glass Palace* as he believes that he did not accept it, for the very reason, that regional writers were not nominated in international writers list. He suggests, "Gosh debunks the national, political and geographic boundaries and supports his own idea that nationalism is an imaginative construct" (19). In fact, Ghosh considers the narrative of nationalism as the main source of creating conflicts, "For him, nationalism seems to be an illusion and a force of violence and destruction" (19). Kadam concludes his study, by suggesting that, the resistance against imperialism and nationalism is very much reflective of Ghosh's own personality and he, unlike Salman Rushdie, is a total insider who looks at the issues of Empire, rule, domination etc. with a complete sense of belongingness. This study, partially, supports my research argument that *The Glass Palace* subverts the binaries in order to raise voice for the unprivileged sections. This gives a limited overview of dismantling of metanarratives of colonization that further deals only with nationalism or patriotism while postmodernism deals with a broader range of issues. Kadam's study coincides with my research, in a way, that I too focus on the presence of multicultural, inter-faith, and cross-cultural relationships in my selected novels from the perspective of postmodern condition. The difference lies in the theoretical limitations, where Kadam discusses postcolonialism, specifically, in the context of India, and my study situates the novel in a global postmodern perspective.

Claire Gail Chambers' Doctoral study titled "The Relationship Between Knowledge and Power in the Work of Amitav Ghosh" presents a critique on the link between discourse and power. She explores four novels, written by Amitav Ghosh, namely *The Circle of Reason*, *The Shadow Lines*, *In An Antique Land*, and *The Calcutta Chromosome*, through the theoretical paradigms proposed by Foucault. She begins her analysis with *The Circle of Reason* and she contends that, Ghosh exposes the game of scientific discourse and its link with power. She claims that he negates the notion that "science has often been regarded as a legitimate and legitimizing form of knowledge" (Chambers iii). She further remarks that the novel highlights science as a tool that was used to gain power in colonized territories of Africa and Asia. In her second chapter, Chambers refers to Ghosh's other novel *The Shadow Lines* and she suggests that, it reveals that space is socially and imaginatively constructed. She asserts, "Ghosh's preoccupation with space and place, I will argue, is suggestive of the crisis of location that many Bengalis have experienced following the Partition of India (1947) and the Pakistani civil war of 1971" (77). She finds that Ghosh counters the "objective knowledge" of science through construction of stories as "*The Circle of Reason* and *The Calcutta Chromosome* pit fantasy, folklore, and story-telling against the rigidity of colonial science" (262).

In her next chapter, Chambers presents her critique of *In an Antique Land* regarding the subversion of traditional notion of history. She highlights the interesting side of the novel that, the narrator prefers reading local stories and poems in place of reading official historical discourse. She claims, "Ghosh is not interested in the broad sweep of History: of Crusades, wars, and empires, but chooses instead to focus on individual histories" (141). In the end, she refers to Ghosh's another novel *The Glass Palace* that also subverts the master narratives of fiction and history. She remarks, "A similar celebration of art infuses *The Glass Palace's* references to photographers such as Edward Weston and Raghubir Singh, and to the short stories written by the character Ma Thin Thin Aye" (262). She concludes her argument, by asserting that, Ghosh's fiction reveals that knowledge is constructed and deconstructed through power. Chambers analysis is valuable to my research as it discusses the background, style, and themes of four very important novels, written by Ghosh. It discusses the subversion of traditional

history and legitimacy of science in these novels with a brief focus on *The Glass Palace* (Chapter 5 of my study). However her study only explores the novels from the perspectives of history and science, while my study adds a new dimension of postmodern fictionality in order to explore *The Glass Palace*.

Uday Shankar Ojha's "Amitav Ghosh's *In An Antique Land*: A Postmodernist's Rendezvous with History" paints a clear picture of Ghosh's general style of fusing history and fiction. He claims that, Ghosh, being an anthropologist, in *In An Antique Land* revisits his past memories in Egypt. He argues that, through the depiction of main character's strong nostalgia for the past, he seems to transcend the barriers of time and space. Shankar remarks that the postmodern representation of history in *In An Antique Land* owes much to Ghosh's own life experiences as he challenges the official historical discourse by narrating the personal stories of his characters. Shankar states:

True to the kindred points of his predecessors and contemporary novelists like Manohar Malgonkar (*The Devil's Wind*), Nayantara Sahgal (*Rich Like Us*), Rohinton Mistry (*Such a Long Journey*) and Shashi Tharoor (*Great Indian Novel*), Amitav Ghosh, a traveller cum researcher, too, believes in the subversion of history skillfully exhibited in his novels like 'The Circle of Reason,' 'The Shadow Lines.' 'The Calcutta Chromosome' and the proposed work 'In An Antique Land'. (Shankar 141)

He further asserts that the novel is packed with the details about various customs, new cultures, social life, and religion of the native people of medieval India and Egypt. He explains that, like Ghosh's other novels, this very work also challenges the legitimacy of war. Shankar refers to a character Ustaz Sabry who, during a conversation with the narrator, expresses his opinion about the war that was fought between Iraq and Iran. He states, "While others were taking advantage of the war to make money, it were the Iraqis who were dying on the front" (qtd. In Shankar 143). It shows that Shankar exposes the fictional representation of violence that is caused due to war, and he mocks at the narratives of enlightenment and civilization. He argues that war not only kills innocent people but it, also, destroys economy, green environment, and the family values. He asserts that other than challenging war narrative, Ghosh narrates political tales related to

the historical event of formation of East Pakistan and “with utmost sincerity, the author presents a fusion of fiction and history” (144).

Shankar believes that the novel challenges the stereotypical representation of the orient, as its various characters interact in friendly terms irrespective of differences of nations, religions, and cultures. He claims that Ghosh blends personal as well as collective histories of people belonging to different classes because “History that defines nations, cultures and people only in totality doesn't define the local or individual” (147). Shankar remarks that the traditional history creates terror and rebellious feelings among the survivors. He sums up his study, by commenting that, Amitav Gosh bridges the gap between different places, time, and cultures through the fictional account of narrating different historical events. His study validates my research as it explores the subversion of grand narrative of history and my study also addresses the same aspect in Ghosh's other novel *The Glass Palace*. However the gap that I find in Shankar's study is that he focuses only on postmodern version of plural history and ignores the fictionality of the historical discourse. My study fills this gap by relating the link between fictionality and history through the lens of Linda Hutcheon's historiographic metafiction.

2.3 CONCLUSION

While during the literature review, I have found that there is scarcity in the existing research scholarship on South Asian novels from the theoretical perspectives of postmodern literary criticism. The research with respect to Lyotard's language games, postmodern fictionality, and historiographic metafiction regarding English fiction from Pakistan and India is lacking to a considerable extent. I have reviewed the limited available material in the form of various research articles, books, interviews, and doctoral dissertations related to my primary sources of the study. Along with identifying the gaps in the existing critical studies, this review also provides justification for the relevant theoretical framework and research methodology used to do the analysis of my primary texts.

Next chapter of my study discusses the research methodology and theoretical framework in detail and it also explains significant ideas, philosophy, and the concepts of the selected theorists.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter seeks to explain the theoretical framework and research methodology used for this study. It focuses on the theories of Jean Francois Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon that this study has invoked as lenses to explore the primary texts. It justifies the application of the theories with reference to language, fictionality and history in the selected fiction. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the theoretical lenses and essential framing concepts that I have applied in this study. First of all, I discuss my rationale for invoking Francois Lyotard's concepts of the subversion of metanarratives and language games.

3.2 METANARRATIVES

Jean Francois Lyotard's *The Postmodern Condition*, is a seminal work on postmodernism, that started a philosophical debate on the modern narratives of Enlightenment. In this work, he claims, "I define postmodernism as incredulity towards metanarratives" (xxiv) and he traces the shift from modern philosophy to postmodern thought. He classifies the metanarratives into two types i.e. speculative and emancipatory. He believes that postmodernism signals the "delegitimation of the universally accepted truths such as technological progress, political emancipation, logocentrism, philosophical consensus, history, patriarchy and imperialism" (37). In his opinion, these grand narratives replace the multiplicity of voices with terror or one thunderous voice. He proposes the idea of small narratives that also claim for legitimacy, but these stories do not generalize their claim for universality. Lyotard regards science as

one crucial metanarrative, that, later on, could not verify its slogans of progress and emancipation. He argues that postmodern response of “incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences” (xxvi). This slogan of emancipation is related to Enlightenment and Marxism, and these narratives claim to focus on the liberation of the common people from all the prevailing religious superstitions.

Lyotard suggests that, in modern age, various institutions including religion, business companies, education, and law became united for the cause of universal emancipation. Their sheer dominance transformed the advanced societies, as he further remarks, “The status of knowledge is altered as societies enter what is known as the postindustrial age and cultures enter what is known as the postmodern age” (3). He classifies knowledge into two distinct types, that is, narrative and scientific. Scientific knowledge represents events from just a single perspective, while narrative knowledge captures the abstract concepts too, such as, emotions and ideas. He explains:

I will use the term modern to designate any science that legitimates itself with reference to a metanarrative of this kind, making an appeal to some grand narrative such as the dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject or the creation of wealth. (xxiii)

However he believes, “The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regard less of whether it is a speculative narrative or a narrative of emancipation” (37). This postmodern practice focuses on the individual ‘little narratives’ and their plural nature, and these mini stories also consider the fact that not all the individuals should be reduced to the criterion of efficiency. He describes that, once the grand narratives or *métarécit* (French) have fallen away, we are left only with the diverse range of language games and the aim of postmodern criticism should be to do justice by allowing them to be heard in their own terms.

3.3 LANGUAGE GAMES

Lyotard calls the phenomenon of organization of metanarratives as “language games”, and he believes that every utterance that seeks legitimacy, consensus and control can be called a game. He in *The Postmodern Condition* states, “I have decided to use the word

postmodern to describe that condition, it designates the state of our culture following the transformation, which since the end of nineteenth century have altered the game rules for science, literature and arts” (xxiii). He claims that, any ‘truth’ is constructed in a particular social or political context and it is plural. His concept of language games is not his own idea rather it was, initially, used by an Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein explains that metanarratives are categories of utterances governed by certain pre-defined rules, and there is no real connection between language and truth.

Lyotard, as a follower of Wittgenstein, is of the view that every philosophy and every utterance should be considered as a move in a game. He believes, “Language games are the minimum relation required for society to exist” (15). He relates language games with politics, knowledge, and power, as these authorities determine who will decide? What is the knowledge? What should be decided as knowledge?. He further states, “It is clear that language games are heteromorphous, subject to heterogeneous sets of pragmatic rules” (65). He argues that it is the lack of sensitivity towards heterogeneous rules that leads to exclusion, violence, and terror. He suggests that the social control will remain unfair until the plurality is taken into consideration. He states:

Is legitimacy to be found in consensus obtained through discussion, as Jurgen Habermas thinks? Such consensus does violence to the heterogeneity of language games. Postmodern knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities; it refines our sensitivity to differences. (xxv)

He proposes that there are three important parts of language games, i.e. the specific context, players and, the rules. He argues that a society is made up of certain language games with specific moves that comprise of a network of communication, in which each group “is always located at nodal points of specific communication circuits” (2). He highlights certain rules which are related to language games and he regards that these moves are “the object of a contract, explicit or not, between the players” (10). He suggests an alternative way to attain legitimacy for the different moves in language games on the parameters of ‘paralogy’ (a Greek word, ‘para’ means ‘beyond’ and ‘logos’ means ‘reason’). The literal meanings of ‘paralogy’ are false or bad logic, because it

breaks the rules of a language game, and it defines reason as not a universal principle, rather a variable human product. Paralogy, however, makes new moves in the language games while, at the same time, it also changes the prevailing rules to invent new strategies.

Similarly, traditional history is one of the language games, as Lyotard in his book *The Differend: The Phrases in Dispute*, expresses his distrust towards official historian's discourse regarding World War Two massacres. He counters the argument proposed by Robert Faurisson, a French historian, who claims that Holocaust incident never happened. Lyotard contests his claim, by suggesting that, in case of World War Two, many records were discarded so the numbers of deaths which are recorded by the official historians are not the same that happened in reality. He refers to the exclusion of these victims, by calling them 'differend' who are silenced and, in this way, cannot testify their position. He relates the term 'differend' with the legal system as well, that forms another language game. He is of the opinion that it is necessary to allow every stakeholder to be heard by the legislators. The differences should be appreciated in order to allow all the stakeholders to make a move in the language game.

Lyotard further discusses this idea in his work *Just Gaming*, where he questions the legitimacy of empirical rules and laws. He asserts that the totalizing legal system does not make sense because there are always cases of exceptions, for example, a war or a murder in self-defense and, ironically, both of these cases gain legitimacy from the same law that says that one should not kill other. He regards that the provision of justice should be based on the acceptance of the heterogeneity of language games and diverse perspectives of common people. It should take into account the individuality of every human being and if it is not done this way, then, injustice occurs, that leads to silencing or exclusion of particular voices and people. He contends:

Absolute injustice would occur if ... the possibility of continuing to play the game of the just were excluded. Thus, obviously, all terror, annihilation, massacre, etc. or their threat, are by definition, unjust. But moreover, any decision that takes away, or in which it happens that one takes away, from one's partner in a current pragmatics, the possibility of playing or replaying a pragmatics of obligation. (67)

In the next subsection, I discuss Linda Hutcheon's concepts of historiographic metafiction, self-reflexivity, parody, irony, and double intertextuality that I have used as my lenses for textual analysis.

3.4 HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

Hutcheon in her book *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* defines, "Postmodernism is fundamentally contradictory, resolutely historical, and inescapably political" (4). Like Lyotard, she too contends that it demonstrates a subversive ideology against modern philosophy of 'objective' representation of the world. She is of the view that postmodern approach is "a problematizing force in our culture, because it raises questions about the common-sensical" (xi). According to her, historiographic metafictional novels reflect the poetics of postmodernism in a true sense, because they problematize the traditional distinction between fact and fiction. She is of the opinion that fiction and history are not fixed products, rather, both are in a continuous process of making, and irony remains the dominant tool in constructing or reconstructing these mediums.

She coined the term 'historiographic metafiction' in her essay "Beginning to Theorize the Postmodern", she takes her concept from Patricia Waugh; a renowned postmodern theorist. Waugh focuses on the fictional construction of the realities as she, in *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-conscious Fiction* states, "Where modernism is preoccupied by consciousness, showing how the workings of the mind reveal individuals to be much less stable and unified than realist psychology would have us believe, postmodernism is much more interested in fictionality" (14). Waugh contends that there is a stark difference between any real historical event and its fictional depiction. She states, "History like fiction is provisional, continually reconstructed and open-ended" (125). Like Hutcheon, Waugh suggests that there is no reality outside the text, rather, it is represented through different worlds within worlds i.e. author and the text, text and other texts, and, text and the reader. She remarks, "not only that writing history is a fictional act, ranging events conceptually through language to form a world-model, but that history itself is invested, like fiction, with interrelating plots which appear to interact independently of human design" (48-49).

Similarly, Hutcheon in her “Historiographic metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History” comments on the fictionality of history as, “In fiction this means that it is usually metafiction that is equated with the postmodern” (3). She contends that Historiographic metafiction challenges the binaries regarding colonial and imperial encounters, and this very aspect, makes it similar to postcolonial literature, but, still, both are not the same. Historiographic metafiction contests any autonomous representation of objective reality that claims for totalized textual and fictional construction of the past. Hutcheon in another work titled “‘Circling the Downspout of Empire’: Post-Colonialism and Postmodernism” states:

At this thematic and structural level, it is not just the relation to history that brings the two posts together; there is also a strong shared concern with the notion of marginalization, with the state of what we could call ex-centricity. In granting value to (what the center calls) the margin or the Other, the postmodern challenges any hegemonic force that presumes centrality (153).

She argues that such novels challenge the traditional, objective, and ordered representation of history. They provide plural interpretations of a single historical event, and they narrate the personal loss along with the collective loss that is missing in traditional historical discourse. She defines, “By this I mean those well-known and popular novels, which are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages” (5). She further elaborates the idea of historiographic metafiction by stating, “The term postmodernism, when used in fiction, should, by analogy, best be reserved to describe fiction that is at once metafictional and historical in its echoes of the texts and contexts of the past” (*A Poetics* 3).

Like her other works, Hutcheon’s *British Historiographic Metafiction* is also based on the fusion of history with fiction in an experimental way. She states, “The meeting of metafiction and historiography produces a new kind of experimental writing uniquely capable of fulfilling the poetics of postmodernism” (71). Therefore, such novels explore the fictional aspect of revisiting the past, and, in this way, they pose certain questions as to how, where, and why against the traditional history. By posing such questions, these novels make “a critical revisiting and ironic dialogue with the past” (*A*

Poetics 4). Catherine Belsey in her essay “Postmodern love: Questioning the Metaphysics of Desire” also comments on the experimental fusion of fiction and historical discourse. She states, “The fictional problematization of history of our access to the ‘facts’ is so common in recent novels that Linda Hutcheon has coined the term ‘historiographic metafiction’ and treat it as the paradigm case for postmodern fiction” (688). She views that such fusion of fiction with the reality questions the reader’s potential in comprehending a postmodern text.

Hutcheon in her another work titled *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* relates historiography with metafiction. She explains, “‘Metafiction’ as it has now been named, is ‘fiction about fiction’, that is, fiction that includes within itself a commentary on its own narrative and/or linguistic identity” (1). She was aware of the negative reception of metafictional novels in 1970’s, therefore, she claims, “we now accept metafiction” (2). She suggests that such novels do not represent the reality and history in a direct way, rather they explore it with the help of parody, intertextuality, and self-reflexivity. These literary devices emphasize on the fact that there is no reality outside the discourse and every story has to be constructed with the help of language.

3.4.1 PARODY

Hutcheon in “Historiographic Metafiction Parody and the Intertextuality of History” explains that an interactive relationship exists between fiction and history in historiographic metafiction. She argues that it is a paradoxical phenomenon that combines historical fiction and metafiction, and, in this way, “the conventions of both fiction and historiography are simultaneously used and abused, installed and subverted, asserted and denied” (5). She thinks that such novels create double stance in the form of parody by citing a convention and then subverting it. She states, “Parody is often called ironic quotation, pastiche, appropriation, or intertextuality is usually considered central to postmodernism” (*The Politics* 93). Her stance is different from other postmodern theorists, who do not focus much on the significance of parody rather they consider it a byproduct of the changing condition of the age. She believes that it is a political activity that subverts ideologies, and it also poses resistance against the totalizing stance of traditional history. She states, “The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction

offers a sense of the presence of the past, but this is a past that can only be known from its texts, its traces, be they literary or historical” (4).

She further explains that historiographic metafiction incorporates double intertextual parody, that blends both literary as well as historical discourses. She regards that parody challenges the segregation of boundaries between history and fiction because it cites various intertexts from both the disciplines. This approach is contrary to modern fiction that is autonomous, self-sufficient, and closed, and it also adheres to the unity of form. She suggests that parody draws attention towards the process of metafictional construction by taking away a certain text from the given context. It also repositions a text in a new context and different perspective, she states:

While postmodernism, as I am defining it here, is perhaps somewhat less promiscuously extensive, the notion of parody as opening the text up, rather than closing it down, is an important one: among the many things that postmodern intertextuality challenges are both closure and single, centralized meaning. (7)

She contends that postmodern parody challenges some of the assumptions about conventional art, such as, the originality of the product is no more valid because it is now made up of various discourses. She further explains this idea in her *A Theory of Parody: The Teachings of Twentieth-Century Art Forms* as, “There is nothing in parodia that necessitates the inclusion of a concept of ridicule, as there is, for instance, in the joke or burla of burlesque” (32). She begins her discussion by acknowledging that “parody is one of the major forms of modern self-reflexivity” (2), and it “can be a serious criticism, or it can be playful, genial mockery” (15). She views that, in postmodern fiction, parody is serious that, also, demonstrates that reality is never discovered rather it is constructed in a self-reflexive manner.

3.4.2 SELF-REFLEXIVITY

Hutcheon in *Narcissistic Narrative: The Metafictional Paradox* argues that parody, in metafiction, is used as a device that presents a mirror in a self-reflexive fiction. It refers to the other texts, and, in this way, it creates a self-reflexive illusion towards its own textuality and fictionality. She argues that, in postmodern fiction, self-reflexivity is used as a tool that problematizes the representation of reality through imitation. She

believes that, in this way, a self-reflexive text contextualizes history in the present time through the process of a creative revisionism. According to her, a self-reflexive text paradoxically demands that the reader should get involved affectively, imaginatively, and intellectually in the process of co-creation. This strategy of working between writer, reader, and the text, is a paradox, where a text is self-reflexive as well as reader-oriented. She thinks that, this strategy clearly makes the reader realize about text's fictionality, and, "In metafiction, however, this fact is made explicit and, while he reads, the reader lives in a world which he is forced to acknowledge as fictional" (7). She claims that this characteristic of self-mirroring, in fact, challenges the traditional realistic concept of fiction.

Hutcheon argues that a self-reflexive novel consciously exhibits its author's aesthetic presence, through the process of fiction writing, and storytelling. She is of the opinion that language plays a very important role in construction of such metafictional work. She states, "Language must be singular in the sense that it depends uniquely on the work in which it appears, as one of its means and one of its ends" (11). This self-reflexive tendency is quite opposite to formal realism that considered language just a medium or means, but the main focus was on action, representation of truth (not words), and the characters. She suggests that self-reflexivity transforms the roles of author, text, and reader. She refers to Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche's *Death of God*, published in 1880, that was followed by Roland Barthes' article *Death of Author* in 1981. Barthes regards the novel as half the product while other half lies in the active participation of reader, who constructs its final meanings. It also ensures that neither author acts dominant nor the reader becomes a passive receiver, rather, they both play their parts in meaning making process. Hutcheon considers this equation of author, reader, and text, as an essential trait for metafiction that deconstructs the hegemony of author by involving a reader's understanding abilities.

3.4. 3 IRONY

Linda Hutcheon in her *Irony's Edge: The Theory and Politics of Irony* extends her contributions to postmodern literary criticism by theorizing the concept of irony. She describes that the function of irony has changed with the passage of time, and, now, it

plays a crucial role in postmodern fiction. She suggests that it has transformed from “limited classical rhetorical trope to a more positive mode of artistic expression with renewed power as an engaged critical force, that is to say, as a rhetorical and structural strategy of resistance and opposition. In other words, irony today is neither trivial nor trivializing” (11-12). She considers it is a risky phenomenon as sometimes the targeted audiences fail to receive and comprehend it or they may misinterpret it. Therefore, she proposes that ““the interpreter” along with “the ironist” formulate an active part in production and reception of irony” (11). In fact Hutcheon’s main concern, unlike the previous concept of irony, is the interpreter rather than the ironist.

Hutcheon introduces another aspect of irony that is related to its emotional impact at the level of mocking, irritating, attacking, humiliating or embarrassing others. It is associated with different responses ranging from anger to delight, with various degrees of motivation from engaging as well as detaching emotions. She proposes two functions of irony: one is constructive and the other is destructive. Constructive irony is used as a weapon against an authority while destructive irony attacks those who expect seriousness. She states, “Of course, even humorous ironies can be deadly serious” (25). She attributes different roles to irony, that work in a communicative system, such as, Reinforcing role that is the basic role with a less critical edge; Complicating role, it reflects richness of all art; Ludic role that is associated with humor and wit; Distancing role that is based on the idea of indifference; Self-Protective role which rejects any superiority; Provisional role which challenges any fixed position; Oppositional role that is applied to the notions of class, race, gender, and sexuality. She is of the view that all these roles of irony are very much evident in postmodern fiction, but irony itself needs a community that is known as “discursive community”. This community is based on “the norms and beliefs that constitute the prior understanding we bring to the utterance” (137). It stands for expectations, beliefs, knowledge, habits, norms, and even communicative strategies, which are common in a specific group.

Hutcheon argues that a discursive community helps the reader to interpret the ironic meanings properly. She relates it with the ironic signals which are employed by the writer in order to facilitate the reader in recognizing the irony. These signals are

categorized into two broad categories, that is, Paralinguistic and Paraverbal markers. Paralinguistic signals include phonic markers, gestural markers, and graphic punctuation signs while paraverbal markers include literalization, exaggeration, repetition, changes in register and contradictions. Hutcheon considers that irony serves “as an evaluative strategy that implies an attitude of the encoding agent towards the text itself, an attitude which, in turn, allows and demands the decoder’s interpretation and evaluation” (*A Theory of Parody* 53). She is of the opinion that while reading a postmodern fiction, a reader’s role is always tested through devices like self-reflexivity, irony, parody, and intertextuality.

3.4.4 INTERTEXTUALITY

Intertextuality, as a most significant postmodern strategy, focuses on the plurality of different texts within a text. This concept was initially taken from Bakhtin’s dialogism, heteroglossia, polyphony, and the concept of multiple voices. Later, it was Julia Kristeva, a French philosopher, who presented the theory of intertextuality. For the very first time, she used this word in her famous research article titled *Word Dialogue and Novel* published in 1966. She regards intertextuality, as a literary device, that relates a text with other texts, and it also discusses or writes in parallel to other works. According to Linda Hutcheon, historiographic metafiction presents a decentered world that emphasizes, on the very aspect, that a literary text weaves fibers of numerous texts by giving reference or extending discussion on them. She defines, “The intertextual parody of historiographic metafiction enacts, in a way, the views of certain contemporary historiographers: it offers a sense of the presence of the past, but a past that can be known only from its texts, its traces—be they literary or historical” (*A Poetics* 125).

She suggests that, in a narration, intertextuality performs a dialogue with a text and re-contextualizes it as per the new context. It can be both vertical and horizontal as explained by John Fiske. The horizontal intertextuality is the reference towards same medium, for example, a book in a book or movie in a movie while vertical intertextuality is independent of these medium constraints. Postmodern fiction reflects both these types as it sometimes refers to just name of any text, song, book or movie in a work, and, on other occasions, it can actually borrow an idea, concept, and style from some other work.

Like Hutcheon, Barth, Eliot, and Frye also emphasize on the use of intertextuality in literature, and they are of the opinion that borrowings, allusions, and echoes relate one text with the other texts. Kristeva regards this formal self-consciousness adaptation of different texts as “a mosaic of quotations” (66). The use of intertextuality suggests that the meanings are not directly given by the author or transferred to the reader, but they occur in a set of codes that constitute other texts. Hutcheon also suggests that intertextuality challenges the traditional closure of modern text, by opening it up to the reader, who is allowed to interpret it with respect to his own knowledge and context.

I conclude this section by relating the theoretical insights of Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon as both the thinkers argue that postmodernist fiction considers language and discourse as crucial to construct the multiplicity of truth, and it demonstrates that there is no reality outside the text. They claim that it subverts grand narratives of science, war, and history, by fusing fictionality and the reality. The selected fiction exposes and subverts the hegemonic grand narratives in the sense conveyed by Lyotard, who challenges their legitimacy in the wake of the destruction caused by science. In the same way, my study dismantles the traditional demarcation between official history and fiction by applying the lens of Linda Hutcheon’s historiographic metafiction.

3.5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is qualitative, exploratory, and interpretive in nature that aims to focus on the literary representation of postmodernist occasions with reference to language, fictionality, and history in the selected texts. Qualitative research is concerned with the comprehension, description, and exploration of a phenomenon or event, Gail Cresswell and Megan Poore in *Writing for Academic Success* define, “The aim of a qualitative research is to provide a holistic picture and it is an inquiry process that explores a social or human problem” (15). Consequently, it relies on experience, social contexts, history, and constructions/deconstruction of reality in order to establish new, or to enhance existing understandings of conditions, and situations in the real world. This method helps the researcher to understand the context in all its dimensions as Jennifer Mason in *Qualitative Researching* explains:

Qualitative research faces new opportunities in a social world that is increasingly thought to be complex and multi-dimensional, and where the particularly qualitative strengths of understanding context, diversity, nuance and process might potentially be very highly valued. It continues to represent a broad and pervasive set of challenges to more fixed ways of perceiving and understanding that world. (viii)

My study relied on various secondary sources, including e-books, books, PhD dissertations, and research journals. The information that is retrieved from the literary sources is used to examine certain postmodernist occasions present in the selected works.

3.6 RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses textual analysis as a research method in order to explore the postmodernist occasions in the selected novels. This method seeks to interpret the intention of the author, and his relation with the text and the reader. It provides a distinctive discursive interaction that gives way to a scholarly engagement to perform encoding and decoding of the text. Moreover, it leads to a rich understanding of a specific text that, generally, is difficult in a cursory analysis. It explores a text in order to trace how it operates, constructs or deconstructs, and generates meanings in any cultural setting. Norman Denzin and Yvonna in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* explain that textual analysis finds the connection of a text with meanings inside and outside of it. They state:

Textual analysis as a research strategy permeates the social sciences, and the range of methods for conducting text analysis is inspiring. Investigators examine words, sentences, paragraphs, pages, documents, ideas, meanings, paralinguistic features, and even what is missing from the text” (789).

Like Denzin and Yvonna, Fairclough in *Analysing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* also views textual analysis in terms of its relation with various themes and styles. He states, “Textual analysis is not only seen as a linguistic analysis; it also includes what I have called ‘interdiscursive analysis’, that is, seeing texts in terms of the different discourses, genres and styles they draw upon and articulate together” (3). In fact, if a reader is asked to talk and comprehend the text in a certain way only, then it will

delimit his critical thinking, and he will ask only a few questions about the text, and, consequently, will find only few conclusions. However, textual analysis of postmodernist texts liberates a reader from these rules and regulations.

In my study, I trace postmodernist occasions through Catherine Belsey's textual analysis in order to explore various themes related to culture, human societies, history, and language in the selected novels. She considers this method very helpful for the reader in making a sense of the text in relation to various ideas. My study incorporates textual analysis to examine the meanings of the words, sentences, and passages. Belsey in *Critical Practice* defines, "A research method that involves a close encounter with the work itself, an examination of the details without bringing to them more presuppositions than we can help" (160). She claims that textual analysis opens up a variety of possibilities for the reader to interpret a given text. A reader will ask few questions before or while reading a text, for example, what is this particular text about? What kind of position does the text take historically and textually? How many arguments are made or available about the text? What is the relation of the text with the earlier existing texts? She further contends that textual analysis aims "to attend to all the quotations that make the text, the traces by which it is constituted" (162). In fact, in this method, the researcher performs a kind of dialogue with the text, and, in this way, s/he extracts meanings from conventions, genres, and codes from historical, social, ideological and cultural perspectives.

According to Belsey, textual analysis as a research method explores a text in terms of its narratives, conversation, grammatical structure, function, and the context. She suggests that textual analysis relates different time frames as, "The present, as well as the past, is always already irremediably textualized for us" (46). She further suggests that, while exploring a text through textual analysis, a researcher tries to find that if "something exists in its difference" (163), and a reader "constructs a text by assembling intertextual fragments" (134). He seeks to trace the possible interpretations and ideologies embedded in a text. Belsey, in her another essay "Constructing the Subject", remarks that textual analysis provokes the reader to approach a text in different ways. She states, "Meaning is never a fixed essence inherent in the text but is always constructed by

the reader, the result of a 'circulation' between social formation, reader and text” (664). She believes that textual analysis investigates the racial, social, historical and political aspects either propagated or questioned in a text. It also helps the researcher to dig out the moral, aesthetic, and philosophical implications of the text. She views that, by applying this method, the reader can explore the ambiguous texts as they are free to “seek not only the unity of the work, but the multiplicity and diversity of its possible meanings, its incompleteness, the omission which it displays and above all its contradictions” (100). It also helps the researcher to place the text in their current scenario and relate it with the past as well. Belsey also comments on the plurality of the concepts present in a text, she states, “Composed of contradictions, the text is no longer restricted to a single, harmonious and authoritative reading. Instead, it becomes plural, open to rereading no longer an object for passive consumption as an object of work by the reader to produce meaning” (“Constructing” 665).

This sub-section justifies the research methodology and research method used for my study, and it has argued that textual analysis is the closely suited method to evaluate the selected south Asian novels.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted the relevant theorists and their research concepts with reference to the language, fictionality and history in postmodern fiction.

In the forthcoming chapters of this study, I have applied theoretical insights of Jean Francois Lyotard to explore the language of the selected fiction as a move to counter various metanarratives and language games. Moreover, through Linda Hutcheon’s concept of historiographic metafiction this study finds the overlapping of historical discourse and fictionality in the selected fiction. It explores that the selected novels subvert modern ideologies through fragmented characters, storytelling, double intertextuality, irony, parody, and self-reflexivity.

Next chapter specifically is based on the textual analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* and it explores how, through language, the novel subverts the modernist essentials and generates plural mininarratives by making paralogical moves.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSFORMATION OF LANGUAGE IN MUHAMMAD HANIF'S *OUR LADY OF ALICE BHATTI*

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the transformation of language in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* in order to trace the subversion of metanarratives through various paralogical moves. It highlights the postmodern shift from grand stories to mininarratives that challenges the existing language games. It also examines the novel in the light of Lyotard's theoretical concept of language games and Hutcheon's idea of irony/playfulness in order to analyze the crucial role of language. This particular chapter highlights the postmodern response in the novel that suggests that there is neither truth nor falsity rather multiple and relative truths. Therefore textual analysis aims to highlight such moves to trace postmodern mininarratives and subversion of fixed notions.

4.2 *OUR LADY OF ALICE BHATTI*

The novel is an insightful story wrapped with humor and emotions such as love, pain and revenge, and it makes a quest to know the humanity and the role of human beings in order to improve it. The plot of the novel is divided into thirty chapters and an epilogue. The plot revolves around the stories related to various characters such as Alice; a Christian nurse, Joesph Bhatti; her father, Hina; a nurse, Teddy; the policeman and Alice's husband, Malangi; a police inspector, Noor; a hospital boy and many other. It represents diverse aspects of these characters' lives that are based on their experiences of love, hatred, society, politics, and violence. The novel is set in Karachi and it begins with a scene where Alice is giving an interview for the post of a junior nurse in a government hospital named Sacred Heart of All Ailments. Later on, the details about her characters are revealed, such as, her mother died when Alice was at a tender age, and she has lived

with her father Joseph Bhatti. Her father is a sweeper who earns his living by cleaning the shitholes of a particular Christian colony of Karachi.

Alice decides to become a nurse but she faces unlimited difficulties in her education and career later on. She is a woman of rebellious and outspoken nature and that is the reason that she is sent to Borstal Jail for Women and Children. However, after completing her sentence, she manages to secure a job at Sacred Heart Hospital near French Colony. As a human being, she is a helpful lady who takes care of Noor's ill mother nurse, but in different times, she becomes a brave girl who cuts the flesh of a man of powerful status. Epilogue reveals that despite all her efforts to survive in the society, she dies an unfortunate and a premature death. She is attacked under the hospital courtyard tree that is also known as Old Doctor. It is mentioned in her father's letter where he claims for her sainthood and glorifies her death.

Other important characters include Noor, Zainab, Dr Pereira, Teddy, Malangi and Sister Hina. These characters belong to low class status, and professionally they belong to various fields such as some are policemen, nurses, beggars, patients and medical doctors. Sister Hina is another important character, who is a Christian and serves in the same hospital where Alice is a nurse. She represents voice of woman who is marginalized due to being a woman and a Christian as well. On the other hand, Teddy is a male character who is a police man and also Alice's husband. His identity keeps on transforming throughout the story as at some occasions he is a kind man but on other he is rude and even attempts Alice's murder in the end. Teddy Butt and his friend inspector Malangi belong to a branch of police department known as Gentlemen's Squad. Teddy Butt, is also a body builder who waxes his body hair and consumes various steroids in order to improve his physical stamina. The novel is full of playful fusion of fact and fiction that subverts the grand narratives in a light yet ironic way. It demonstrates that the characters make various paralogical moves against the established language games, and, in this way, plurality of truth is highlighted.

4.3 LINGUISTIC PLAYFULLNESS

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti draws attention towards its playful constructed-ness through the use of various figures of speech, such as, similes, metaphors, and ellipsis etc. It represents the serious experiences, sensitive emotions and tragic stories of the characters in a light manner. Francois Lyotard comments on this playfulness that it creates discontinuity and confusion due to the excessive use of allusions, puns, and quotations. He believes that, such strategies subvert the conventional ideas of a coherent development of narration and, in this way, also challenge the reader's general assumption regarding the novel challenges the reader's assumptions and understanding of a traditional novel. He contends, "A whole range of accepted narrative and even stylistic operators is brought into play with no concern for the unity of the whole, and experiments are conducted with new operators" ("Answering the Question" 14). He regards that these operators help the reader to know the story, and interpret it in a given way. Moreover, this strategy allows a reader to direct and specify his interpretation in a certain way.

Textual analysis highlights certain postmodernist occasions in order to show the representation of various ideas through experimental language. For instance, Teddy's feelings of being in love are expressed as, "He feels he can carry her and walk the earth...He feels he has been allowed back into a school of happiness from which he was expelled a long time ago" (223). He knows "that somehow his midnight yearning for her and his insomnia would walk hand in hand and form a rhyming, soaring declaration of love that would reverberate through the corridors of the hospital" (223). On the contrary, in the later part of the novel, he is represented as a conventional policeman when he puts a gun on Alice's head and forces her to acknowledge his love. This exaggerated expression reflects the liberty that language enjoys, and, surprisingly, it also refers to his uncertain behavior of being a lover and a policeman simultaneously. His language and use of different words and tone in various contexts subverts the dichotomy of sane/insane and rational/emotional character.

At other instance, Teddy expresses his feelings to her in an unrealistic way by creating imaginative stories, such as, he says, "I saw your face for a moment and then you disappeared. Then I looked up again and saw that the moon had disappeared too"

(102). These lines are paradoxical because Teddy is a body builder as well as a policeman; therefore, he is supposed to talk about real things happening. On the contrary, he creates a unique and fanciful expression of love for her beloved. He relies on the poetic language, and the text writes:

“. . . mixed up couplets about her lips and hair, half-remembered speeches about a life together, names of their children, pledges of undying love, a story about the first time he saw her, what she wore, what she said, a half-sincere eulogy about her professionalism that he wasn't sure she would appreciate, her shoulder blades, all these things rushed through Teddy Butt's head" (93).

The novel makes witty use of certain metaphors, for example, when it refers towards Alice's struggle in dealing various challenges. It uses a lighter tone while describing such occasions when she is sexually, mentally, and physically molested. In a playful tone, it refers towards the signs of physical torture on her body, such as, a cut on one of her eyebrows, a moon-shaped bullet mark on her left cheek, a strong bite mark, and a cigarette sign on her shoulder. These marks provide an evidence of her confrontations with men in different circumstances, the text writes, "Her twenty-seven years old body is a compact little war zone where competing warriors have trampled and left their marks" (256). In this metaphorical line, the physical body of Alice symbolizes Pakistan, that has become a conflict-ridden zone since last few decades. The text depicts the victimization of other women too, who, like Alice, struggle to survive in a patriarchal society. She, as a nurse, happens to witness the killings of innocent ladies at the hands of their male members of the families. She thinks, "It seemed that the city was full of serial killers. There was a murderer in every kitchen; sometimes there was a murderer even when there was no kitchen in the house" (142).

Similarly, through the depiction of various incidents, the novel emphasizes on the dehumanized treatment of the Christian community that it receives at the hands of Muslims. However the tone is not serious or harsh rather it is playful, for example, Joseph expresses his grief in these words, "When there was nothing. Choorahs were there. When everything is finished, Choorahs will still be here. And cockroaches too" (77). This textual line is a playful parody of a sentences taken from Ayesha Jalal's *Self*

and Pity that states, “When there was nothing, there was God; if there had been nothing, there would have been God” (6). This playful reference towards other text expresses the deep grief, and it also reflects a serious issue of marginalization in a subtle manner. This playfulness reveals the power of language that constructs an identity through the word ‘choorah’ in order to marginalizes Alice and her father. By depicting this marginalization, Hanif actually laments at the very fact, that people show a lack of understanding towards Christianity. They are unable to comprehend the fact that Jesus Christ was a prophet with a holy book. This lack of acknowledgement makes them disrespect this religion as Joseph “feels that finally they have pulled Yassoo down to their levels, as if Yassoo wasn’t the savior of all mankind but a janitor who went around cleaning their streets” (181).

The novel includes a number of other playful references to quotations and idioms, for instance, “PT teacher often lectures Teddy, “An apple a day only keeps the doctor away,” but an onion keeps the devil away”. It keeps your blood clear and keeps the bad thoughts out” (202). These lines show that not only the style of the idiom is playfully copied in the form of parody, but, at the same time, it is re-used in a new context. The playful language also makes the novel a blend of high and popular culture as it includes popular songs, poetry, advertisements, and local phrases etc. The distinction between these cultures emerges due to the class differences, which are related to the matters of production as well as distribution of money. The novel reflects these economic and cultural divisions, through the incorporation of various shades of language, used by the characters belonging to both high class and low class system. One such occasion occurs when Teddy Butt tries to convince Alice to accept his marriage proposal. Teddy is a police worker who belongs to low class family, therefore, it is assumed that his language would be poor. Though, he expresses his love in a different way by reciting popular poetry, and singing songs for her. Indeed, she also appreciates his effort and she thinks, “This Teddy boy might be a police tout, but he has a poetic side to him” (93). It draws attention towards the popular art as Alice observes that, “Teddy has been writing her lovesick notes that she suspects are copied from 100 Best Love Songs of the Past Twenty Years” (124). The text writes in a light manner that, in fact “Teddy Butt’s ideas of love are derived from any song that might be topping the charts at the time. His ideas about the logistics of love are learned from the wildlife documentaries he watches on National

Geographic” (125). Finally, he is able to convince her, and she agrees to his marriage proposal. His successful accomplishment of the task through popular art culture, actually, establishes the worth of popular art. It also reflects Alice’s appreciation of art in the form of poetry, stories, fiction, verses, phrases, and music. Mushtaq Bilal, a critic and a writer, praises this novelistic fusion of high and popular culture that contests the existing rules of art. He states:

Hanif’s fiction is influenced by popular Punjabi culture and explores how a human self-negotiates with institutions of the state and religion in contemporary Pakistan. Through his seemingly ordinary characters, Hanif provides immediately relevant social and political commentaries, interspersed with witty repartee, which not only keep the narrative fresh and the reader glued but also provides valuable insights into the complex cultural milieu of present-day Pakistan. (115)

Similarly, Teddy’s attempt to mix poetry and prose, also, reflects his own aesthetic sense that makes him enjoy this blend of high and popular culture. Moreover, it strengthens his trust on these art forms that help him express his deep feelings. At other instance, he praises the uniqueness of a singer’s voice when a prisoner says, “My name is not Abu Zar.’ The boy’s voice is melodic, and cultured as if he has been taking singing lessons” (166). This textual line reflects the appreciation of art in the form of a beautiful voice that usually is groomed, polished, and musical. It also shows Teddy’s love as well as his sharp sense to understand the art.

Textual analysis highlights that various intertextual references which are incorporated in the novel also reflect the culture of Pakistan, because the local slogans or phrases express the emotions as well as the moods of people. The depiction of culture in the form of wall chalking, advertisements, and graffiti also refer towards different issues of the society, such as, one of them is the marginalization of women as the text writes, “The electricity pole is splattered with leaflets and stickers and bits of graffiti. The Coalition for the Protection of Honour of the Mothers of the Faithful reads the poster with a chador covering a faceless woman. Liberty or Death, demands a little sticker” (25). These lines refer to a demand made by women that asks the society to give them either their due rights or inflict death on them. It shows the courage of women that they

know how to ask for their rights, and, less than that, they will not make any compromise. Some specific terms such as ‘chador’ (scarf) and ‘honor killing’ are used in the context of Pakistan for their very strong connotative concepts. The cultural concept of the word ‘chador’ also represents that it, literally, means a scarf, but its impact is very strong in Pakistani male dominated society where it is often used to suffocate the freedom of women. Moreover, it is also observed that a woman’s scarf is often used to murder a woman, and it shows that this sign of honor sometimes becomes the danger.

Italicization of certain words or phrases helps the reader to focus on the very idea contained in the text. The language deviates from the rules of spelling, for instance, it writes, “On the wall in the living room, red ribbons are scotch taped to read Happy WeddingS” (148). The word ‘WeddingS’ not only flouts the rules of word structure, but it also refers to the ironic emphasize on the idea of marriage. In a way, it challenges the grand narrative of love, and the story also proves that Alice and Teddy’s wedding turns into a flop idea at the end. Other than reflecting local street culture, the novel makes playful parody of songs, such as, Teddy sings, “*Under the shadow of this flag, we are one, we are one*” (204). Alice remembers another song, sung at her mother’s death “*Pity on the soul of thy handmaid*” (172). Some other examples are quoted here:

“He pees right under the sign where it says Look, a dog is pissing here” (a very common saying in Urdu that is written frequently on walls) (117).

‘Dard or dawa aur, dard aur, dawa aur’ (49) (A famous line of Urdu poetry)

‘Who Belongs to Pakistan, Musalman, Musalman’ (a common and famous slogan in Urdu) (253).

‘Bless our Lord who art descended from the heavens’(Taken from Bible) (101).

“Say your prayers before prayers are said for you” (translation of Islamic Hadith) (163).

Textual analysis represents that certain harsh realities are represented in a light manner with the help of irony. The novel raises serious questions like why segregation? Why class conflicts? Why underestimation on the basis of religion?. In fact, the very title *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is ironic, in a way, that Alice, as a Christian, is disowned by the

society, but, even then, she is known as ‘Our Lady of Alice Bhatti’. The textual analysis shows that everyone keeps himself away from Alice, but, ironically, the same very person wants to touch her privately. The novel writes, “but the same people who would not drink from a tap that she has touched have no problem casually poking their elbows into her breast or contouring their own bodies to rub against her heathen bottom” (140). She is aware of these double standards that expose the selfish approach of high class society in order to exclude her by calling Alice an untouchable. These men do not want to tarnish their image of ‘purity’ while, on the other hand, personally and secretly they desire to molest her sexually. The text represents that the only advantage that she desperately wants is still not available to her, it writes:

She can live with being an untouchable, but she desperately hopes for the only privilege that comes with being one. That people won’t touch her without her explicit permission. But the same people who wouldn’t drink from a tap that she has touched have no problem casually poking their elbows into her breast or contorting their own bodies to rub against her heathen bottom. (95)

4.4 READER AND THE TEXT

The novel through incorporation of postmodern literary techniques such as circular plot, intertextuality, self-reflexivity, flashbacks, and code-mixing embodies a clear shift in the role of the reader from a passive to an active consumer of the text. It depicts schizophrenic characters who develop in fragments and contest the traditional pattern of characterization of a conventional novel. The narration exhibits multiple modes and reader may find it ‘realistic’, ‘journalistic’, ‘allegorical’, ‘romantic’, or ‘scientific’. In fact, the text involves the reader, in its production, and asks him/her to play his part where he needs to interpret various puns, jokes, riddles, proverbs, idioms, and phrases. This mutual act of encoding and decoding establishes a relationship between novel, novelist, and the reader. Moreover, the fragmented narration confuses the reader in extracting any clear meaning, and it is not easy to interpret the story by doing just a single reading of the text. The whole structure of the novel is built around a chain of similar ironic incidents represented in the form of words, expressions, and gestures. In Hanif’s

novel “postmodernism operates chiefly at the level of content rather than form” (Nicol 185).

Hanif develops his story in flashbacks that suggests that, in the current postmodern world, there is no coherent reality that can be represented objectively. Lyotard, in the same sense, challenges the realistic portrayal of the world that invites the “call to order, a desire for unity, identity, security, and popularity” (“Answering the Question” 4). He seems to support Hanif’s style of narration, as he considers that the artists should make a move to in already existing language game of art. He states, “They must question the rules of art and narration as learned and received from their predecessors. They soon find that such rules are so many methods of deception, seduction, and reassurance that make it impossible to be “truthful”” (ibid 6). The reader oriented epilogue makes the novel open ended, and it addresses her/him directly to conclude the story the way s/he likes. Moreover, self-reflexivity provokes the reader to acknowledge the fictional construction as well as to know the contribution of existing texts in a discourse. Similarly, code-mixing represents the local culture and multiplicity of languages, that challenges the knowledge of the reader regarding local terms, words, phrases with respect to their denotative and connotative concepts.

4.4.1 EPILOGUE

The epilogue subverts the established language games of conventional artistic principles by presenting the un-representable. It makes a paralogical move by presenting the untraditional closure that does not facilitate the reader rather challenges his/her reading abilities. Lyotard comments on the same very aspect as he states:

A Postmodern artist or writer is in the position of a philosopher: the text he writes, the work he produces are not in principle governed by pre-established rules, and they can’t be judged according to a determining judgment, by applying familiar categories to the text or to the work. (*The Postmodern Condition* 81)

Similarly, through inclusion of the epilogue, Hanif destabilizes the totalizing meanings which are now constantly deferred. It is written in past tense while the rest of the text is narrated in the present tense. Moreover, it does not mark the end of the novel, rather it declares the start as Joseph writes, “Why not start the story when Alice Bhatti came to the

Sacred, looking for a job?”(339). It consists of a letter written by Joseph Bhatti who narrates the horrible details of his daughter’s murder. He also records her constant struggle to find her identity in the society right from her student life till the end. It does not provide any clear picture, rather it provokes the reader to construct her story through interpretation of gaps and paradoxes. The reader is at liberty to derive his/her own conclusion as the text says, “There is only one thing left to do, and that is to tell the complete story of Alice Bhatti, her birth and suffering and marriage and miracles associated with her, and then leave it to the people to decide whether she deserves to be recognized as *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*” (339).

Epilogue plays a very important role in the evaluation of the whole story, as it summarizes and comments on Alice’s various experiences regarding her childhood, youth, education, career and marriage. It constantly provokes the reader’s involvement to interpret the underlying ideas as it states; “It’s being done in the hope that common people hopefully don’t share the prejudices of those who in the name of our Holy Lord have set up bloodsucking business ventures”(339). In these lines it is clear that Joseph Bhatti questions the prejudiced attitude of religious leaders, and he hopes that reader will read and interpret Alice’s story differently. It sums up her life right from the beginning of her career at Sacred Hospital to her wedding, and then to the point till she meets the fatal incident of acid attack. It communicates to the reader that how Alice is attacked by her husband Teddy. It is devoid of humor that establishes a paradoxical link with the rest of the novel that is full of irony. On the contrary, Joseph narrates the incidents in an illusive and a sympathetic tone, he starts his letter as:

An Open Letter to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints

The Vatican

From Joseph Bhatti

French Colony

Our Holy Mother appeared on the fourth of September. (328)

Joseph Bhatti narrates that Alice married Teddy Butt, who belongs to a different faith, but unfortunately, their relationship does not work well. Being a patriarchal man, he was not

satisfied with Alice who behaved as a confident, brave, and courageous woman. He fails to dominate her, and then he decides to take revenge from her, therefore, he adopts the most brutal way and attack her with acid. She succumbed to his severe attack and died while on the way to the hospital. Joseph Bhatti, while narrating this incident, does not lament her death rather he glorifies her pain. He suggests that instead of causing harm to Alice, Teddy confirms her sainthood, he writes, “My daughter did not suffer the pain that her estranged husband meant to cause her by pouring half a liter of sulfuric acid on her angelic face” (339). In this way, he gives a saintly conclusion to her as well as the novel, he says, “she ascended to heaven with our Holy Mother” (329).

Joseph takes the position of the author by portraying Alice as a saint by incorporating magical realistic elements. He uplifts her status, and “By passing this text into the lens of magical realism Alice Joseph Bhatti appears to be a zoomed feisty character who is the embodiment of the Christian sainthood” (Shaheen et al 113). He describes the scene after Alice’s death as, “Our Lady of Alice Bhatti’s peacock throne began to ascend and the kites became still in the air, their wings folded in respect. As far as I am concerned, she had ascended to the heavens, before that first drop of acid touches her face” (337-338). He does not provide a clear conclusion or end regarding Alice’s life, rather he leaves the reader with many unanswered questions. Such an ambiguous conclusion makes the novel postmodern because it lacks a neat and defined closure. It also leaves the reader with multiple conclusions as “Epilogue is therefore not an evaluation of the novel’s narrative, but is a type of further digression attached to an endless text” (Salami 227). Other than epilogue, the novel involves the reader in meaning making process through self-reflexive depiction of multiple realities. This technique questions the originality of the text as well as positions the text in the world of texts.

4.4.2 SELF-REFLEXIVITY

The novel incorporates another very important postmodern characteristic by creating various fictional illusions through self-reflexive intertextuality. It is filled with allusions of all kinds of texts including Hanif’s own novel *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, as, here, he undermines the character of Zainab, by portraying her differently. This intertextual reference subverts the dichotomy of real/fictional as it highlights that every story is

constructed, and it is not some external reality that is present there in the outside world. Through this intertextual cross-reference, Hanif refers towards the discriminatory laws with regard to the Hudood Ordinance, which were implemented in 1979. In *A Case of Exploding Mangoes*, Zainab plays the role of a blind lady, and a prisoner too, who curses the military government for making the absurd Hudood laws. However in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, she plays a different role of being a cancer patient who is bed ridden and under treatment. However the similarity in both the roles is that both the novels depict the marginalized, painful, and helpless condition of a woman. The deprived state of Zainab, actually, symbolizes the marginalized status of other women of Pakistan, who are victimized by the law. On the contrary, the difference is that Zainab of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* is quite passive, while in *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* she is an active woman.

The characters, during their conversations, draw reader's attention towards the construction of different stories in a self-reflexive manner. They appreciate the story writers, such as, Sister Hina mentions the famous Urdu playwright Manto, who died in 1955. She says, "As far as I'm concerned the whole country is a nuthouse. Have you read Toba Tek Singh? ... Manto wrote about the nutters in a charya [Urdu for psychiatric] ward and then ended up in one himself. His own family put him there" (42). She laments at the ignored state of his last years of life, that, even being a treasure of Pakistan, he was ignored to such an extent that he became mentally sick, and, finally, landed in a mental ward. The reader finds the presence of other books too, such as, when Alice brings a book to cure Zainab's cancer, it is "a little brown book whose title is handwritten, that is, *Home Cures for Cancer*. She flips some pages and turns to chapter two: *Growing Your Cures in Your Back Garden*" (219-220).

At various instances, the characters acknowledge the significance of silence that communicates and conveys the message, while words often fail to express it. It reflects towards the meaningfulness of silence or unwritten document, and it also self-reflexively comments on the status of novel, for instance, Noor says, "A record of the meeting is not everything that happens in a meeting; sometimes it's better to leave things unwritten. Dr. Pereira has encouraged him to make his own choices. Dr. Pereira says that sacred texts, as well as profane novels, don't record everything" (31). The text shows that, at times,

Alice prefers to remain silent and her silence does not reflect her humiliation, rather her confidence. It also shows her power because, in certain situations, she does not want to approve or affirm any idea, therefore, she stays silent in order to registers her resistance. Other than books, the novel also refers towards some newspapers reports such as *Catholic Courier* that describes Alice as a “soldieress of Yassoo” (259). The novel also includes religious discourse such as when Joseph Bhatti treats ulcer by reciting Quranic Ayas. The text writes, “He shuts his eyes and starts to recite Sura Asar. By the declining day, man is in a state of loss....” (66).

The setting of the novel comprises of a hospital, therefore, the story revolves around the discussions of/on doctors, patients, workers and staff members. It incorporates medical terminology, names of machines, Operation Theater’s terminology, names of abortion pills, and symptoms of diseases etc. For instance, Alice, after getting pregnant with a surgeon's child goes for a medical abortion, and text records the minutest details ranging from medicine to symptoms. It writes:

He brought her two misoprostols and made sure that she took them in front of him. After she recovered, he managed to secure a Mifeprex injection from the hospital pharmacy. She suffered six hours of grueling pain. She rolled the corner of the bedsheet around her hand, bit it with her teeth, tried to shove her fist into the throat, then gave up and started screaming. (264)

The novel also refers towards famous historical personalities like Fatima Jinnah and Gandhi. It happens that when Teddy traces the lines, in the hands of Alice, in order to tell her fortune, and he says, “I have never seen such a generous hand. And this thumb, such willpower, leadership qualities, stubborn maybe. This is definitely a Gandhi hand. Always principles over pleasure” (127). Mahatma Gandhi was a great politician, social activist, moralist, spiritualist, and a philosopher of India. He was famous for his principles of morality, religion, humanity and social values. Teddy’s comparison between the personalities of Alice and Gandhi fuses past with the present. Wang quotes Hutcheon as he states that, “Hutcheon proposes a similar argument with a different emphasis, arguing that postmodern text thematizes the interactive process between the producer and the receiver in order to demonstrate how the meaning of the text results from the joint act

of reading and writing” (16). At other instance, Sister Hina tells Alice that Begum Qaz is treated in the same VIP ward of the *Sacred Hospital* where Fatima Jinnah was once treated. Through the mouthpiece of Sister Hina, Hanif comments on Fatima Jinnah as, “Did you know that Fatima was a dentist, a trained dentist? But she sacrificed her whole life for this country” (81). Textual analysis reveals that characters are constructed by one another, such as, Noor comments on Alice when he hears about her marriage. He, instantly, constructs a story in his mind as the text writes, “Noor is trying to block out mental images of Alice in a red dress, sprawled on the stern of a white yacht, her head in Teddy Butt’s lap, his hands playing with her hair” (218).

4.4.3 CODE-MIXING

Textual analysis of the novel reveals that by using the technique of code-mixing, it captures the true spirit of Pakistani culture in its diversities. At lexical level, this strategy of code mixing subverts the hegemony of Standard English language. The localized English refers to specific religious, social, and cultural practices. It is artistically peppered with a variety of words from different languages, and Hanif does not add any explanation in the text for the borrowed words taken from other languages. Code mixing gives knowledge about a particular concept or idea that may be related to religion, culture, society, norm or values. Hanif does not shy away to use such words as he in one of his interviews states:

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti takes place in a civilian environment, and I like the sound of Yassoo. People can look up in a dictionary. If we are really curious about an expression we go to online dictionary. Sometimes the context in which you use the words makes it perfectly clear what you are talking about. I don’t think anybody is going to mistake Yassoo for Muhammad. (Bilal 127)

Religious terminology is also used in the text such as “*Yassoo be praised*” (137), and it shows that Christian community uses this word for the prophet Jesus Christ. Muslim girls call Alice as ‘the Kafir den’ (135) and ‘Kafir’ is an Urdu word that means atheist. He does not translate this word into English because he wants to show the full intensity of hatred that it expresses. Another such code is used at the time when Alice helps her patient as the text writes, “She is trying to bring order to a world full of sick people,

administering IVs at 2 a.m., holding old women's hands, pretending to be their daughter, reading Kalima with them as they breathe their last" (117). 'Kalima' is the basic foundation of Islam as it states "La Ilah Illa –Allah Muhammad Ur Rasool Lalah" (there is only one God and Muhammad-ur-Rasool-lulah is the last Prophet and messenger of ALLAH). According to the tradition, the relatives assist the dying patient to perform the recitation so that he declares his faith at the time of his death.

The novel incorporates certain specific local words, which are related to the prevailing issues of the religion. It reveals that some words are used in derogatory sense in order to manipulate the identity, for example, when Joseph Bhatti says, "If I am going to be called a bhangi all my life, I might as well have some bhang" (74). 'Bhang' (opium) and 'bhangi'(opium addict) stands for a sweeper (local meaning) who always belong to the Christian community. He is often addressed as 'choorah' or 'jamadar', that again means 'sweeper', and it is a commonly used word in Pakistan. The word 'choorah' form an identity and "this code is used to show the prejudice persistent in the people against the groups of different religions and castes" (Nazar 270). There are certain other religious references which are found in the novel, such as, Hindu Goddess Kali (333), Catholic (333) and Sura Asar, Allah (God), Jazak Allah (God bless you), mash ALLAH (beautiful), Sura Yaseen, Ya Ali, Quran (Holy book), shawl (scarf), Halal (legal in Islam), charpoy (steel bed), bhabi (sister-in-law), Sahib (gentleman), cheetah (leopard), Hazir ho (report here), Mullah (religious scholar), musla (Muslim), Bhai (brother), Sahib (sir), Messiah (doctor), paan, dupatta (scarf), basmati (a kind of rice), biryani (spicy cooked rice), biri (cigaret), shalwar (trouser), kachra (garbage), dhoti (traditional dress), banafsha (flower) and nazbo (flower) are commonly used in the social and cultural contexts of Pakistan.

The presence of few words, taken from local language, refers to the manipulative practices going on in the society, for example, Teddy's expresses his confused state of mind with respect to his relationship with Alice, he says, "This whole business of love, he concludes, is a protection racket, like paying your weekly *bhatta* to your local hoodlum so that you are not mugged on your own street" (123). The term 'bhatta' refers to a commonly used word in Karachi, and it stands for a huge business that is owned and run

by a group of looters. They take illegal tax from almost all businessmen of the city and if anyone does not pay heed or he fails to pay the demanded money, then either he is killed, or his business is forcefully shut down. Code-mixing is visible, in the text, at various other instances too, such as when “Alice Bhatti enters what seems to be a medicine bazaar” (320), in this line, Urdu word ‘bazaar’ means market or stall. Other medical terms like OPD, patient department, ICU, IV drip, X-ray machine, Psychiatric ward, Emergency and Accidents (E & A), Orthodont, and Gynecologist relate the novel with a non-fiction discipline i.e. medicine. There are certain words that provide information regarding relationships, for example, when Teddy’s friends greet the couple on their wedding, the text writes, “There were dozens of sailors in white shalwar qameezes, all calling her bhabhi” (132). The words ‘shalwar’ and ‘qameez’ show the culture of Pakistan where people mostly wear this dress, while ‘bhabhi’ is a word of regard, uttered to address wife of one’s brother or friend. Though, all the sailors were strangers to Alice but they prefer not to address her by her name, rather they call her ‘bhabi’, and this word connects them with her emotionally as well as culturally.

The novel also admits, and acknowledges the official superiority of English. In fact, English is currently used in Pakistan, specifically, in official setups in order to maintain documents, records, and legal discussions. Noor admits and appreciates the significance of English as he says, “The important men are talking about important stuff. Although Noor can only pick out a few words, like a mission statement, evaluation and holistic, because it is English they are speaking, he knows that they are talking about something important” (280). In this way, he relates the significance of the content discussed with the language, and, in this way; he admits its importance. Similarly, the words taken from various languages make the text look different, such as, when a Christian girl teaches Teddy, how to abuse in six languages? The text writes, “Fok jou, na ma low, khahar kosse, chodhru, ma ki kir k” (150). At various instances, Hanif provides literal translation of certain Urdu idioms, for example, when Teddy scolds Noor as, “You are a snake in my sleeve, you son of a bitch” (283). “Snake in my sleeve” is a famous Urdu phrase that means an enemy that is too close to be doubted as an enemy, and he/she is usually assumed as a friend but proves otherwise. The novel uses different slang words as it writes, “She would be OK living with an extended family” (113), the word ‘ok’

represents the common language that is excessively used by majority of the users, and this is the typical word that is understood by everyone, irrespective of any level of education that one has. Some other examples are:

“Cut out this gun-shun business” (112).

“They can be a bit talkative and lovey-shovey” (42).


Some words are Oye (172), TT (191), musalman (287) and oh (195) etc.

Hanif’s use of hyphenated compounds reflects a different style, such as, words like; two-colored, Not-Abu-Zar, vulgar-looking, humiliate-your-husband (238), raising-the-dead (249), bitch-eat-bitch (255), twenty-seven-year-old (256), rent-a-witness (194), betel-nut-soaked (13) and Junior-Mr-Faisalabad-powered (284) create a different expression. Few other examples taken from the text are:

“He knows that people run *post-pregnancy-flat-stomach-in-three-weeks* workouts” (233).

“I-was-born-with-a-small-one-but-I-have-been-saving-money” (322).

“We-are-all-His-sleep-type sentiments” (295).

Textual analysis highlights that intra-lexical fusion of Urdu and English transforms the uniformity of language, for example, it writes, “She goes through Empress Market, where the Pathans sell tomatoes and baby hawks” (323). The word ‘Pathans’ means Pashtuns (a local language speaking community) and Hanif does not use any alternative word. Other such words like ‘Wronged men’ (180), ‘no-hoper’ (instead of hopeless) (274), and ‘musalman’ (287) are also found in the novel. The novel also uses the symbols, without giving their literal translation, such as, when Alice goes to a mental ward, she notices that on the walls is written, I  My Psychology” (48). The strategy of code mixing visibly subverts the ‘purity’ and ‘hegemony’ of Standard English language that is associated with Enlightenment philosophy. However, the textual analysis also shows that the language also generates mininarratives which are contextualized, plural, and subjective, and these little stories subvert the grand narratives of modern age.

4.5 SUBVERSION OF METANARRATIVES

Our Lady of Alice Bhatti manifests its distrust on metanarratives and it replaces them with ‘petit recit’ or little narratives. These little stories celebrate plurality through the idea of ‘paralogy’ and ‘heterogeneity’ against consensus on the legitimacy of the grand stories. The textual analysis of the novel highlights the fictional subversion of totalizing ideologies to demonstrate a shift from modern to postmodern fiction. It challenges the consensus on the established narratives that claim for validity, and, in this way, gain control and spread terror. Through the mouthpiece of different characters, the novel breaks this consensus and generates multiple truths in order to resist the established hegemonic language games. This very phenomenon suggests that the previous language games are no more workable as postmodern fiction “have in common is a rejection of ‘meta-narratives’” (Harvey 9). Therefore, new moves are needed, which are considered false but are legitimate and relative. The novel incorporates various paralogical moves against the hegemonic language games of faith, nationalism, science, and identity.

4.5.1 FAITH

The novel highlights various issues related to faith by depicting the stories of the characters from both i.e. Muslim and Christian communities, specifically, in the context of Pakistan. It delineates on this very fact that, contrary to the teachings of any religion, the major portion of society adopts a discriminatory attitude towards the minority community. It portrays that every attempt to homogenize the diverse population of Pakistan has met with failure that has resulted into various ethnic, cultural, and religious clashes among different groups. This condition challenges the master narrative of faith that has generated more conflicts in the wake of already existing language games of hierarchies. Pakistan was formed on the basis of Islam, that is a dynamic religion and it teaches the lesson of unconditional love, humanity, respect, and tolerance towards every human being irrespective of his/her faith. Hanif highlights this message, and he, at the same time, criticizes those who think that it is enough to be born in a Muslim family, and they lack a true understanding and practice.

There are some other characters who happen to challenge the narrative of faith, such as, Alice is one such example. She exposes this lack of knowledge regarding faith,

and she views that it is mostly used to play a language game in various situations. While dealing with different people, she notices that if one is in trouble, only then, s/he gets conscious about his/her religion. She happens to witness one such occasion, when a Muslim Shia woman is brought to the hospital for delivery, the text states, “Alice Bhatti is holding her hand, ignoring her screams, which alternate between yelling and chanting slogans of Ya Ali as if she was a new convert at a Shia procession” (239). This makes Alice astonished, to see a woman in extreme pain, but who is so obsessed to remember her religious sect. She mocks at this pretentious human behavior that has reduced the humanity to this categorization of faith that has increased the existing religious conflicts.

In another instance, the novel shows that the narrative of faith also cast an impact on the personal lives of the characters. For example, a clash of opinion occurs when Alice marries Teddy, the first problem, that she encounters is to keep their child’s name. The text represents that she becomes extra sensitive, and she thinks about this issue even before her marriage. Her fear also shows the kind of society in which she lives that is divided into clear cut identities (Muslim and Christian). Her confusion is represented in these words:

She had never talked babies with Teddy and now she knows why. It would have involved a discussion about names, how the child would be brought up, in what religion. Would it be circumcised or baptized or first circumcised then baptized? She would have settled easily on some neutral name, no Joseph or Judith obviously, but something that would have worked for both of them (265).

Despite all the exploitation, that she faces, at the hands of society, she and her father keep on fighting for their rights, and they raise their voice against the unjust suppression. Like her, Ortho Doctor is another such character who challenges the grand narrative of faith by criticizing the so-called religious followers. He says, “All they do is fuck around, and when they get into trouble, they use religion, nay they abuse religion” (217). Hanif highlights the discriminatory attitude of people towards the narrative of faith, by crafting such characters, and exposing their exploitative strategies with respect to religion. The novel highlights that no religion allows its follower to segregate against any community. It does not criticize so-called Muslims only, but it, also, targets few Christian characters

who exhibit discriminatory attitude towards others. Such people use 'religion' to satisfy their own selves and to mask their evil deeds. For example, the Christian reverend, a religious character, is a corrupt character who manipulates the common people. Textual analysis shows that he is a rapist as well as a murderer, but he denies his guilt. He rapes his Christian maid Margaret Bhatti (a worker in his house and Alice's mother too) and kills her afterwards. Later, at her funeral scene, he pretends to be sympathetic with the victim's family, but there are some other people, who know the reality. Ironically, they are powerless to disclose him as a murderer as the text writes, "Whenever Reverend Philip mentioned Mother of Alice's name, the gardener started to wail in an injured animal's voice. The person sitting on the gardener's left insisted that he had heard him saying 'murder, murder, murder' during the prayer" (177).

The gardener cannot raise his voice against the reverend due to his powerful position as no one will believe his narrative. On the other hand, the scars on Margret's dead body too revealed that she resisted rapist's evil attempts but, even after knowing everything in clear terms, nobody dared to challenge or blame him for the murder. The text shows that any opposing voice against the unjust authority is suppressed as, "The person sitting on the right of the gardener accused the person of spreading rumors and violating the sanctity of a post-funeral prayer. He even offered to swear on the *Bible* to prove that the stranger was actually saying 'martyr' martyr, martyr" (177). These lines reflect that, for worldly matters, people bring God into their issues and even they, shamelessly, take fake swears/oaths on His name in order to win a benefit.

The novel depicts Joseph Bhatti as a peaceful man, who does not like few Muslims because of their troublesome behavior and actions. He loves the religion of Islam, but he reflects his disbelief on the legitimacy of being a Muslim only. He warns his daughter Alice not to marry a Muslim, he says, "just because they became Muslas doesn't mean that they are any better than us" (179). On the other side, his strong belief and reverence for Islam is reflected through his actions, for instance, he treats ulcer by reciting Islamic Ayahs, "He shuts his eyes and starts to recite *Sura Asar*....by the declining day, man is in a state of loss..."(66). Though, his Muslim patient gets surprised to see him reciting Islamic Sura, "a Christian choohra reciting the Holy Quran with the

zeal of a novice mullah (religious scholar), he has never seen. He is not even sure if it's legal" (66). It is ironic as it challenges the general belief that only followers of a particular religion can know about it, but, here, in the novel, the reader finds that a Christian man knows Islam as well and he shows his regard and understanding, by treating his patient through its recitation.

The novel highlights that there are similarities in the teachings of almost every religion in terms of common message of peace, respect, and brotherhood. Like Joseph, Teddy acknowledges this lesson as he, as a policeman, happens to meet different women, and he feels sameness. Once, he meets a Bangladeshi female prisoner, and "he sat with her while she sobbed and cursed in Bengali. The only word he could understand was Allah" (97). His experience constructs an interfaith dialogue that finds similarities in both the religions of Islam and Christianity. It highlights a significant mutual approach of compassion that is practiced in all the religions. He emphasizes the fact that the human society believes in divisions on the basis of religion, but the sole creator of this world was, is, and will be, only one, that is, ALLAH Almighty.

The novel adopts a critical stance towards those who hide their religious identity due to certain worldly fears, such as, Sister Hina, who never reveals her faith in order to avoid any discrimination. On the contrary, she passes as a Muslim in her professional environment, but her true religious identity is revealed later. It happens that, one day, Alice visits her home, and she finds that she is actually a Christian. Similarly, another such incident occurs, when Alice's Christian college fellows hide their religious identity, and she points it out to them. She asks, "Why wear Jesus locket if you have to hide it? Did Yassoo ever say he wanted to be crucified on a hairpin and then hidden in your undergarments?" (254). On the other hand, Alice and her father do not hide their religious identity rather they publicly own their faith. Alice criticizes a section of the Christian community, such as, when she makes fun of cross making business. She says:

Crosses are everywhere now, you can buy them really cheaply, in all materials, all shapes, Alice used to tell her dorm mates at nursing school that if Yassoo came back to life today and roamed the world and saw it full of so many crosses, wouldn't he conclude that it was a world of perpetual pain? (179).

Alice and Joseph Bhatti, despite being official citizens, face discrimination in social, religious, cultural, and professional setups. Alice is kept marginalized right from her childhood, but she remains headstrong in her struggle against the social categorization. As a nursing student, she faces strong opposition as it happens that one day a group of Muslim girls come to beat her, and they come with hockey sticks while they also hold a copy of their holy book. The text writes, “The group descended on Alice’s dorm, a place they had started calling ‘the kafir den’, armed with hockey sticks and a copy of the Quran, and they were chanting slogans like, “Who belongs to Pakistan, Musalman, Musalman” (253). When she is attacked, all the Christian girls hide themselves in order to remain safe, but she remains at the scene and fights back.

Alice gets strength from her religion, and she beats all the girls severely who run away. Dr. Pariera, as an in charge of the college, comes on the scene and comments, “Nurses might be doing God’s work, but they are not supposed to bring God into their work” (254). He laments at the attitude of the current society, that brings religion into everything. Later, these girls ask their Muslim male fellows to take the revenge from her, therefore, boys come and they try to shoot her. They fire her but, by chance, the bullet fired by them only touches her one cheek, and it leaves a mark there. These Muslim girls, in fact, symbolize a section of Pakistan, who associate religion with nationalism despite the message of the founder that, no one, on the basis of religion, will suffocate the other.

On the other hand, Joseph Bhatti cleans the stuffed drains, but, even after serving for the entire community, he never gets the due respect. He laments at this behavior that targets him in these words, “These Muslas will make you clean their shit and then complain that you stink” (1). He criticizes those who pretend to be religious instead of being the actual followers of their religions. The text also mocks the shallow strategy of showing off the religious fervor as it writes, “The driver puts on a tape and a Musla anthem starts to play. There is no music, just a bunch of men shouting at the top of their voices demanding to be teleported to Mecca” (87). Hanif, through these characters, and their stories, criticizes the society for their strict adherence to religion, while ignoring the true message of peace that it gives. In fact, they don’t know the real essence of religion;

the lesson, that teaches them to be tolerant towards each other irrespective of any difference. Sister Hina mocks this approach of Muslims as she says:

I don't know what this world is coming to, as a child, I was taught that God is in everything. Now that I am getting old, they want me to literally see God in vegetables. For the last five years, every year there is an aubergine somewhere that, when you slice it, it has the word Allah running through it (276).

The novel quotes another incident that once Alice was in love with a doctor, and as a result of that, she used to spend some time with him. She gets pregnant with his baby as “it never occurred to her that their sweaty moments together could lead to anything” (263). Therefore, she asks him to marry her but, to her surprise, the doctor says, “My mother has a heart condition, I am not sure she can take it. For generations, there has never been a single marriage outside our Shia clan, let alone a marriage into another religion” (263). These lines expose his double standards that if he was so concerned about this distinction of Shia and Sunni then he should never have made love with Alice in the first place. It occurs to him only after his sexual pleasure that he cannot marry her. This subversion of grand narrative of faith is also related to the slogans of nationalism and patriotism and its roots go back to the Partition of Indian subcontinent.

4.5.2 NATIONALISM

The novel raises voice against the totalizing stories regarding nationalism and patriotism, particularly, in the context of Pakistan. It brings into light the gaps and manipulations that few citizens face in the name of nationalist narrative. This idea of dismantling of metanarratives is crucial to Lyotard's philosophy, who views that these narratives consist of language games which are ideological in nature and try to control the society. He views that postmodernism gives voice to victims or representatives of victims whether victims of colonization, science, progress, human rights exploitation, or class differences; they get their voice heard in this movement. Malpas quote him as:

Lyotard's notion of justice can have no content . . . we have to judge case by case. Injustice excludes someone from making statements about the just, whether by killing them or by forbidding their voice from being heard. To be just is to allow

others to participate in the 'game of the just', to respect their differences and allow them to speak for themselves (56-57).

Similarly, the novel exposes the corruption and gaps with respect to the working philosophy behind various national institutions and their legitimacy. It criticizes certain laws, particularly, the Islamization, Marshal law, and Huddod ordinance, which were introduced by Zia regime in 1970s. Through various characters, it suggests that these laws have marginalized the minority communities and the horrible effects are still there. It laments at the present scenario as it shows that Alice and Joseph Bhatti, though being Christians, prove to be good citizens, but their efforts are not rewarded. Their social discrimination challenges the concept of national identity as it depicts that Alice is born in Pakistan, therefore, she is an official citizen but she is treated as an alien in her own land. Through her example, the novel questions the very notion that if belonging to a certain land is the criterion for a stable national identity, then why Alice is not accepted by the society even being a national and an official citizen. Later on, the novel highlights that her national identity does not save her from the constant humiliation that she faces rather her entire family is suppressed for two reasons; first because they are minority, and second; that they belong to a low class. They are manipulated by Muslims as well as by high class Christians, and it becomes evident when they could not get justice for the brutal murder of Margret Bhatti, at the hands of Christian reverend.

The novel reveals underlying paradoxes in the behavior of people that, on one side, they believe on formalities, but, on the other hand, Alice and her father despite having their national identity cards are not acknowledged as national citizens. Even after serving as a nurse, Alice is deprived of the basic respect from her own society, and, at times, she finds herself in such situations that make her realize her powerlessness. Moreover, she feels like a stranger in her professional and social environment, and she could have never known herself as who she was? If she had not gone outside of her home to work as a nurse. At hospital, she feels herself as a person who is a worker there, but still an outsider, therefore, she tries to fit in. She fights against this discrimination, and, her struggle goes on until the very end of her life. She faces discriminatory behavior from

Sister Hina, Teddy, doctors, her Christian community, the hospital staff, and even the patients.

Noor, a hospital employe, is one such character who possesses a stereotypical mindset, and his discriminatory attitude towards Alice is visible at various points. Throughout the course of the story, he proves very helpful to her, but, at times, he exhibits prejudiced thoughts, such as, when he asks Alice about her wedding details. He gets shocked to hear that her wedding was actually arranged by Teddy's Muslim friends. He asks, "Are you sure you got married on a nuclear submarine? They would not allow you on it. They would not allow a non-Muslim on it. I mean, they would allow them if they worked on it, of course, if they had a proper pass and uniform" (218). On the other hand, Teddy and Alice get marry, and her "intimacy with a Muslim man constitutes a transgression both on grounds of violation of the codes of conduct, as well as a political betrayal of the nation, since it was along lines of religious faith that the subcontinent was originally partitioned" (Lal and Paul Kumar 8).

The characters raise the issues which seem petty but actually are troublesome, such as, getting a national identity card etc. During a conversation, sister Hina and Alice talk about the unnecessary delay that is always faced in the process of making a national identity card. Sister Hina shares her story that she was married to Mr. Alvi, and, according to the norm, she changed her name to Hina Alvi. She tells Alice that, though, she got divorce from Mr. Alvi, but, ironically, her name remained the same. She could not change her name because of the fear of wasting her energies in a department that is not willing to facilitate its citizens. She considers this name changing process as a challenge as she says, "If you think I should have gone back to my maiden name after my divorce, then you try changing your name on your ID card and see if you can do it in one lifetime" (297). These lines reflect the frustration of the general public, who is not facilitated in its own country, therefore, they have to make compromises on certain unwanted decisions that are forced on them.

The novel traces the consequence of following the grand narrative of nationionalism as it demonstrates that a citizen's liberty is often curtailed on the parameters of fixed demarcations. One cannot be judged by these rules as the novel

shows that Muslims chant slogan like “Pakistan ka Matlab kya...*La Ilaha Illala*”, and this very act marginalizes the non-Muslim nationals. In a true sense, Pakistan was created to form a united nation, but, ironically, it has further scattered and disintegrated the human society. The text narrates one such incident, when a Muslim lady patient expresses her disgust in these words, “Kafirs have all the fun in this country. This country was made for Muslims, and poor Muslims can’t even get any Valium around here” (128). The lines show that they (Muslims), time and again, remind Alice about her status of being a Christian, who has no right to get anything in the first place. In this way, the novel questions the ideology behind the formulation of Pakistan by exposing the miserable post-Partition state. It laments that, even after gaining independence, the country is still drenched in never ending problems.

Similarly, there are some other characters who represents a strong distrust over the current situation of Pakistan, for instance, when Alice, in a conversation with Teddy, expresses her concern for his police job as it is considered a risky job. Teddy tells her, “We live in dangerous times. We live in a dangerous place. It’s better to know the danger, to work with it, to tame it” (238). These lines not only sensitize the reader about the current state of the country, but also, the reader’s role to understand and remain positive in order to change it. In this way, the novel challenges the Partition ideology from the perspectives of common men and the people from minority groups. It emphasizes that several problems of present day Pakistan have their roots in the Partition. Moreover like Ayesha Jalal, Hanif also proposes that the discrimination against the Christian community has its roots even before partition. The novel, ironically, compares and comments on the unstable state of Pakistan as it states, “Alice follows her gaze towards the ceiling and sees a wet patch that looks like a map of a country in transition” (47). Such conversations and commentary draw reader’s attention towards the current situation of Pakistan that it is still grappling with many problems. Such commentary also reveals the trauma of the Partition as, “Teddy kneels beside him and wriggles his hand into the left pocket of PT teacher’s shorts. His shorts are frayed but made of expensive cotton material. Butter Jeans, he likes to call them; apparently the only factory that made them was burnt down during partition” (201). These lines reflect the immense loss that the Partition narrative did to the property and business other than killing innocent human

beings. The exclusion of such sections in the historical discourse fails to acknowledge the existence of the people, who, in reality, have suffered during formation of Pakistan. The narrative of nationalism is also challenged by depicting the violence that was caused in the name of freedom and patriotism. It writes:

For Teddy's father, everyone who was born after Partition was a sissy puss, because nobody quite met his criteria of not being a sissy puss: how much buffalo's milk had they drunk? Had they ever been injured in a real bull race? Had they ever bicycled three hundred miles to watch a Shanta Apte film? Had they ever stolen a government horse? Hell, had they ever stolen anything? And no, electricity didn't count; you were still a sissy puss (199).

The depiction of such horrible incidents related to the Partition challenges its legitimacy, and it highlights that justice cannot be achieved by doing injustice, in the form of massacres and numberless killings of innocent people. Through depiction of these tales of horror, the novel subverts the binary opposition of present/past as it demonstrates that both are related, and the impact of past is always there on the current time. The characters also feel horrified and they still feel the terror about any possible recurrence of such tragic incidents in the future. The text shows the fear as, "PT teacher has told his colleagues that during the partition riots somebody cut off his mother's ears to get her earrings, and he doesn't want that to happen to his wife" (202). The continuous influence of the Partition on the personal life is evident through different incidents involving various characters. The medical surgeon is one such character, who gets excited about the baby that he is going to have as a result of his extra-marital relationship with Alice. He starts planning the child's name as, "First he started to cry, then he chain-smoked for an hour and went through a list of baby names that included every possible combination from the names of the central executive committee of the Indian Communist Party at the time of Partition" (263). It reflects that, even in the present time, when long decades have passed since creation of Pakistan, people are very much influenced by this event in every aspect of their life. Similarly, Sister Hina challenges the idea of nationalism by deconstructing the Partition ideology, and she forms multiple stories to subvert totalizing notions related to history and nationalism. During a conversation with Alice, she tells

that, after the division, both Pakistan and India mutually agreed to do a horrific exchange of mentally retarded Muslims of India to Pakistan and vice versa. She gives a new dimension to the description of historical figure of Fatima Jinnah, by challenging the stereotypical understanding of her. She says:

What do you call them: mother of nation. Now if her brother is the father of the nation, how can she be the mother of the nation? They could have called her sister of the nation, but no. Because then people might have mistaken her for a nurse, one of us. It's a nation of perverts, I tell you (81).

This textual extract shows that she challenges the grand narrative of fixed history in the sense conveyed by Hutcheon, who considers it a very important characteristic of historiographic metafiction. Hutcheon regards that such fictional construction changes the historical facts and it aims “to foreground the possible mnemonic failures of recorded history and the constant potential for both deliberate and inadvertent error” (*A Poetics* 114). Moreover, this technique destabilizes the reader’s knowledge of fixed historical facts, and, also, provides him with an optional course of history. In the same way, Sister Hina reveals that the Partition did not only affect the people who witnessed it, but it also has cast a very strong impact on those who did not witness it, such as, the younger generations of the victims. She, time and again, criticizes the Pakistani nation by calling them ‘perverts’, and she points towards the current moral chaos of society that was formed on the basis of slogans of peace, liberty, and freedom.

4.5.3 SCIENCE

Textual analysis of the novel reveals that it dismantles the emancipatory claim of science in the sense conveyed by Lyotard, He claims that science “legitimizes itself with reference to a metadiscourse... making an explicit appeal to some general grand narrative, such as ... the emancipation of the rational or working subject, or the creation of wealth” (*The Postmodern Condition* 60). Similarly, through the characters of Alice and Joseph, Hanif subverts the master narrative of science and its relation to various fields of knowledge. As the story is based on the setting of a hospital, therefore, it revolves around the narratives working behind this institution involving doctors, their professionalism, medicines, treatments and patients etc. For instance, it challenges the authority of the

knowledge that is occupied by degree holder doctors, but, ironically, they do not possess the commitment to cure their patient. On the other hand, Joseph Bhatti is not a medical doctor himself, but he, successfully, treats the incurable patients of the ulcer by reciting from the Quran. He adopts a different way to treat ulcer rather than promoting the conventional medical methods. He takes help from other practices such as spiritualism, divinity, and miracles, which are considered outdated in the modern era. This very phenomenon challenges the hegemonic power of science, and it also acknowledges the significance of spirituality that helps to cure the physical pains and ease the mental sufferings. Similarly, Noor is another character who does not possess a professional formal degree but he knows everything about field of medicine. Moreover, he is not a certified doctor, and he has never attended even a short diploma in medical surgery, but he knows many things about the field. Surprisingly, his knowledge and expertise to treat a patient are not below than a professional surgeon, and it happens that “On the night of Garden East attacks, he took out a bullet from the shoulder of a victim. He hasn’t read Gray’s Anatomy, but there is nothing in that fat book that he hasn’t seen strewn on the floor of A & E” (38).

Like Joseph, Alice too possesses this spiritual power, and the last chapter, of the novel, entirely focuses on this significant perspective of her personality. Hanif relates her character with the spiritual and divine power, and she, despite being a nurse who works in a very practical field of medicine, possesses a kind of mystic power that enables her to predict the future by just looking at one’s face. Such characterization subverts the denotative nature of scientific discourse, and it also deconstructs the notion of fixed reality and rational character as well. Textual analysis shows that Alice is very much aware of her divine power, she, in a conversation with Noor, tells him, “Ordinary people on the streets, I just know. I look at their face and then I see their dead face and I know how they will die” (61). She gets recognition for her miraculous healing power, and the patients start believing her too. The text writes, “Patients are here to seek Alice cure, They have heard the tales about dead kids coming alive, the old no-hoper cancer patients going home on their own feet” (274). In this way, the novel through these characters stresses on spirituality that is a significant aspect of postmodernism. It represents that, in the end, Alice flies high towards the sky due to her sainthood, and she is rescued from

worldly sufferings. This depiction of spirituality, as the focus of the novel, replaces the concepts of modern narratives of objectivity, rationality, and science.

The use of magic realism is another very significant characteristic of postmodern fiction that subverts the narrative of concrete reality and science. Hanif incorporates this technique in his fiction, and it places him with the renowned writers like Gabriel Garcia Marquez and Salman Rushdie. He incorporates dreams, imaginative stories, and shifts of time in the narration in order to create a magic like effect. He weaves elements of fantasy into the reality and vice versa. By doing so, he represents the voice of the marginalized sections of society. Here the marginalized characters are Alice and Joseph Bhatti, who are labeled as 'untouchables' by a few Muslims, and they are also excluded by the people of their own community too. One such magical incident happens, when Alice restores the life of a 'dead child' who is pronounced dead after the delivery because he shows no signs of breathing. Therefore, medical staff announces his death, but Alice gets sad at the fate of baby, and his mother. Therefore, she, out of utter grief, carries the dead baby in her hands and prays few words. Miraculously, after a few moments, the baby starts breathing as the text describes:

She holds the baby's palm in both her hands and starts to pray. She prays like she never prayed before like nobody prayed before. She just conjures up her Lord Yassoo and gives it to Him. She holds him by his throat till he can't breathe, she hangs from His robe...She accuses Him of being a deadbeat Lord leaving poor wretched girls to bring dead babies into this world. She hears a door creak behind her and she opens her teary eyes slowly. Before she can turn around she sees a little blood bubble pop out of the dead baby's left nostril, then the toes on his right foot start twitching, as he is trying to walk in his death sleep (243-244).

Alice's divine power gives her a saint-like figure who challenges the rules of medical science. The news, of this miracle of 'dead baby becoming alive' spreads quickly to the people around through an eyewitness, who describes the whole incident. The text writes it, "The sweeper will tell everyone that he felt the presence of the Holy Spirit. In reality, he is down on his knees, he realizes that the dead baby came alive is a miracle" (272). After this incident, patients come to meet her and they kiss her feet, and, in this way, she

is transformed from an ordinary French colony's Christian girl into a well-received 'Our Lady of Alice Bhatti'. It describes that patients use to see her and feel her presence, in the hospital, even when she physically was not there. It becomes awkward to know that "she appears at people's bedsides in the middle of the night when she is not even on duty, when she is not even in the hospital, when she is probably fast asleep in her bed" (277).

Alice dies in an acid attack, and people observe something magical about her this very painful incident. The text writes, "The sky was clear and there was no moon. Then above the roof, people saw a silver throne hovering, held aloft by a flock of peacocks on which sat a likeness of our Holy Mother and also the Likeness of Alice Joseph Bhatti" (328). These people feel that, after the acid was thrown at her face, her dead body was flying towards the sky due to the blessings of the Holy mother. It describes, "There were at least eight witnesses who swore they saw a Toyota Surf floating two feet above the ground with its hazard lights on just before the likeness of our Holy Mother appeared on the roof of the OPD" (337). Alice desires her death even before it actually happens to her, and her longing symbolizes that she wants to get liberated from the prison of insensitive society.

The novel fuses fantasy with the supernatural elements in order to create an unreal effect. It shows that even cars and hospital machines perform unbelievable actions and the reader is going to believe it. The use of figurative devices adds up in the total effect, such as, when "an X-ray machine rolled through the corridors of Ortho ward came to stop on the edge of stairs, then extended its mechanical arm and started whizzing as if it was controlled by an invisible force and taking photographs for posterity" (329). This wordy and verbose description creates a picture in the mind of the reader that makes him/her believe it. Another such magical incident happens, in the ward, when suddenly "An IV drip in the general ward turned to milk. The medico-legal officer Dr. John Malick also witnessed the apparition and kneeled down and sang the praise of our Lord Yassoo and then of Our Holy Mother" (329-330).

4.5.4 PROFESSIONALISM

The novel, in a subtle way, juxtaposes the professional self with the unprofessional self in order to subvert this clear demarcation. It questions the professionalism related to the

fields of medicine, police, and law, by exposing the prevailing corruption and exploitation in these departments. As the novel's themes revolve around the stories of doctors, patients, and their dealings. Through various characters and incidents, it challenges the legitimacy of medical profession, and it exposes malpractices and lack of commitment on the part of doctors. One such incident occurs, when a surgeon commits a gross mistake while performing a serious surgery in the operation theatre, and the patient dies. He, as a doctor, is supposed to treat his patient with full care and professional seriousness but he fails. Alice, being an eyewitness to this whole tragic incident, narrates this incident to police with a trust that justice will be ensured, and the culprit will be punished. Unfortunately, instead of arresting the careless surgeon, the police arrest her. She is punished for revealing the corruption, while the surgeon is set free on a pre-arrest bail. Her exploitation, at the hands of medical professionals, police, and the court challenges the legitimacy of these institutions. It shows that she is falsely blamed for a crime that she has not committed. The novel highlights that, though, doctors take oath to remain stick to commitment and dedication, but they often become greedy and senseless. The novel highlights that Alice gets depressed at unprofessional behavior of doctors, therefore, "she says things like what is the difference between a doctor and a donkey? Sometimes she says it in a room full of doctors" (35).

The pathetic condition, of Sacred Hospital, refers towards the miserable state of the majority of the hospitals in Pakistan. In fact, a hospital is a place that is meant to be well built, neat, well equipped, with proper wards, facilities and the staff, but the novel highlights its ignored state, and it shows that a hospital has become a business market. It also refers to the fact that, at present, a hospital can no longer be trusted in terms of professional sincerity, treatment, and facilities and the doctors also lack professional commitment and sincerity. Text writes, "What miracle? Anyone getting out alive from this hospital? Yes, that is definitely a miracle" (275). Dr. Pereira comments on this sorrowful state as he says, "The Sacred has a severe shortage of doctors, there is no way of telling whether the medicines we use are real or fake, we can't even get the janitors to turn up for work" (287). The issue of fake medicines also questions the legitimacy of science that claims human progress, but, ironically, it proves more fatal than being good for humanity.

Noor also comments on this lack of professionalism on the part of doctors, and, by doing so, he manifests a common man's distrust. He draws the reader's attention towards the abuses written on the walls against the doctors, in fact "He was quite puzzled about the writing on the wall, which claimed that Dr Pereira, the man whose address he had been given was a dog. Why was a doctor a dog?"(30). This abusive language shows the patients' hatred, who might have faced some very tragic experiences with these doctors, and, consequently, they abuse them publically. They have no hope to get justice from the institutions of law and police, as the text expresses, "Three slogans in different colours proclaim Dr. Pereira to be a dog, a donkey and a Christian preacher" (25). Their plight shows that, when common people go to doctors they either get poor treatment or they are refused at all. At other instance, the novel again refers towards this public display of anger in these words, "Dr Pereira was referring to the giant banner that had been strung up overnight at the entrance of the Sacred. It accused the doctor, in three rhyming lines, of being an Indian dog, a Jewish agent and a land grabber" (216). The text highlights that this hatred is due to the greedy approach of doctors who don't value the ethics of their profession; rather they consider it a source of earning only. Alice also observes such careless behavior shown by one doctor and, "As a sharp-eyed final year student nurse she (Alice) was in the operating theatre and watching closely as an octogenarian surgeon, famous for cutting open chests and then not stitching them back shut till he had counted his fee in cash" (257).

On the other hand, Teddy problematizes his identities of being a policeman and a body builder, as both these shades run parallel in his personality. He waxes his hair as an obligatory fulfillment of his profession that confuses Sister Hina Alvi, who considers hair on men's body as a sign of masculinity and manliness. She disagrees with Alice, when she tells her about her marriage plan with Teddy, and Sister Hina is very sure that she cannot marry a hairless man. However, Teddy is of the view that one's profession is a separate identity that cannot be mixed with multiple other shades of one's personality. He is a policeman, and, in Pakistan, generally, this profession is considered as a non-friendly occupation, though, its sole purpose is to defend and provide justice to the citizens. There are certain stereotypes attached to this department, such as, lack of justice, corruption, unfair imprisonments, bribery, corruption, mass exploitation, and the misuse of power.

Sister Hina reflects this very fear of a common citizen when she questions Alice's decision of getting married to a policeman. She asks her, "Is'nt he always hanging out with that horrible Inspector Malangi? Always riding in Police vehicles. Why would anyone want to be friends with those people?"(194). It becomes evident when Alice discloses the news of her marriage and the response of Sister Hina is awkward. She is rather shocked, she says:

Why would a girl like you marry a boy like him who waxes his body?

The question surprises Alice and she says, "He is a body builder. They are supposed to do it, its requirement of their job".

Sister Hina Alvi looks at Alice as if she can't believe that a professional nurse would harbor such unprofessional thoughts" (193).

The novel reveals the misuse of power by Gentlemen squad/GS, a special police team, that, contrary to its name, works quite opposite. The conversation between Teddy and Malangi (another policeman) reveals its corrupt policies, rules, hidden strategies, and tactics. These manipulative strategies influence Teddy, who, like Arjun in *The Glass Palace*, is confused and divided between professional and unprofessional self. The text states:

"He doesn't know how to explain to Alice that in his line of work, kindness and cruelty are badly mixed up.

"Have you eaten? Eat some more. Now die" (208).

Similarly, on another occasion, the novel highlights the unjust approach of police towards its citizens when Malangi captures a culprit, Abu Zar, who was doubted to be involved in East Garden terrorism incident. He admits that he has held him without any solid proof, and, in fact, in order to legitimize his arrest, he pursues a senior Doctor and requests him to assist him in this matter. The doctor refuses, and then Malangi asks Noor to help him in convincing the medical officer, because GS wants to punish the victim any way by blaming him of causing injury to the policemen. He exposes his evil intentions as, "Why don't you help out and get us something broken that will look good to medico-legal so that we can have this hero to ourselves for a few days? And then I'll get him to confess to

Garden East” (21). Textual analysis exposes the underlying contradictions in the system of law, for instance, when Alice is summoned to appear before the judge, and defend her case. The text writes, “She looks at the judge as if to say, how can a man so fat, so ugly, wearing such dandruff covered black robe sit in judgment on her?” (69). After a bitter experience of unjust imprisonment, she decides to punish the same surgeon (the actual culprit) and she, after her release from the lock up goes straight to his clinic. She enters his office and attacks him, the text describes:

Before the famous surgeon could shout or press the buzzer, she took a marble flowerpot from the windowsill and aimed at his head. He fainted at the first blow and thus was saved; suffering a broken nose and losing four front teeth from his imported Swiss dentures (266).

Due to assaulting the doctor, she is again sent to the prison for a long period of one year, but she remains strong, and from the jail she appears in her final exams too.

4.5.5 IDENTITY

The novel comprises of various characters who challenge the notion of fixed identities by depicting multiple contradictory roles. For instance, Alice, as a postmodern decentered subject, exhibits various identities in different contexts. Her character does not develop in a linear flow, rather, it is constructed through mini-narratives, and without any proper sequence. She is found in fragments, that is, as a child, as a student, as a nurse, and as a wife, as a prisoner in Borstal jail. Alice, right from her childhood till youth stands against the norms, as she goes to nursing school at the time when she was supposed to get marry. However she manages to complete her degree successfully, despite facing much discrimination at the hands of her fellows, college staff, and the society. She, as a junior nurse, is always marginalized in the medical profession, and she has to face the unjust treatment by male senior surgeons, who consider nurses as mere “garbage bins in uniforms” (175). This ironical reference to her low professional status becomes the biggest daily challenge for her.

The text depicts that Alice is a beautiful lady, but she experiences it differently, rather it becomes a ‘curse’ for her since it only increases her problems. At the time of her marriage, Teddy’s Muslim friends are surprised to see her, the text describes, “She was

quite fair-skinned for a Christian, a midshipman insisted” (133). Here, Hanif challenges the stereotypical perception about physical features, which are, normally, associated with Christians. Unfortunately, her beauty acts as a hurdle in getting peace of mind, as she cannot afford a private vehicle, hence, is deprived of the relative protection from sexual harassment. She has to walk in bazaars, and, in this way, “lewd gestures, whispered suggestions, uninvited hands on her bottom are all part of Alice Bhatti’s daily existence” (9). Her marginalization reflects terror and harassment as a result of various language games of patriarchy, which are functional in the society. Lal and Paul Kumar in *Interpreting Homes in South Asian Literature* state, “Death, national honour, patriarchal values, and communalized identities conjoin here with the nationalism that celebrates murder and suicide” (11).

On the other hand, the text represents that, in the police custody, she does not behave cowardly or fearful, rather she pretends that the police officials are assigned to guard her. Her life gets traumatic, especially, after the brutal murder of her mother. She has lived alone with her father since her childhood, and she never had anyone to share her feelings. She is sent to jail, many times, without having any fault, however, the depressing and unhygienic condition of jail could not break her spiritual strength. When she grows up, her desires are crushed by a corrupt society, and she fails to enjoy her life. She keeps on searching her position, but she meets failures in fulfillment of her dreams. She keeps her hopes high and as “a nurse coming out of the household of Choohra Joseph Bhatti, whom even other Choohras consider untouchable, is a sign that the next generation is ready to move on” (136).

Alice is fully aware of the fact that the society, in which she lives, gives weight to caste, status, faith, power and, money only. Throughout her life, she meets with the people who dictate her about things, matters, or decisions. She is deprived to use her personal power, and her constant vulnerability makes her identity crises a never-ending tale. The novel portrays her through unconventional characterization, for instance, it does not focus on the exterior of Alice like her beauty and mesmerizing looks, rather, she is depicted as a strong lady in the backdrop of a patriarchal society. She believes in a different idea of being a woman, and she has a unique individuality, zeal, and reason. She

reflects the voice of a woman, who belongs to the minority community but, also, facing a male-dominated society and a conservative professional environment. Alice also possess strong masculine qualities that shows that a woman is no more a weak or irrational human being. Being a Christian, she is considered helpless, and blamed and sent to the jail. Sanchita Bhattachariya in her research study entitled “Status of Women in Pakistan” comments that “Other factors for miserable plight of women are a problem with the legal system, religious extremism and abuse of religion” (187). Throughout the novel, at many instances, she keeps on raising her objection towards the inhumane treatment of women at the hands of the society. She says, “There is no place a woman can go and deliver a baby, that there is no place for her even when her water is breaking” (73).

Alice falls in love with Teddy and marries him, but her decision is disapproved by her colleague, Sister Hina, who warns her about the patriarchal society. She says, “Congratulations. But I am worried. A married Muslim nurse is not much better than a single Christian nurse. You just become a slave multiplied by two” (194). But Alice remains firm on her decision and, despite all the pressure, she exercises her individual power against the traditional labels attached to a woman. Textual analysis reveals that, even after her marriage, she does not subjugate to any kind of fear, rather she celebrates her marriage in a quite untraditional way. She signs her marriage papers, on a boat, in a sea. She, as a wife takes the liberty, especially, when she initiates a physical closeness with her husband. Hanif writes about her paralogical moves against the language game of patriarchal society in a metaphorical language:

“Alice runs her fingers over his stomach, counting the flesh ridges.

‘I want one like that’.

She cannot remember if she has ever made such a direct demand for a man. Or to a woman. Marriage, she suddenly realizes, is a liberation army on the march” (209).

Her action is contrary to the behavior of a stereotypical woman who does not initiate any kind of physical closeness, immediate after her marriage, let alone on the very wedding night. Textual analysis represents that a patriarchal society makes the women realize that

they are not free in their actions, behaviors, and language. As a matter of fact, Alice pushes the boundaries of social norms, and, in spite of being a woman who is supposed to be passive or shy at her wedding night, she seduces her husband. The novel shows that, unfortunately, their marriage does not go well, however Alice, unlike a typical woman, moves out of her unhappy conjugal life. Here the novel questions the stereotypical representation of ideal love, that is, usually, depicted in movies and popular fiction, as the love between Alice and Teddy proves to be a failure. In fact, it turns out as a constant source of depression and anxiety for Alice and, finally, results in the form of abnormal behavior of Teddy, and her death. On the other hand, Malangi, a colleague of Teddy, manipulates this situation by suggesting Teddy to punish her. His character stands for the social patriarchal power structure, who does not approve an independent, intellectual and strong woman as wife. Inspector Malangi's own experience about marriage shapes his thoughts as he, in a conversation with Teddy, shares his experience:

You go to work and people think you have an analytical mind, you are an expert of some sort on something. You walk down your street and people ask for your advice because they think you are a man of the world, and then you go home and you start discussing the weather with your wife or the damp in the walls and she will prove in an instant that you are the world's biggest idiot (237).

The novel portrays that a woman like Alice is rarely found in the Pakistani patriarchal society as she is mature, bold, and courageous. Moreover she cannot be easily victimized and objectified. She is not an over-protected woman, rather she is ambitious, adventurous, talented, and multi-tasking person. She is brave enough to make the decisions of her own life. She never feels afraid of any kind of threat and "she has never accepted a wound without trying to give one back" (256). In fact, she seems to acquire some degree of uncanny power that makes her predict the future. These visions become her source of strength as everything is revealed to her whether that happened in remote past or in recent past, and anything that may happen in future. Ironically, even after possessing this visionary power, she spends a marginalized life, and as an excluded being. Therefore she has a dream of having her own house, and this very desire symbolizes her inner yearning for stability, existence, and safety in a cruel society.

Moreover it represents the fact that she wants to live her life without any restriction. She wants to enjoy her freedom as, by nature, she happens to challenge the perfect image of a stereotypical woman, text describes as:

Alice does not like to be like other women. She tries to maintain a nondescript exterior; she learns the sideways glance instead of looking at people directly. She speaks in practiced, precise sentences; so that she is not misunderstood....She avoids eye contact and she never eats in public. (145)

Her strong desire to have her own house, also, arises out of various scary encounters that she has to confront at her work place. One such incident of sexual harassment happens in the VIP room, where she is assigned a night duty to take care of a female patient named Begum Qazalbash (Qaz). Begum Qaz is a woman from a very rich family, and she is under treatment for renal failure. She keeps a strict protocol with her and “she likes to be addressed as Qaz. Convent education, a very self-made lady in a family where even the sixth generation of men does not have to do anything to make a living” (82). The text shows that when Alice enters Qaz’s room to check her condition, she notices a mysterious kind of presence of her male relatives. They were playing chess in the room, and apparently everything was looking normal, but, after a short while, she finds that one of them starts staring her in an unusual manner. Then he stands up, and moves towards Alice to offer her a piece of cake. She tries to digest this situation and remains reserved, but then, all of a sudden, he takes out a pistol, and puts it on her head. In the meanwhile, he unties his trousers and reveals his sexual organ, and he forces her to suck it. Ironically, she has a history of facing such awkward situations; therefore, she does not get scared, rather she treats this man in the same way as she has dealt with others. The reader finds that, even in such a tensed situation, she remains calm, and this quality makes her different from a stereotypical woman. In no time, she plans to get rid of this nasty man, and, quite unexpectedly, she takes out a sharp blade from her bag and instantly slashes the man’s flesh. The blood gushes out and the man starts screaming, but she remains cool and fearless. Later on, Sister Hina inquires her about the incident and she warns her not to take such extreme step against anyone in the future. The text writes:

Hina Alvi says: “This is a real life. That thing that you slashed was a real cock.”

Alice replies: “And he was waving that real cock of his in my real face.” (111)

Throughout the novel, Alice keeps a masculine tone, because it makes her sound serious and mature. In fact, her bold language contradicts with her feminine fears. She also avoids using formal expressions like ‘sorry’ and ‘thank you’, which are considered weak. The text shows that she never tries to learn a submissive language. Noor describes her personality traits of being bold, outspoken and straightforward, and he “knows that Alice is the kind of person who’ll return a favor by saying fuck you too, he also knows that her fatal flaw is not her family background, but her total inability to say simple things like ‘excuse me’ and ‘thank you’” (32). The novel emphasizes the contemporary state of a common woman in the context of Pakistan, where she is taken as light as the game of play-cards, that is used for amusement only. Similarly, Alice is also deprived of her basic rights and when she tries to question the authority, either she is arrested or killed. During her professional career, she, almost every day “saw a woman shot or hacked, strangled or suffocated, poisoned or burnt, hanged or buried alive” (142). It was always some husband, father, son, brother, or a lover killing a woman in the name of honor.

Alice’s mother, Margret Bhatti, is raped and then killed by a high-class family, where she used to work as a maid. Similarly, Zainab, mother of Noor and a poor woman, is another marginalized female character who is under treatment in the same hospital where her son serves as a personal assistant. She spends the initial stage of her life in Borstal Jail, while her later days are spent as a patient in *Sacred Hospital*. Her marginalized state reflects various issues like poverty, unemployment, poor nutrition, imprisonment, and the victimization under discriminatory laws. She manifests many identities of being a mother, a patient, and a prisoner. As a prisoner and as a patient, she is powerless, but, at the same time, she enjoys immense power over her son due to her motherhood. Her son, Noor, regards her as his precious entity, and his strong feelings of love, care, and respect towards his mother reflect his deep concern for her.

The concept of naming is considered an important element that forms one’s identity, but, ironically, the novel reveals that, even in an advanced city of Karachi, people don’t know their names. Noor, while making a record of detail, is surprised to

know it, as he observes that “Patients were baffled when he asked them to spell out their names because many couldn’t spell their names or any other words. Nobody had ever asked them to spell anything. Most of them didn’t know that their name was made up of letters they should have learned” (35). Like Noor, Alice too challenges this naming phenomenon, and she makes fun of those parents who keep Muslim names in order to hide their Christian identity. Text writes, “They remind her of those people in French Colony who give their children these names in the hope that they’ll pass as Muslas. As if there weren’t already enough Muslas” (265). The novel highlights the postmodern approach that identities are constructed through discursive strategies in order to objectify human beings. In this way, a subject is categorized, labeled, isolated, or excluded from a dominant discourse. The words “choohra”, “kafir” and “untouchable” are fine examples of this way of identity formation.

The characters depict multiple identities, for example, Noor, as a postmodern subject, at certain times behaves normal while, at other instances, he becomes very emotional and almost insane. Dr Pereira, for the very first time, meets Noor when he was begging in front of Sacred Hospital as, “He heard that sickly, but clean cut boy gently shepherding a woman shouting, ‘Excuse me, sir. Excuse me, madam’” (30). He is impressed by the polite manners of the little beggar, who was holding his mother’s hand, and “Dr Pereira motioned them to get in the car, a beggar with good manners deserved a chance to be asked a question or two” (30). Noor plays different roles i.e. as a son, as a professional helper, as a beggar, as a lover, and as a grown up seventeen years old boy. In every role, he is different, the text writes:

Should I get some tea? Noor asks, then closes his register carefully, puts it on his chair and leaves. As soon as he shuts the door, he starts to run and skip. Inside the room, he is a brooding, attentive lackey; outside in the corridors of the Sacred Hospital, he practices a bit of careless living, which, despite his precocious burden, he knows that as a seventeen-year-old he is entitled to (36).

Sister Hina is a nurse who mostly remains serious, strict, and bossy, but, at the same time, she stays well behaved during her office hours. Once Alice happens to observe her outside the hospital premises and she notices entirely different shades of her personality.

The text describes, “It is strange to see her outside the Sacred. Suddenly she is in a world where she does not have total control, where she cannot expect each one of her wishes to be carried out” (292). In fact, her ambiguous behavior makes Alice confused about her real nature as a person. After the incident of sexual harassment, Sister Hina blames Alice for this situation. After sexual harassment incident with Alice, Sister Hina disapproves her action of wounding the man. This shade of her personality perpetuates the patriarchal values and it renders unquestionable powers to male members of society. It also reveals a significant point that a patriarchal society is sustained by both the genders; men and women. It is surprising to see that Alice does not speak a single word to the man who harasses her, rather she remains silent. She resists his oppressive behavior through her actions only. However, the ironic representation of Sister Hina’s attempt to approve the unjust action of sexual harassment reveals the underlying hypocrisy in her nature. It also shows that she does not possess a fixed identity, she is often very kind to Alice, but, at other times, she becomes unnecessarily strict, especially, in her professional setup.

Similarly, Teddy Butt is a very kind policeman when he is on duty to guard a prisoner, and he often becomes so sympathetic, that, once he even helps a convict getting an escape from police. On the contrary, as a husband, he is dominating and ruthless towards Alice. The fact, that he throws acid on her face creates doubt about his character, and it becomes difficult for the reader to consider him a sympathetic man or a cruel husband. In fact, he depicts multiple identities, such as, at one occasion, he tries to force his love on Alice by putting a gun on her head, and, in this way, threatens her. Later on, out of anxiety, he rushes out of the hospital and opens numberless fires just randomly. This shooting causes a series of killings in the city that is, then, shut down for three days. The novel deconstructs the binary of professional/unprofessional behavior as various characters manifest their unprofessional selves and professional selves at the same time. The textual analysis reveals that, the professionalism of one person becomes a matter of unprofessionalism for the other.

4.6 CONCLUSION

The current chapter has provided a detailed textual analysis of *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* in terms of transformation of language by employing theoretical insights of Lyotard's language games and subversion of metanarratives. It has highlighted that language in postmodern fiction is ironic, self-reflexive, intertextual and localized. Through language, the novel subverts the metanarratives of faith, science, professionalism, and identity. The study has also traced a unique relationship between reader, author, and the text from the perspective of postmodern lens. Moreover, the inclusion of local expressions, various codes, and phrases involve the readers to participate in the active interpretation of the novel. The study has also proved that the novel constantly draws parallel reference towards metanarratives and mininarratives. It has found that the characters make paralogical moves to question the existing language games in order to generate new and plural narratives.

Next chapter explores postmodernist occasions of fictionality explored in *The Glass Palace* and it highlights the strategies that weave fiction and reality together.

CHAPTER 5

POSTMODERN FICTIONALITY IN AMITAV GHOSH'S *THE GLASS PALACE*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the textual analysis of *The Glass Palace* attempts to explore postmodern fictionality and its relation with representation of reality. It highlights the constructional as well as fictional aspects of the novel. It also explores the blend of fact and fantasy that forms a new equation between text and the outside reality. This study is based on the application of Hutcheon's theoretical concept of historiographic metafictionality. However, as the concept of metafiction is taken from Patricia Waugh, therefore, some of her theoretical insights are also mentioned and applied in order to examine the underlying fictionality in the novel. However, the present chapter focuses more on the fictional aspects of the construction of the realities as compare to the exact imitation of these realities.

5.2 *THE GLASS PALACE*

The novel comprises of seven parts namely Mandalay, Ratnagiri, The Money Tree, The Wedding, Morningside, The Front, and The Glass Palace. All the chapters are further divided into forty-eight sub-parts. It, unlike conventional fiction, begins with a world map highlighting the geographies of India, Burma, China, and other countries. Part one comprises of the first five chapters, while part two consists of nine chapters, part three starts with chapter fifteen to chapter twenty, and part four begins with the twentieth chapter. Part five starts from twenty fifth chapter while part six begins with chapter number thirty two and, part seven starts from chapter forty. The plot represents the condition of India by offering a portrait of its popular culture, life-styles, behavior, thoughts, perceptions, and its various moods.

The different settings of the novel include Bengal, Malaya, Burma, and India. The main story revolves around four families, that is, Saya John's from Singapore, Rajkumar's in Rangoon, Uma's from Calcutta, and King Thebaw's of Burma. Some important characters are Dolly, Queen Supalayat, Dinu, Neel, Elsa, Matthew, Bela, Alison, Arjun, Kishen Singh, Jaya, and Hardy. The main themes revolve around the issues such as science, wars, history, politics, and nationalism. It also highlights the discursive formation of history narrated through the perspectives of marginalized people. The entire novel, except the last chapter, is narrated in third person's voice. It begins with the story of an Indian boy Rajkumar who is eleven years old and he happens to witness the major historical event of Burmese royal family's exile to India. He belongs to India, but he comes to another land, Burma, in order to earn some money and fulfill his dream of achieving a successful life. He narrates the story of king's exile, while, on the other side, the same event is also recorded by the royal family's child maid Dolly. During the exile, she travels with the Royal family from Burma to India. As she grows up, she gets married to Raj Kumar, who, by then, has become a successful Burmese businessman, and the couple, once again, settles down in Burma. They have two sons and, unexpectedly, by the end of the novel their younger son is killed in Japanese bomb blast due to the fight for the national cause.

The novel does not adhere to the traditional formula of a proper beginning, rise, climax, catastrophe or denouement. It incorporates unexpected turns in the proceeding of the story without conventional cause and effect approach. Multiple events are mixed at the cost of uniformity and order, and the plot merges together various events of past, present, and the future through incorporation of flashbacks, dreams, and fantastical elements. Ghosh develops the characters in fragments that demand reader's active participation in order to construct them. He, as an author, is greatly influenced by the political as well as cultural milieu of post independent India. Being an anthropologist, he comments on the cultural fragmentation, cultural degeneration, colonial and neo-colonial power structures, distrust on the materialistic offshoots of modern civilization, loss of value of human relationships, and chaos. Through this novel, he challenges the modern notions of progress, emancipation, and justice. As historiographic metafiction, the novel

represents history through various tools including intertextuality, parody, memory, and fantasy.

5.2.1 INTERTEXTUALITY

Textual analysis highlights the construction of the story through incorporation of other fictional texts, inter-texts, and subtexts. It demonstrates that there are various references to other character taken from different texts, such as, the presence of Ah Fatt, a Chinese character, gives a self-reference towards one of Ghosh's own novels i.e. *Sea of Poppies*. Here, the novel mentions him in these words, 'Dinu, Illongo, and Saya John visited Ah Fatt's restaurant' (359). He is portrayed as the owner of a restaurant that places him in a direct contrast to his previous role as in *Sea of Poppies*, he is depicted as a miserable prisoner, who is under British custody. His considerable transformation from *Sea of Poppies* to *The Glass Palace* strengthens a postmodern concept that identity is fluid, and it also transforms as a result of a change of the context.

The novel gives reference to various holy books as well, for instance, the Bible, as at one occasion when Saya John laments at the human negligence towards earth. He quotes Holy Scriptures, "And the Lord said unto Moses and unto Aaron, Take to you handfuls of ashes of the furnace, and let Moses sprinkle it toward the heaven in the sight of Pharaoh" (95). In this way, Saya makes the reader realize about his/her role in taking care of the surroundings and the natural environment. He challenges the legitimacy of science by exposing the destruction caused by it, and, by doing so, also subverts the dichotomy of science/nature. Similarly, there are other characters who treat their physical and spiritual pains through the recitation of holy Bible, for instance:

Often Dolly would read from the scriptures –One day Dolly chose a discourse by the Buddha, addressed to his son, Rahula. She read: *develop a state of mind like the earth, Rahula, for on the earth all manner of things are thrown, clean and unclean, dung and urine, spittle, pus and blood, and the earth is not troubled or repelled or disgusted* (343).

Through intertextuality, the characters refer to existing myths, theories, and different philosophers. The text shows that they get philosophical towards the realities of the world and they show their trust on the theories, rather than depending on the visible concrete

realities. At one point Dinu says, “I was talking about Edward Weston’s theory of pre-visualisation...that you must see the truth of your subject in your mind” (509). The intertextual references towards other novels connect the reader as well as provoke him to feel the pleasure associated with the reading of such texts. The novel also appreciates other works of art including fiction and poetry, for instance, Arjun admires reading poetry as the text writes, “The CO introduced Arjun to Robert Graves and Wilfred Owen. Arjun lent him his copies of H.G Well’s *War of the Worlds* and Jule Verne’s *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea*. These exchanges became a pleasurable part of Arjun’s life at Charbagh” (312). In this way, he shows his love towards music by mentioning and praising his favourite songs again and again, “At the end of each night, Arjun would put on his favourite record – Tommy Dorsey’s band playing ‘I’m Getting Sentimental Over You” (369). His appreciation reflects Ghosh’s acknowledgment of different genres of art. This phenomenon also demonstrates that intertextuality helps the reader to interact with various types of art; be it writing, drawing, painting, or music. It also focuses on the aspect that art cannot be enjoyed with dull and dry mind or without any emotions and aesthetics. Like Arjun, Hardy likes listening songs because he has a sense to enjoy the rhythm, and “He had a good ear for a tune and was usually the first in the mess to learn the latest Hindi film songs” (313).

At another occasion, the characters refer to various pictures and images and they comment and position them in the new context. For example, Dolly, in a conversation with Uma, refers towards Queen Victoria’s picture that has her famous smile. Uma asks her a very sensitive question about queen Supalayat’s ruling strategy, that did violence and spread terror in Burma, and she replies, “Don't you sometimes wonder how many people have been killed in Queen Victoria's name? It must be millions, wouldn't you say? I think I'd be frightened to live with one of those pictures” (114). This shows that Dolly, instead of praising her beauty, associates the smile with the atrocities which were committed by the Queen’s team. Here this reference questions the legitimacy of the rule by both the Queens as they imposed the grand narratives of justice, rule, and law in the fake pretension of their people’s welfare.

The novel incorporates certain metafictional characters who write and comment on fiction or poetry. One such character is Daw Thin Aye, a creative writer, who writes stories. Once she sends some stories for the publication, but, to her surprise, the authority rejects her work. The editor says, “Pick it up, take it home and study it. Don’t send anything to this office again until you have learned to write proper Burmese” (536). It reveals that the so-called ‘literary’ and ‘powerful’ person makes an effort to hide his own weakness and ignorance. He, himself, is too illiterate to understand and appreciate poetry and, moreover, he cannot digest the fact that a native could excel in knowledge and creative art. His rejection also shows that he is afraid of the power of the words that can overpower him.

5.2.2 FRAGMENTED CHARACTERS

The characters in *The Glass Palace* develop in fragments as they belong to different cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The fact, that they are not from any specific nation, culture, and identity influences their personality and develops them differently in various contexts. They belong to Burma, India, and Sri Lanka, and together they form strong familial ties without having any real blood relationship, and their strong bonding refers to postmodern multiculturalism and globalization. For instance, Rajkumar right from his childhood gets exposed to different cultures, and, for this reason, he does not feel any real connection to a single place. Text reveals that he, basically, belongs to Chittagong, while his family was settled in Arakan “where Burma and Bengal collide in a whirlpool of unease” (13). Due to the spread of a fatal fever his family dies, and he has to move away from his native place. He comes to Burma and joins a food-stall as a worker. He has to face discrimination as he was called “you fool of an Indian, you coal-black Kalaa” (7). Then, later, he happens to meet Dolly and marries her, and has two sons.

Similarly, Saya John is another such character who is developed in fragments as textual analysis shows that the Indian soldiers, who are posted in Singapore, comment on him as “a dhabi ka kutta- a washerman's dog- na ghar kana ghat ka you don't belong anywhere, either by the water or on land” (10). While he never took this comment at heart, rather he acts dynamic in different contexts, and he, very flexibly, enters and crosses the boundaries of various cultures. He even changes his attire without any

hesitation, such as, when he visits any European official for his business meetings then he wears “European clothes: a sola topee, leather boots, khaki trousers” (67). The novel laments at the very fact that religion is often misused by its followers, and it is used as a tool to misinterpret, and legitimize their manipulations. However Ghosh, through his characters gives a different message, for example, Saya John, being a role model for his friends and family, does not impose religion on others, and “He keeps his religion to himself. In all the years I worked for him, he never once asked me to go to church” (194).

Dolly is another character who, like Rajkumar, is an orphan and she does not belong to any family or place, rather she works as Queen Supayalat's maid. She takes care of the second princess, and she also joins the Royal Family after their exile from Burma to India. She, as a child, meets Rajkumar at the scene when the glass palace was looted. She offers him some sweets that symbolize her welcoming approach to another rootless human being. Textual analysis proves that her loyalty to the royal family remains unquestionable throughout her life, and she does not leave them in their crisis. With the passage of time, she develops feelings for Mohan Sawant, a coachman, and, by this very act, she subverts the racial segregation. Like Elizabeth in *Burnt Shadows*, who disagrees with the idea of developing relationship with the man of different cast or status, here too, Dolly is warned by Uma to stay away from Mohan Sawant. Dolly remains aware of her rootlessness as well as displacement, for instance, she, while talking to Uma Dey says, “If I went to Bunna now I would be a foreigner - they would call me a kalaa like they do to Indians” (113). Like Hiroko Tanaka in *Burnt Shadows*, she also wants to forget her past as she says, “I don't remember much, which is a kind of mercy” (113). However, Both Hiroko and Dolly know how to move ahead in their lives as Dolly feels satisfied with her new location as she says, “This is the only place I know. This is home” (119).

The novel highlights the fragmentation in the characters due to their profession, such as, Arjun and Hardy, as at various occasions, the modern metanarratives of loyalty and patriotism are imposed on them by the use of terror. They, as army officer, are torn between their identities that confuse them about their profession, national identities, and also on their role as human beings. Arjun is always hated for his Eurocentric attitude and he is blamed for lack of patriotism for his home country; India, that is why, he faces a

crisis in his life. He fails to explain the reasons of his alienation in his profession as well as his life. The text highlights that he is transformed in the wake of war, and, in fact, he starts harboring negative feelings towards the British rule. His character is developed along the lines of the collective history as Ghosh, in an interview, comments, “The character of Arjun is one that was very compelling to me because the peculiar circumstance he finds himself in, the way in which he is formed, the way in which his history is enmeshed with the history of the families around him” (qtd. in Sankaran 1). This suggests that Arjun is not an individual character, rather he is a product of whatever happens around him on political, social, and national levels. He, initially, is fascinated by the western style and mannerism, but, with the passage of time, his perceptions are transformed. He observes certain contradictions in the military system that leads him to revolt finally. His disbelief becomes his permanent attitude later on as he gets upset and shows a lack of professionalism, enthusiasm, commitment, and sincerity towards his career. Christeena in her research entitled “Colonial History Tracked – A New Historical Reading of Amitav Gosh’s *The Glass Palace*” states:

In the beginning, Arjun is intoxicated with the British way of life that the army has initiated in him. He is proud to belong to “The Royal Battalion” and is overwhelmed by its glamour. The textual analysis reveals that with the passage of time he realizes “that it is his masters from whom the country needs to be defended. (288)

This transformation of Arjun, as a loyal army officer into a rebel, makes him lose his focus as well as his interest in the military career. Although he can lead a very successful professional life, but he chooses to remain indifferent. Textual analysis reveals that his subversive attitude is also partially shaped by the opinions that he receives from his friends and family. Alison is one such influence on his life, who exposes the power nexus as she comments, “Arjun – you are not in charge of what you do; you are a toy, a manufactured thing, a weapon in someone else’s hands. Your mind doesn’t inhabit your body” (376). This creates confusion in his mind regarding many established realities that gets aggravated by his friend Hardy who is also an army officer. He asks Arjun:

‘Well, didn’t you ever think: this country whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time—what is it? Where is this country? The fact is that you and I don’t have a country—so where is this place whose safety, honour and welfare are to come first, always and every time? And why was it that when we took our oath it wasn’t to a country but to the King Emperor—to defend the Empire’?. (330)

Arjun and Hardy realize that their fight is without any sense of loyalties and belongingness. In fact, Hardy’s rebellious approach provokes negative sentiments in Arjun against their British masters. Hardy further says, “It was strange to be sitting on one side of a battle line, knowing that you had to fight and knowing at the same time that it wasn’t really your fight— knowing that whether you won or lost, neither the blame nor the credit would be yours” (406). Like Arjun and Hardy, another decentered character is Uma Dey, who is a widow of Beni Prasad and an activist of Indian Independence League. She is portrayed as a strong character who questions the patriarchal norms of the society. She does not adhere to the stereotypical role of widowhood, rather she lives a free and an independent life. The text describes her:

As a widow living at home, Uma’s life was still one of rigid constraints and deprivation: her hair was shaved off; she could eat no meat nor fish and she was allowed to wear nothing but white. She was twenty-eight and had a lifetime ahead of her. As the months dragged by it became clear that some other solution would have to be thought of. (184)

She criticizes man-made categorization, of human societies, on the basis of national and political affiliations, and such divisions ultimately create conflicts between people of different communities. She laments at the prevailing cast system, in India, that divides Indian nationals into elite, high middle, low middle, and poor or untouchables. She admits that India needs a total reformation that has nothing to do with colonization or imperialism only. She says, “Let me add that we must not be deceived by the idea that imperialism is an enterprise of reform” (294). She emphasizes that some awareness is needed in the general public regarding their role to bring a positive change in society. At other occasion, she represents the voice of power, authority, and position, for example,

when she argues in the favor of British rule in India. Uma challenges the narrative of imperialism as she protests in these words, “How was it possible to imagine that one could grant freedom by imposing subjugation? How could any section of people hope to achieve freedom where the entirety of a populace was held in subjection?” (189).

Contrary to the confused and schizophrenic subjects, there are various other characters who represent government. They adhere to unconditional obedience and follow its rules without giving a second thought. Beni Prasad Dey, an Indian, is one such character who is appointed as District Collector of Ratnagiri, in 1905. He enjoys a highly prestigious rank in the British Civil Service. He marries Uma Dey, who is almost fifteen years junior to him. However, his character remains ambiguous and he is depicted as a weak fellow. Later on, due to princesses’ marriage to a low class man, he was demoted from his official position for the reason that he could not take proper care of the Royal Family and their relations. However, his own marital life too faces many ups and downs and his wife, finally, leaves him. He could not bear the insult, and as a result commits suicide by drowning himself.

The novel, like *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, questions the concept of naming because many characters carry double names that ultimately stands for dual or multiple identities. Dolly and Saya keep the tradition of double naming alive, “Four years later, Dolly had a second child, another boy. Like Neel he was given two names, one Burmese and one Indian: they were, respectively, Tun Pe and Dinanath” (195). The concept of double naming is associated with the tradition, and, this very aspect reflects the postmodern spirit. This also reflects the local culture of keeping two names as the novel writes, “Six weeks later Dolly was delivered of a healthy boy. An astrologer was called in to advise them on child’s names: he was to have two, as was the custom among Indians in Burma” (195).

The novel, in a postmodern sense, decenters the idea of fixed characterization as it takes both the human as well as non-human characters. These includes animals, like elephants and cows, and also the elements of natural environment such as trees and forests. These non-human characters cast a strong influence on the progression of the story. Their unique depiction shows that, generally, feelings are attributed to human

beings, but the novel relates them with animals too. In this way, it deconstructs the binary oppositions of human/animal, sane/insane and rational/irrational by showing animals as loving, loyal, friendly, and revengeful. The novel highlights the significance of the special traits of an elephant, and it describes her capabilities to set the target accurately. Saya informs about this elephant as, “She was an old elephant, skilled in the art of demolition. It takes her no more than a glance to size up a dam of snagged wood and picks a point of attack” (101). He also quotes a story that is about her love for her master, he says, “This young oo-si, as it happened, was much loved, both by his peers and by his mount, a gentle and good-natured cow by the name of Shwe Doke” (98). This incident is about the emotions of love possessed by an elephant, “Those who know them well claim to be able to detect many shades of emotion in elephants – anger, pleasure, jealousy, sorrow” (98). He narrates the incident that Shwe Doke’s trainer dies and she feels this loss. The novel writes:

Shwe Doke was utterly disconsolate at the loss of her handler. She was restless, and nervous, frequently flapping her ears and clawing the air with the tip of her trunk. So pronounced an upheaval as the absence of a long-familiar handler can put even the gentlest of elephants out of temper, often dangerously so. (98-99)

Textual analysis shows that, like human being, Shwe Doke takes revenge as soon as she gets a chance. It happens that one night she is set free from her strong metal chains, and, then, she comes to McKay’s hut and hits him hard. In this way, she kills McKay Thakin who was responsible for the ‘accidental’ (actually planned) death of Shwe Doke’s master. The depiction, of this incident, shows that the novel, not only, discusses the bigger issues of war, progress and science, but it, also, demonstrates the personal stories involving human beings, animals and even trees.

On the other hand, some other characters treat the plants and the green environment with the same degree of respect that they give to their human fellows. For instance, Dolly feels happy to see the stillness of forest, where “Each tree had a diagonal slash across its trunk, with a halved coconut shell cupped underneath” (198). The novel discusses different flowers and their specific characteristics, and, this very aspect reflects Ghosh’s own love towards nature. It also shows his interest in the natural environment,

and his novel highlights the fact that these flowers and trees are a good companion of human beings and they also add flavor to the food. For example, Saya states, “The flowers Bunga Kentan and Bunga telang – ginger flowers and blue flowers give the food its taste. That’s what Elsa always says. Prawns are made with ginger buds – that’s what gives them that amazing taste” (365). The text informs the reader about the names of some of the flowers as:

Dolly said, startled, ‘that’s a padauk tree, isn’t it?’

They call them Angsana trees here; Elsa said (197).”

Almost all the characters lament at the loss of trees, that was done as a result of industrialization and scientific advancements. The text through personification expresses deep grief on the eraser of jungle by employing words like “killed”, “assassinated”, and “dead” (69) in order to refer to this process of their brutal cutting. It highlights a profound love of scenic beauty that is not yet harmed by industrialization and economic progress as it writes, “The surroundings of Charbagh were spectacularly beautiful: craggy, ochre mountains, streaked with great slashes of brilliantly coloured rock” (312).

5.2.3 PARODY

The Glass Palace is a fictional parody of the past that suggests that history is available in the form of discourse about it with the help of imagination. It is a parody of certain historical events such as British colonization of Burma, World War Two, and the military dictatorship of Myanmar. It is based on the fictional description of two very crucial historical events i.e. British army’s invasion of Burma in 1885, and the house imprisonment of Aung San Suu Kyi who was an activist in National League for Democracy, in 1996. It creates a fictional world of historical events that happened in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This fictionalization, through the language, acts as a multidimensional reflective medium as Waugh states, “Metafiction sets up an “opposition, not to ostensibly ‘objective’ facts in the ‘real’ world, but to the language of the realistic novel which has sustained and endorsed such a view of reality” (*Metafiction* 11). The novel focuses on the pre-colonial and post-colonial history of Burma, by narrating stories based on human characters, rubber plantations, and even elephants. It constructs a fictional account of history through various political references, maps,

photographs, letters, drawings, and interviews. It creates imaginary and real worlds and, in this way, the novel strengthens the postmodern stance of knowing the past through 'traces' or 'texts'. This blend of fiction and reality subverts the dichotomy of real/imagination and realist/fictional representation.

Similarly, Linda Hutcheon explains the art of rewriting history in the form of a parodic representation, and she states, "To parody is not to destroy the past; in fact, to parody is both to enshrine the past and to question it" ("Historiographic Metafiction Parody" 6). Likewise, the novel, through imagination, retells the historical past of three very significant South Asian countries, that is, India, Malaysia, and Myanmar. It establishes the significance of the fictional aspects of history with the help of the imaginary narrators who act like author by commenting on various events. It incorporates personal histories of all the characters, such as, Rajkumar, Uma, Dolly, King Thebaw, Neel, Queen, Dinu, Arjun, Bela, Hardy, and Alison that go parallel with the relevant national histories. There are various characters who tell history in the form of many stories and, instead of narrating the events of violence, they focus more on the consequences of these traumas. Such portrayal shows a sound knowledge of Amitav Ghosh on past events, and, at the same time, it makes the readers realize about the textuality of the history. In one of his interviews, Ghosh reveals, "Writing this book has completely transformed me as a person and as a novelist. Very few novelists get that experience; it changed my understanding of history" (qtd. in G.Kadam 20).

The novel provides a map right in the beginning that reflects its unconventional nature, and, in this way, it relates the literary artifact with the geographical knowledge. This discursive construction reflects on the process of narrating history and its relevance with the present time. The fictional account of history challenges the singular reality of traditional historical discourse, and it focuses on the limits of rewriting and representation of the past. The novel is self-conscious, and, at the same time, it asserts as well as undercuts the modern formalistic representation. It is different from ordinary reality as it is situated in a world of texts and intertexts. It plays upon the truths as well as lies of the traditional historical records. It presents multiplicity of realities that problematize the unidirectional traditional historical discourse. It generates many little stories to counter the

metanarrative of history that interrupts the narrative linearity as well. The constant back and forth interplay of past and present events suggest the strong relationship between both the time frames.

The novel depicts the historical event of Burmese king's exile through multiple stories, for instance, it presents different sides of the emperor's personality. It shows him as a careless ruler, who never stepped out of his residence since years. It was his Queen Supayalat, who was responsible for taking care of the state affairs. The text shows that when British came to invade, King Thebaw and his forces surrendered in just fourteen days. Dolly and Rajkumar record the king's exile, and their perspectives show that the King does not mourn or behave violent during his imprisonment. Some other incidents related to King's exile are also included in the novel, for example, Beni Prasad Dey interference in his daughter's decision of marriage that is related to the larger debate. Queen does not listen him, rather she shouts, "It's people like you who're responsible for this tragedy. Did you ever think of the consequences when you were transporting people here? What you and your kind have done is far worse than the worst deeds of the Europeans" (247).

The novel is about the war and its atrocities and textual analysis reveals that different characters do talk and express their fear of the situation. The main plot is based on the fictional depiction of the war that was fought between Burma and British in 1885. Burmese kingdom was lost, and the King was exiled along with his family. This phenomenon of constructing stories related to history creates fictionality as Waugh states, "In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text" (*Metafiction 2*). In the same way, the novel moves to the fictional description of Second World War and it depicts that Indian army is busy in fighting against Japanese in Malaysia. British too were excited to exploit teakwood from Burmese's forest and, for this purpose, they waged a war as, "The imperial fleet crossed the border on November 14, 1885" (23). The text writes, "The key objective of the British forces intrusion into Burma is only for trading and not for military conquest" (15). British were fully prepared for the invasion and the novel demonstrates

that they were having latest war weapons as well as an advanced technology. This destructive use of war equipment also subverts the grand narratives of science and progress, because it proves that this advancement has killed more humans than it has ever saved. The text writes, “The British forces were armed with the latest breech-loading rifles. Their artillery support consisted of twenty-seven rapid-firing machine guns, more than had ever before been assembled on the continent of Asia” (23).

After the invasion, it is seen that majority of King’s soldiers start resisting the British presence, and they start using their weapons to harm them, “The invaders responded by tightening their grip. There were roundups, executions, hangings” (49). There was continuous sound of rifle-fires in the streets, and people were afraid of forthcoming danger in the form of violence. This depiction shows that these national clashes not only horrify the common men, but also, disturb the career and economy of the countries. In the novel, Ma Cho has to shut down her stall as “considerable damage had already been caused; lighting a lamp, Ma Cho discovered that most of her pots, pans and utensils had been either stolen or destroyed. She let out a stricken wail. “What am I to do? Where am I to go?”(49). Textual analysis shows that even the exile of Burmese royal family, is related to the teak business, “a few months ago there’d been a dispute with a British timber company- a technical matter concerning some logs of teak” (21). The novel portrays journalistic details such as it writes, “Singapore is one of the most heavily defended places in the world” (311). Moreover, like a political discourse, the characters talk about different issues, especially, when Jaya expresses her anxiety, she says, “Politics has invaded everything, spared nothing...religion, art, family...it has taken over everything...there is no escape from it.” (542). The novel also narrates the facts about certain historical events as “In 1905, the nineteenth year of the King’s exile, a new District Collector arrived in Ratangari” (104).

The novel, by making the parody of certain historical events, exposes the reason behind such decisions of waging wars, and capitalism is one of them. It shows that, often, such decisions were made in order to gain monetary power and the novel laments at the fact, that the green environment was badly damaged in the name of progress. Hutcheon proposes the same idea as she believes that postmodern philosophy relies on speculative

mode that does not agree to a single and totalized approach towards the representation of different ideas and “once accepted certainties are interrogated; life suddenly becomes unstable, chaotic and fragmented” (*A Poetics* 57). Similarly, Saya creates a parody of the British manipulation of green environment, he says, “It was the Europeans who saw that tame elephants could be made to work for human profit. It was they who invented everything we see around us in the logging camp. This entire way of life is their creation” (74). In this way, the novel reflects that the national leaders’ blind adherence to certain ideologies created clashes in the human societies. The characters comment and give their opinions on the policies of various political leaders, and either they affirm the rulers’ philosophy, or negate them completely.

Dinu is another character who challenges this blind adherence to rules as he talks about the hierarchy of races and its roots in the history. He says, “Hitler and Mussolini are among the most tyrannical and destructive leaders in all human history ...their whole ideology is about the superiority of certain races and the inferiority of others...” (293). He further questions the master narratives of imperialism and capitalism that claim for human liberation and progress. He says, “It was because of the imperialists that Burma had to be shut off from the world” (537). He refers towards the ‘outer’ chaos as he says, ‘there is a chaos on the roads’ (386) and this outer chaos is juxtaposed with the inner chaos experienced by the characters. Uma Dey also reveals the underlying paradox in the European narratives of justice, human rights, and democracy. She gets settled down in America, and she feels that she already knows what is going on in the city. She says:

New York had proved to be all that she had hoped. A kind of heaven for someone like herself, except that the shelter it afforded consisted not of peace and quiet but the opposite. It was a kind of place where one could lose oneself in the press of people. She had known that this was a place that would be to her taste because so many of the other passengers were people who were tired of the ruthless hypocrisies of Europe, just as she was (192).

At another point, she challenges the notion of imperialism and she blames the authorities for manipulation of the common mass. She says, “It is they who invoke the old imperial laws to keep themselves in power. The truth is that they have lost...that is just a matter of

time before they are made to answer for all that they have done” (543). The text manifests her doubt with regard to the national policy making bodies, and she adopts a critical stance towards foreign policies. She exposes certain gaps in the manipulative discourse, she says, “We must not be deceived by the idea that imperialism is an enterprise of reform, colonialists would like us to believe this, but there is a clear refutation” (294). Textual analysis also highlights the parody of the classification of people, cultures, and lands under a specific totalizing system and a unitary law. The characters subvert these divisions as they are totally confused with the real meanings of the terms such as liberty, legitimacy, patriotism and nationalism.

The novel presents a parody of military system and its working strategies, and, by doing so, it highlights the corruption that prevails in this institution. It makes an ironic parody as, “For Hutcheon, postmodern parody depends upon the ironic rather than upon the comic, for she defends that for her parody would be repetition with critical difference, not necessarily involving ridicule. It would emphasize difference rather than similarity” (Salomon 71). It shows that, like other characters, majority of Indian military officers maintain a challenging attitude towards their profession and loyalties. Though, they are subjected to an informal psychological training where they are groomed, in a way, to internalize the English culture and to obey their strategies. In order to detach the soldiers, they are also given a different diet as, “The officer’s mess served ‘English’ food” (281), but some officers, such as, Hardy and Arjun were reluctant to accept this hegemony.

Hardy fails to acquire the English taste, hence, he flouts this disciplining technique, and he “was one of those chaps who simply could not get by without his daily dal-roti, at least once a day, he’d find a pretext to leave the cantonment so that he could eat his fill somewhere in town” (281). Similarly, the novel combines various stories related to historical discourses as Linda Hutcheon believes that history is fictionalized in literature and it is narrated in the form of stories to suggest multiple interpretations of a single historical event. Human beings cannot live detached from their past and they need to know their roots, therefore, societies look into their past, write about it in order to know that from where they come from or who they are, where they are heading for. She asserts, “Historiographic metafiction works to situate itself within historical discourse

without surrendering its autonomy as fiction” (“Historiographic Metafiction Parody” 4). In the same sense, the novel reveals multiple interlinked historical events, it writes:

In 1947, in preparation for the British departure, Burma’s first national elections were held. They were won by General Aung San. But on 19 July, shortly before he was to assume office, Aung San was assassinated. Within months of the assassination, a communist-led insurgency broke out in central Burma. In a short time, there were sixteen insurgencies raging in Burma. (529).

These textual lines represent the contrast between historical figures and fictional characters, and such fusion also confronts the conventional distinction between real and artificial world(s). The use of fictional characters with real names, which are taken from history, confuses the reader about the reality of these events. This phenomenon is perceived by Brian McHale, a renowned postmodernist, who considers that these ‘borrowed’ characters are ‘transworld’, for the very reason, that they drive the attention of the reader towards the blurring of the boundaries between history, reality and fiction. This also refers to the names that exist outside the world of words, King Thebaw of Burma, is one such fictionalized character who was a real emperor.

The novel presents various perspectives of marginalized characters who do not hold any leading place in the official historical record. It captures their stories of displacement, dislocation, identity crises, exile and loss of property. It also narrates the impact of national tragedies on those victims who were not even remotely concerned with the policy making discourse. This very phenomenon challenges the binary opposition of official/personal history as it generates pluralistic version of various experiences with respect to a single event. Their individual perspectives about different historical events reject the linear view of history, because they construct various narrative layers with the help of flashbacks. It reveals that the single uni-lateral narrator is replaced with multiple narrators who also reflect multiple voices and possess similar or contradicting opinions. These narrators do not believe in rationalistic or positivistic history that claims to teach some lessons to improve the condition of human societies. They experience history as a cyclic phenomenon where every victory is attached with some disaster. Amitav Ghosh, in

an interview conducted by Hawley, comments on his own philosophy of questioning the master narratives of fiction and reality. He states:

What interested me first about borders was their arbitrariness, their constructedness – the ways in which they are naturalized by modern political myth making. I think this interest arose because of some kind of inborn distrust of anything that appears to be given or taken-for-granted. This is why I distrust also the lines that people draw between fiction and non-fiction. I think these lines are drawn in order to manipulate our ways of thought: that is why they must be disregarded. (“The Writer” 9)

The novel highlights the characters’ mistrust on the justification of waging war, as they find the reasons too insignificant to do such violence. This attitude mocks at the master narrative of capitalism that is behind most of the wars and Lyotard considers it “A vanguard machine dragging humanity after it, dehumanizing it” (*The Postmodern Condition* 63). In this way, the novel links the political history with the personal history, and it also records that how the characters were affected by these happenings. For instance, the forced exile of the Burmese King changes the political scenario of Burma, and it transforms the characters’ lives emotionally, mentally and physically. As a result of this, Dolli, Rajkumar, Queen, and King are displaced and they, also, go through a shock in witnessing this event. Rajkumar views this exile as a nine years old orphan, and, being a child, he is unable to understand the reason behind this national decision, but, at least, he gets an idea of British authority. He thinks, “What vast, what incomprehensible power, to move people in such huge numbers from one place to another – emperors, kings, farmers, dockworkers, soldiers, coolies, policemen” (50). This fusion of fictionality and historicity reflects Ghosh’s own concern, he states:

I think fiction has always played that part. If you look at Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*...I think difference between the history historians write and the history fiction writers write is that fiction writers write about the human history. It’s about finding what happens to individuals, characters. I mean that’s what fiction is...exploring both dimensions, whereas history, the kind of history exploring causes, causality, is of no interest to me. (qtd. in Yesapogu n.p)

Like Rajkumar, King and Queen along with their three daughters are exiled to India and their migration causes a sudden shift in their status. Earlier, they used to remain inside their glass palace and they were mostly invisible to the local public. During their exile, the Royal Family was humiliated in front of many people around them including their servants, local public, army, and their daughters as well. Their exile also symbolizes the erasure of entire Burmese culture. After the King's exile, the country's economy was badly affected and Burmese lost their hold on their land due to the British occupation. Burma was famous for its huge teak plantation, but its economy declined immediately after the British occupation of the country. Queen Supayalat expresses her extreme disgust over this manipulation, and she blames British government for the loss of their land, dignity and injustice. The novel ends at Japanese invasion of Burma, in 1942, and, as a result of that, a huge number of people migrate to Calcutta. This fight, between Japanese forces and the British, creates unrest in Burmese people, who are confused to choose the right government for them. Out of no choice, they start migrating from their country to another land. Their migration also portrays a sudden fall in their fortune as, once, they used to be rich businessmen, but, later, they got poor and homeless.

5.2.4 MEMORY, DREAM AND FANTASY

Textual analysis highlights that the novel, while constructing the stories, relies heavily on memory, imagination, dreams, illusions, and fantastical elements. Lyotard supports such representation as he states, "Literature can disrupt established language games and ways of representing the world. There are things that are impossible to present in available language games, voices that are silenced in culture, ideas that cannot be formulated in rational communication" (qtd. in Malpas 47). The novel also makes maximum use of significant postmodern ploys such as intertextuality, narrative within narrative, the crisis of representation of truth, blurring of fact and fiction, and self-reflexivity. Multiple narrative moves to and fro with the help of dreams, visions, and images along with the real stories. They play with reality, invention, and fiction, moreover, the occasions of fantastical and supernatural elements are fused.

Through memory, various characters construct past in order to demonstrate the effects of various historical traumas on the lives of common men. Memory plays a

significant role in the subjective construction of identity and history, and it provides a platform to compare various perspectives of different people/characters. It helps them to form as well as ruin their relationships, such as, husband and wife, father and son, brother and sister, and, master and slave. The complication between the relation of Dolly and Rajkumar, and, Uma and Beni Prasad owes to the memories of their past. It shows that history is not only based on mere facts or documents, rather, it is linked with human experiences and to their stories of transformation. Similarly Queen Supayalat retells the achievements of their predecessor Burmese Kings to a Burmese minister Kinwan Mingyi. The text writes, “Queen had told the Kinwun Mingyi; they were kings, sovereigns, they’d defeated the Emperor of China, conquered Thailand, Assam, Manipur” (19). At other occasion, the text reveals the character of King Thebaw with the help of memory as it states, “As a youth he had been famous for his good looks: it had once been said of him that he was the handsomest Burman in the land. He’d been crowned at the age of twenty” (32). It also shows an ironic side of the king as he, after getting the rule, “had not stepped out of the palace in seven years” (34).

The novel highlights the importance of dream and its strong impact on the personal lives of the characters. In this way, it challenges the master narratives of science and objective reality, because it shows that dreams are significant to transform the lives of human beings. It also problematizes the reality by incorporating various fantastic elements as Patricia Waugh in her *Metafiction* views this aspect as, “Through the merging of dreams, visions, fantasies, hallucinatory states and pictorial representations, the concept of reality is problematized” (31). This idea of dream is connected to Dolly, one day she gets a divine calling, that, later on, proves true. The text writes that she “drifted into a dream. As so often in dreams, she understood exactly what it was trying to communicate. She screamed” (203). This fear, that the dream conveys, makes her leave the place immediately:

Rajkumar stumbled out, hugging herself with shaking arms. ‘what happened?’

‘We have to leave,’ she said. ‘We have to get Dinu to the hospital’ (203).

The text reveals that her dream does not remain an imagination only, rather, it turns out as a bitter reality. Their son, Dinu, gets handicapped due to polio after having a severe

fever. However this very incident shows that the metanarrative of science is installed and subverted when Dinu, initially, gets fine due to the medical treatment that he receives at the hospital. Similarly, in another dream, Dolly is visited by King Thebaw who warns her to think seriously about Dinu's health, and, after few days of this dream, the king dies.

Like Dolly, Saya John also believes in invisible warnings and divine clues, as he says, "Be careful, Rajkumar. Anthrax is a plague and it was to punish the pride that the Lord sent it down" (193). It shows that he believes that, a disease is caused due to God's curse, and, in this way, he negates any idea of scientific reason. The novel demonstrates that various characters do indulge in believing invisible things or ideas that happen to them without any cause and effect rationality. The common public go for signs, symbols, visions and divine clues, such as, "Strange things began to happen. There was news from Mandalay that the royal elephant had died. Everyone had known that the elephant would not long survive the fall of the dynasty. It seemed like a portent. (44). Such speculative thought pattern subverts the scientific knowledge that believes on concrete and visible reality and it also highlights the loving feelings of animals towards their masters. Moreover, it suggests that human actions of war or invasion do not harm a great number of people only, but they also cause adverse effects on the animals.

The emotions and feelings of the characters are also mixed up with the reality and fictionality, for instance, Dinu falls in love with Alison just by looking at her pictures. He reveals his obsession in these words, "I feel my pictures have helped me know you....I think I know you better than I've ever known anyone because this is the most intimate way that I can know any one" (358). For him, there is no distinction between real Alison, and her image, and, this very inclination blurs the difference between reality and fantasy. Another such occasion occurs when Kishen Singh, a soldier, while talking to his officer Arjun says, "All fear is not same. We don't know who to fear more? Sah'b, a man may fear the shadow of a gun just as much as the gun itself – and who is to say which is the more real?" (430). Here the text shows that the fear of the copy is more than the real entity, and this state refers towards postmodern hyper-reality.

The characters develop past events, by the help of their memory, and this construction of historical record subverts the totalizing narrative of traditional

historiography. These incidents often do not correspond with the recorded historical facts. It narrates the event of Indian uprising in 1857 when Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal king, was captured from Delhi. The blind emperor, along with his sons, took refuge near Humayun's tomb. The novel shows that British military came to capture the King, but the common public gathered around them in order to protest. The crowd was increasing in number and it was getting very threatening, "Finally, to keep the mob under control, the major had ordered the princes' execution. They had been pushed before the crowd, and their brains had been blown out in full public view" (38). Similarly, another character, Prince Thonzai, tells a story about Bahadur Shah Zafar, that when he was exiled to Rangoon then he used to live in a small house. The text writes, "One night the Prince slips off with a few of his friends and goes to look at the emperor's house. They'd found him sitting on his veranda, fingering his beads" (43). He was looking very old and sick. The Prince along with his team manages to see his glimpse only, but could not meet him.

5.2.5 THE GLASS PALACE AS A METAPHOR

Textual analysis highlights the significance of the glass palace that is the name of King Thebaw's first residence, in Burma. It is situated in the middle of Mandalay. Its shine and glamour reflects wealth of the Royal Family. Its walls are made up of white crystal that look like a mirror. Urmila Sanyal in her research study states, "The Glass Palace symbolizes the glory that was, before it lost its grandeur in the maze of violence and insanity which was brought about by a senseless war" (27). The laymen of Burma, including Rajkumar, constantly discuss this palace and they want to see and touch this huge structure. Its strong building also highlights the importance of architecture and castles making, and, in this way, it stands as a metaphor for King's strength. The text describes its majestic building that has nine roofs wrapped in golden glitters, "It's very large, much larger than it looks. And right at the center there is a vast hall that is like a great shaft of light, with shining crystal walls and mirrored ceilings. People call it the Glass Palace" (7).

The glass palace does not represent only a poetic device, but it also gives a clue to Victorian history, Sahdev Luhar and Madhurita Choudhary in *Constructing a New Canon of Post-1980s Indian English Fiction* state, "The Glass Palace of a Burmese King is the

symbolic representation of the Crystal Palace built by Queen Victoria in England. The Crystal Palace stands for colonial exploitation. Thus, the title of the novel is an indication of colonial exploitation” (131-132). However it proves fragile as it could not save King and his rule, rather he gets defeated at the hands of British and is exiled. It proves no more than a dream as the King observes, “This is how power is eclipsed: in a moment of vivid realism, between the waning of one fantasy of governance and its replacement by the next (36). Ghosh, through incorporation of long passages, provides an ironic commentary on the history of teak cultivation, for instance, Young Matthew tells Rajkumar:

“There’s going to be a war. Father says they want all the teak in Burma. The King won’t let them have it so they’re going to do away with him.’

Rajkumar gave a shout of laughter. ‘A war over wood? Who’s ever heard of such a thing?’ (15).

These textual lines reflect that the war was waged over teak woods, and this revelation, falsifies the legitimacy because it is not based on human progress, rather materialistic gains and to achieve the Royal glass palace was one of them. However, soon after the British invasion, the glass palace becomes open for everyone, and the most shocking thing happens when king’s own men, women, and the staff start stealing things. The text describes in these words, “Everywhere people were intently at work, men and women, armed with axes and das; they were hacking at gem-studded Ook offering boxes; digging patterned gemstones from the marble floor” (33) Everyone was in hurry to steal some precious thing for himself/herself and, somewhere, a woman shouts, “The soldiers—they’ve been looting the palace. We’re trying to save a few things for ourselves” (27)

The invasion of the glass palace subverts the roles of powerful/powerless as it turns the Royal Family into prisoners and, ironically, as compare to them, now a common man stands powerful. Now nobody needs any permission to enter the King’s residence but “Just one day earlier the crime of entering the palace would have resulted in summary execution” (30). The laymen start observing the entire situation, and they want to go near Queen and see her expressions. The text writes, “A day before, she could have had a commoner imprisoned for so much as looking her directly in the face. Today all the city’s

scum had come surging into the palace and she was powerless to act against them” (29). After the successful invasion of the Royal Palace, British brought many changes in the glass palace, they converted few rooms into club, sports room, and a chapel. In order to maintain their control, they also deploy army units in order to terrorize the local people by showing them some worst examples of brutal violence. British invasion forcibly changes everything and converts it into a British’s province. They destroy the royal sanctity of the glass palace and “Courtly Mandalay was now a bustling commercial hub; resources were being exploited with an energy and efficiency hitherto undreamt of” (58). The text highlights a shift in the physical location of the Royal Family that takes the reader from Burma to “A place by the name of Ratnagiri” (52). This journey also reflects the spiritual transformation of the couple of King and Queen, for instance, now they start thinking differently on various issues.

The novel shows that the glass palace is also a studio, owned by Dinu, and, here, he displays many pictures taken by many renowned photographers. Jaya asks Illongo for Dinu’s address and he tells her about his studio, “He held the paper out to her and she took it. The sheet was smudged and crumpled. She peered at it closely, deciphering the letters. The first words that met her eyes were: ‘The Glass Palace: Photo Studio’” (502). Many people visit his studio to see a pictorial account of history, and, through this description, Ghosh gives a touch of artistic dimension to the historical incidents, and it also relates historiography and its representation through the images.

5.2.6 MULTIPLE STORIES

The novel, as a postmodern fiction, contains sub plots and multiple stories, which connect the characters with the main theme. They create little stories related to issues of culture, religion, and class, and their personal narratives run parallel to the national events. For example, an important subplot revolves around the life story of Burmese Royal family, who, after the exile, lives in the Indian culture under the close monitoring of British government. The family gets involved with the local people and their culture. The Queen very often takes a ride out to Ratnagiri local market, along with her daughters, and “People would crowd into the streets to look at her as she rode by, but she never seemed to notice anyone or anything, sitting as straight as a rod” (67). Similarly, their

three princess also undergo a transformation, “In their early years in India, the Princesses usually dressed in Burmese clothes—aingyis and htameins. But as the years passed their garments changed” (66). They start wearing Indian dresses like saris, which are not very expensive, but the simple ones. They adopt local hair styles and often wear oil on their hairs like common girls of the town. They also learn and speak local languages such as Hindustani and Marathi, and only their parents speak Burmese.

The text shows that it is not only the cultural impact that influences the Royal Family, but it also transforms their behavior, feelings, and emotions. Through their actions, the King’s daughters challenge the legitimacy of hierarchal relationships, which were earlier followed by their parents. For example, the elder princess’ love affair and pregnancy with Sawant forms an important turn in the story that is related to the main theme of power. The collector of Ratnagiri, Beni Prasad Dey, an Oxford graduate, is assigned to investigate the matter of Princess’ pregnancy and subsequent marriage to Sawant. He as a representative of British government wants to maintain the practice of class hierarchies intact, but Princess’ affair with their driver, Sawant, questions these class systems. It is done because, as per the government’s instructions, the Royals were not allowed to marry below their status.

Like Princess, the Queen also subverts the dichotomy of superior/inferior relationships, and she, instead of getting embarrassed at her daughter’s decision to marry a low-class Hindu, blames the government. As a postmodern subject, she counters the discourse of the powerful, and, in this way, she does not surrender to their grand narratives of class and cast system. She, as former Queen, still retains her power, and manages to reverse the roles as the collector stands meek and powerless in front of her. Hutcheon, in the same way, regards that “Discourse is not a stable entity rather it changes its form and significance, depending on who is speaking” (*A Poetics* 185). Queen laments at the loss that her family has faced due to government’s selfish motives. She says:

Yes, we who ruled the richest land in Asia are now reduced to this. This is what they have done to us; this is what they will do to all Burma. They took our kingdom, promising roads and railways, and ports, but take my words, this is how

it will end. In a few decades, the wealth will be gone—all the gems, the timber and the oil—and then they too will leave. (5)

These above mentioned textual lines show that the government's efforts to control the queen's family are ruined. Queen challenges the legitimacy of their decision and law, by exposing their manipulative policies, at their face. Therefore, in order to avoid the failure, Beni Prasad expresses his reservations over the possible marriage of the elder Princess with their coachman, but Queen counters him as, "English alone understood liberty, we are told ; they do not put kings and princes to death; they run through laws. If that is so, why has King Thebaw never brought to trial?" (150). This unsuccessful task depresses Beni Prasad as, in the later part of the novel, it is revealed through Uma Dey that he commits suicide as a result of his failure to control this matter. In this way, he gets nothing out of sheer obedience to British rulers, Uma says, "He had wielded immense power as a District Collector, yet paradoxically, the position had brought him nothing but unease and uncertainty" (186). In this way, different stories are linked and interlinked in the backdrop of bigger narratives of history. Maggie Ann Bowers in *Magic(al) Realism* states, "In fact, postmodernist thinking about history usually emphasizes the lack of absolute historical truth and casts doubt over the existence of fact by indicating its link with narrative and stories" (72-73).

Like his family, the King also undergoes a transformation as he assumes a permanent sitting position in the balcony where he use to spend time in the evening. He starts observing the fleet that crosses the bay on daily basis. Though "He was never aware of counting the boats that set sail in the morning, but somehow he always knew exactly how many there were" (68). One day, he notices something different and "he could tell that the number wasn't right, that one was missing" (ibid). He immediately asks Sawant to check as "there was a storm at sea" (ibid). Sawant goes out in the village and the news of this storm is confirmed to him, and, this incident, places a title on the emperor of being "a watchful king" (ibid). From then onwards, the King becomes a source of the reliable information for the local people on various matters. For instance, it is he, who predicts the monsoons as, "One morning each year he would wake to see a faint but unmistakable deepening in the color of the line that bisected his window" (69). He gets the sign of rain

and he announces it to Sawant who goes out and yells, “The rains are here. Quick. Seal the shutters, put out the buckets and take everything off the floor” (ibid). The news of rain spreads in the whole town and people start taking care of their houses, animals, and harvest. The text writes, “Grandmothers would rush to remove their pickles from the sun, and children would run cheering from their houses” (ibid).

Like the story about the Royal Family, the novel comprises of other sub plots and these family narratives are related to the main plot. The small/local stories are based on relationships of friendship, love, and marriage in the wake of national and political happenings. Different characters form relationships as Dolly contemplates, “why people arranged marriages for their children: it was a way of shaping the future to the past, of cementing one’s ties to one’s memories and to one’s friends. . .how wonderful it might be, the bringing together of so many stories” (199). Her younger son Dinu marries Saya John’s grand-daughter, and her elder son Neel marries Manju who is Uma’s niece. The marriages of these families keep their memories and stories alive, and this is also a phenomenon that connects the present time with the past.

Similarly, Rajkumar, throughout his life, remains a spectator of the rising conflicts between Burmese, English, Hindus, and Muslims. In fact, his personal story is related to the official history as, he, being a child, narrates the impact of various political events on his life. Sometimes, he presents an actual record of the events, while, on other occasions, he seems to exaggerate the story. Textual analysis shows that he is seriously affected by the happening of certain political and historical events. He describes his bitter experience of exile in these words, “It was hard to think of leaving Burma, I have learned in my life that there is no certainty about things” (310). He loses his father due to the spread of a dreadful disease in their town named Akyab. Then his mother dies too, and he becomes an orphan at a very young age, and failing to get any reasonable job he migrates to Burma. After things go wrong in Burma, he, along with many other homeless people, loses his job and shelter. In fact, his downfall shows that the exile of the Royal Family affected everyone in terms of their land and job securities.

The manipulative treatment of Indian soldiers, by British military institution, forms another sub plot of the novel. Arjun and Hardy Singh, two Indians, are exploited,

and, throughout their career, they remain confused about their loyalties. In fact, their divided behavior subverts the binary of professional/unprofessional attitude. In one of their conversations, they reflect on their doubts as:

“Arjun asked Hardey: are we mercenaries, what do you think.’ Hardy shrugged. ‘All soldiers are mercenaries today. It’s because a mercenary’s hands obeys someone else’s head. Because, yaar, in other words, a mercenary is a buddhu, a fool” (347).

Their discussion can be related to Lyotard’s philosophy that suggests that the body of a worker, soldier, a female, a child, a slave, a prisoner, and a person from an inferior culture is subjected to objectification. Similarly, these soldiers are controlled and made to obey the commands without any hesitation. Arjun and Hardy question the British military’s claim of civilization, and they expose that it is only implemented to spread terror, and gain some materialistic benefits. They are shocked to see the numberless killings of innocent people, which were done in the name of military operations. There are other soldiers too, who resist this military power and “Troops were said to be resisting transfer orders, a Sikh unit – a squadron of the Central India horse – was said to have mutinied. They had lain down their weapons and refused to board the ship that was to take them to North Africa” (313). These soldiers, through their rebellious behavior, question the military authority that objectifies them and controls them with terror, through its prison system. Through certain strategies, it spreads fear, for instance, “Two men had been executed. A dozen others had been exiled to the prisons of the Andaman Islands” (313) instills terror among all the soldiers.

Like majority of the Indian soldiers, Arjun is also controlled, and, due to that he feels lost and uncertain of his professional commitment. The text highlights, “He had never experienced the slightest doubt about his personal sovereignty. But if it was true that his life had somehow been moulded by acts of the power of which he was unaware” (431). His cousin, Dinu, also exposes the misuse of power at the hands of the military institution. He, in a conversation with Alison, expresses that military officers do not possess a free mind, rather they are trained to perform certain tasks only. He says:

All their lives they have been trained to obey....their parents, their teachers, the military...this is what their education teaches: the habit of obedience...when they come here...they find no one will scold them for what they say. (508)

The novel combines personal and national histories, and, in this way, it challenges the dichotomy of the objective/subjective narratives. It explores the tragic history of British Indian military officers who were fighting against Japanese forces in Malaysia during World War Second. Unlike a conventional historian's reliance on some major facts, Ghosh's fictional response records the voices of the excluded people. He describes the soldiers' sufferings and that how they were used as a tool, by the British authority. Saya John remembers Indian soldiers, when he used to work in a hospital, that they used to come there after getting wounded. He remembers that most of them were in their early twenties, and, sadly, money was the only charm for them in their profession, though they were never given enough of it. He says, "Chinese peasants would never allow themselves to be used to fight other people's war with so little profit for themselves" (29).

On the other hand, the novel shows that many soldiers, who belong to different nations, prefer to obey their British masters. The text writes, "They were from the Hazara Regiment and the 1st Madras Pioneers. The Indians were seasoned, battle-hardened troops. The Hazaras, recruited from the Afghan border, had proved their worth to the British over decades of warfare, in India and abroad" (23). The description of these soldiers' loyalty is juxtaposed with Arjun and Hardy's negative sentiments against their masters. While there are some other soldiers who don't bother to attach their loyalties to any party and they work just like a machine. They obey their masters without having any feelings of patriotism or revenge against any kind of enemy, and, ironically, they don't know that who their real enemy is? The text writes, "The crowd's initial nervousness melted as the first squad of soldiers marched past with their shouldered rifles. There was no rancor on the soldiers' faces, no emotion at all. None of them so much as glanced at the crowd" (24). Saya discusses this state of indifference with Rajkumar when he shares his experience with these soldiers, and on the basis of which he came to know that they don't know anything other than killing others. Rajkumar understands their psychology as he says, "They're just tools. Without minds of their own. They count for nothing" (27). Their discussion exposes the manipulative and dehumanizing strategies of various institutions that are employed in order

to control a common man to use his labour for certain materialistic gains. Like Rajkumar, Jaya explores the history of Burmese famous freedom fighter Aung San Suu Kye, and, in this way, she highlights the significant role of women in the society. She also explores the past of her uncle, Dinu, and her grandparents, in the aftermath of the Partition of India.

Through these short stories, the novel incorporates irony, a postmodern literary device that mocks the modern essentials. Linda Hutcheon claims that irony performs two functions i.e. it refers to intertextuality as well as it has a significant pragmatic value. She suggests that in metafiction, it is used as a tool to examine various ideologies and their subversion. Postmodern perspective on irony is different from the classical concept that considers it as a pessimistic notion, while here, it creates a level of uncertainty or an 'edge'. Irony, uses language as a discursive strategy, and it considers two participants as important, that is, "the ironist", and the "the intended audiences"" (Hutcheon *Irony's Edge* 10). Similarly, the novel depicts the King's exile in an ironic manner to represent the gaps in the ruling strategies of the powerful authority. It shows that, after his exile, the Royal Family is transported to Ratnagiri through Mandalay, Rangoon, and Madras. Their journey represents a mental, political, economic, social, cultural, and personal transformation. King's displacement takes away his power from him, he says, "It wouldn't suit, all this moving about. They were not a portable people, the Burmese" (44). This line is ironic as King, during his rule, has never met his people, rather it was queen who dealt with these national matters. They both were class conscious and they even did not allow a commoner to enter into their residency.

During his rule in Burma, the King exploited many Indian laborers for the purpose of business and commerce. Textual analysis highlights that he along with his Queen waged many wars against their enemies in order to occupy certain territories. They committed atrocities in various forms, such as, at one occasion Queen orders her soldiers to kill seventy nine new born baby boys in order to crush the threat for the throne. Similarly, she is always occupied with a sense of superiority complex, and, even after the exile, she keeps on exercising her control in her home. She expresses a variety of emotions in order to control her staff as, "The Queen would get very impatient,

sometimes she would shout, and that would be worse still. The terrified ayah would fall over” (48). She maintains a hierarchal relationship with her servants, common people, and government representatives. She keeps the ritual of ‘shiko’ effective even in Ratnagiri, and the visitors are not allowed to turn their backs on Queen. Dolly describes this painful experience of the Indian women while performing shiko, who were assigned to look after the Royal family as helpers. The text writes, “When she watched them lumbering around on their knees, huffing and puffing or getting themselves tangled in their clothes and falling flat on their faces” (47). Ironically, Queen accepts her elder daughter’s love affair, and, later on, her pregnancy with a low caste Indian Sawant. Her smooth acceptance reflects a transformation in her behavior as well as a deviation from the stereotypical Burmese culture. It also questions the British government’s strong desire to preserve the purity of the royal blood of Burma.

At other instance, the story of the King’s exile is ironically narrated by Rajkumar, who, as a child, witnesses this event. In fact, he always felt a kind of attraction towards the palace, and he often used to inquire about the palace from the Royal staff. The outward beauty and calmness of the glass palace increased his desire to see it from inside. However he remains unable to enter in the palace because of his low social status, and he knows that “the crime of entering the palace would have resulted in summary execution” (34). Soon after the exile, Burmese laymen gather outside the glass palace and they start looting all the precious jewels. Their interest in material demonstrates that they were not ruled by some kind hearted ruler, therefore, the King’s loss does not matter to them. At other occasion, the novel reveals racial discrimination that victimizes others, for instance, Arjun and Hardy, during their posting at Singapore, go to a swimming pool, but, to their surprise, they are not allowed to swim with other races. Text writes it in an ironical way:

Following Kumar’s (their Singaporean army friend) lead, Arjun and Hardy jumped in. Within a few minutes, they found themselves alone: the pool had emptied as soon as they entered the water.

‘I should have warned you about this,’ Kumar said, with a mischievous smile, the clubs actually put up signs on their doors saying, “No Asiatics allowed”.

Arjun laughed. ‘We are meant to die for this country – but we can’t use the pools.
(345)

These lines show that they both, even being military officers and defenders of the country, are considered as ‘untouchables’ by the same country, for whom, they fight and die. Their example clearly exposes the existing gaps in the Western narratives of equality, justice and humanism. Similarly, the novel brings into light the violent reaction of Indians and Muslims of the Indo-Pak subcontinent against the rulers during the Partition event. The British government excluded, suppressed, and marginalized them. However, the novel does not discuss it in detail, but it gives its brief reference in order to question the legitimacy of this tragedy, and to expose the violence and injustice that it has done to the common people.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The present chapter has highlighted postmodern fictionality in *The Glass Palace* and it revealed that the novel employs strategies of intertextuality, irony, and various subplots. It is self-referential and self-conscious about its own status as artifact. It contests the myth of objective truth by demonstrating that reality is subjectively constructed through language. It highlights that the characters are unusual instead of being focused and rational human beings as they are developed in fragments. The study has also found that through multiple stories the novel destabilizes the uniformity of meaning and contests the concept of a totalizing plot.

Next chapter is based on the textual analysis of *Burnt Shadows* and it captures postmodernist occasions regarding overlapping of fictionality and history in the sense conveyed by Linda Hutcheon and Jean Francois Lyotard.

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *BURNT SHADOWS* AS HISTORIOGRAPHIC METAFICTION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores *Burnt Shadows* in order to trace the postmodernist occasions produced as a result of a fusion of fictionality and history. Textual analysis traces these instances individually in separate historical events that are divided in five long chapters. It also examines the specific strategies incorporated in the novel in order to re-write the past events including World War Two, Nagasaki Atomic Bomb Attack, and the Partition 1947. Moreover it explores the novel as historiographic metafiction that connects the past with the present through the depiction of the events such as 9/11 World Trade Tower Attack, Pakistan's Nuclear Explosion, and War on terror. It brings into light the fictional record of the horrible consequences of all these events and their impact on the characters' lives with the help of their individual stories. The study also highlights that such fictional depiction of multiple historical traumas that are repressed in the sub-conscious mind of the victims (direct or indirect) find an outlet in this postmodern genre that is known as historiographic metafiction.

6.2 *BURNT SHADOWS*

The novel is divided into five parts namely Prologue, The Yet Unknowing World, Veiled Birds, Part-Angel Warriors and The Speed Necessary to Replace Loss. The story begins in the final days of World War Two in Japan, and then it moves to the Partition 1947 in India, Pakistan in 1980s, New York after 9/11 September World Trade Tower attacks, and finally, Afghanistan in the backdrop of US bombing. The characters belong to different nations and continents and the novel records their attitudes, beliefs and

perceptions regarding various issues. It also highlights their responses, reactions, and their role during the worst historical events. It presents a formal experimentation as well as a contextualized investigation in order to re-examine the past. The first chapter is set in Nagasaki, second in the subcontinent, third in Pakistan while fourth is set in New York. Each section deals with the overwhelming impact of a single historical trauma/event through episodes, flashbacks and memory. This style, of merging subplots, refers towards another significant strategy of nonlinear narrative where time overlaps and repeats in various ways.

The story is based on a Japanese protagonist named Hiroko Tanaka who keeps on changing her location due to various historical tragedies. The first part, of the novel, is about her memories of childhood, family, her first love and the worst event of her life i.e. Nagasaki atomic bomb attack. She is first seen in Nagasaki, in August 1945, where she serves as a schoolteacher and, then, later on, she joins a munition factory as a worker. Her father is known as a traitor because of his severe reservations against the rulers and kamikaze militarism. Hiroko happens to meet a German man named Konrad Weiss, and they both share some common interests and the love of languages is one of them. Finally, they fall in love with each other, but their romance remains incomplete as Konrad gets killed in the atomic bomb attack.

Beginning from Japan, later on, Hiroko moves to India after the Nagasaki atomic bomb attacks, and here she meets different people from different cultures. She meets a Muslim man named Sajjad, and then, after mutual consensus, they marry and move to Pakistan. Unfortunately, the Partition riots displace Sajjad from Delhi in the same way as Nagasaki did to Hiroko, and they move to Karachi. They are blessed with a son, Raza, who, like his mother, is a linguist. He joins Afghanistan's training camp with his friend Abdullah. In the later part of the novel, Sajjad is killed and Hiroko, being insecure of the nuclear posturing between Pakistan and India, once again moves to New York. In the final section, she is living there with Harry's daughter Kim.

Some other characters also play important role in the development of the story such as Elizabeth, Kim, Harry and James. The plot revolves around political and historical tales of these characters' experiences. It constructs these little narratives

through incorporation of various postmodern tendencies such as multiple identities, self-reflexivity, double intertextuality and storytelling. The various locations comprise of countries like Japan, Tokyo, India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and US. In all these settings, the characters, time frame, and stories are different, however, few characters such as Hiroko, Sajjad, Elizabeth, Kim, Harry, and Raza remain constant.

The discontinuous narration of history challenges the uni-directional representation of the past, and it also plays a riddle to the reader's understanding. S/he needs to solve it by collecting various fragments of individual stories in order to get a coherent understanding. Moreover, the narration provides pluralistic historical versions and, in this way, it explores the gaps left by the national history. Therefore, as a blend of history and fiction, the novel problematizes the past and highlights that history is not fixed or absolute, rather it is always in the process of making. Hiroko remains a constant character, throughout the story, while all the other secondary characters also make the important part of the plot. The characters subvert the stable identity of the modern subject who is rational, enlightened, committed and disciplined. He/she also adheres to social norms and shows a firm belief in science and knowledge.

Hiroko, Sajjad, Konrad, Elizabeth, Raza, and Kim are ex-centric in multiple ways with reference to class, nation, race and language. They are multi-layered, unstable and complex, and they do become emotional and irresponsible at certain point of time. They challenge the dominating meta-narratives of science, truth, knowledge, humanism, history and colonization. Each character appears like an onion, where, with each layer, he/she becomes a different self who plays a different role in various cultural and social contexts. Shamsie treats all the characters equally without adhering to any distinction of superior/inferior, rational/emotional, sane/insane, and adult/child. Unlike the modern fiction, the characters possess their own subjective identities, stories, and life experiences. The novel, as historiographic metafiction, exhibits various characteristics in order to merge fictionality and historical discourse together.

6.2.1 THE PROLOGUE

The novel is based on a circular plot as it starts from the prologue that is thematically connected to the last chapter. The prologue is written in the present tense and in Italics,

while the rest of the story is narrated in the past tense. However, the story predominantly revolves around the character of Hiroko, but the prologue is mainly about Raza. Raza is presented as a prisoner whose name is not revealed initially, while, in the last chapter, it is disclosed that he is Raza Konrad Ashraf who is in Guantanamo Bay. Similarly, the prologue also poses questions such as ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘what’ in order to investigate the past. In fact, it is prologue, from where the actual story begins and it starts from the point when Raza tries to remember that how he has reached at CIA prison?. As Clements states:

Burnt Shadows, opens with a man shackled, interned and anticipating receipt of ‘an orange jumpsuit’. But there is no sense of vindication here, nor is the reader given any means by which to “know” how to interpret the scene that Shamsie’s ‘Prologue’ frames. We are confronted only with the consequences of condemnation: subjugation, confusion and dehumanisation; and with the answerless question: ‘How did it come to this?’ (123)

The last line of the prologue “How did it come to this” establishes a link between past and the present. Later on, the novel reveals that he is sent to the prison when Kim, mistakenly, points him out as the culprit as she “identifies the wrong man in the parking lot” (363). Her silly action embodies the fact that a little mistake can make a huge difference. Her hasty decision also symbolizes the careless and wrong decisions made by different nations. Though their decisions appear justified from their perspectives, but, actually, they bring huge disaster, bloodshed, and destruction to humanity. They also continue to effect the coming generations, but, ironically, the decision makers never realize their mistakes. This literary construction, of separate worlds, represents human relationship in the postmodern transnational world as Shamsie comments on this multiple settings as:

When I wrote *Burnt Shadows*, I originally thought it was going to be a novel about Karachi but then it completely changed and ended up being about a lot of other places. What I discovered is there is something interesting about writing about places you don’t know. (Bilal 136)

The prologue depicts Raza's detention (that actually takes place at the end of the novel), while the actual story begins with his mother Hiroko's traumatic experience of Nagasaki atomic bomb attack on 9th August 1945. The novel integrates fragmentation, discontinuity, and displacement as a reflection of the broken self. It undermines the concepts of cause and effect and the notion of rational characters as Asma Zahoor states, "In the same way, whatever the good intentioned ex and neo-colonizers like Burton and Harry have done to favor Raza or his family, also resulted in disaster, the highest of which is seen in the prologue where he is presented as a prisoner ready to be transported to Guantanamo Bay" (17).

Raza is an intelligent boy with plain physical features and very fair complexion. He inherits the love for different languages from his mother Hiroko. Textual analysis reveals that Hiroko's Japanese identity and the atomic bomb experience makes Raza feel uncomfortable throughout the novel. This also cast a negative impact on his relationships as, once, he falls in love with a girl named Salma and he proposes her, but, to his surprise, she refuses, by saying that he may be a deformed man because he is a child of a bomb survivor. She further suggests him that he should not disclose his identity to anyone in America whenever he goes there. It seems ironic that Pakistan was Raza's birthplace, but he was known by Nagasaki atomic bomb attack, and was excluded by his very own society. On the other hand, Harry promises him an admission in any American university, but, unfortunately, he steps back and his refusal comes to Raza as a greater shock. His disappointment subverts the metanarrative of American dream, by exposing, that it is a land that just offers an illusion of progress and development, but actually does not give a chance to all. Therefore, in a desperate mood, Raza visits his friend Abdullah who is an Afghan boy, and his student as well. Raza gives English lessons to him, and, in return, he learns from him the skill to operate rifle and weapons. Abdullah tells him that, very soon, he will go to a Mujahedeen camp and Raza shows his willingness to join him. Therefore he goes there, but, after some days, his father dies, and he has to come back. His father's sudden death makes him feel lonely and homeless.

Raza's destiny is shaped by many characters such as Hiroko, Sajjad, Kim and Abdullah. He is also confused due to the strict categorizations of nation, culture, and

language. His imprisonment is related to many characters, and Abdullah is one of them who get displaced because of the Russian Invasion, but earlier he used to live in a Refugee camp in Peshawar with his family. Later on, he comes to Karachi in order to supply arms, and then, at the age of fourteen, he joins a training camp for Mujahedeen. Abdullah goes to America in order to earn a better living for his family and there he becomes a taxi driver. After 9/11 incident, he was stereotyped as a young anti-American Afghan Muslim who can be dangerous for America. His brother, Ismail, requests Raza to help him cross the border, so that he can enter Canada, and from there he would go back to Afghanistan. Raza asks Kim to help Abdullah cross the border, but she is also torn between her perceptions and actions.

Initially, Kim helps Abdullah to get an escape from American police (FBI), who falsely consider him a terrorist, but, later, she herself asks them to arrest him. She does so, because she suspects him to be the real killer of her father, while Raza, being a loyal friend of Abdullah, pretends to be him (Abdullah), hence, the police arrests him. At last, Kim realizes her mistake, and she calls the police and requests them to set Raza free because he is not the man they wanted. She also asks them to punish her for providing wrong information, but, ironically, the policeman refuses and says, "There's no law against reporting someone on a hunch" (363). In this way, Raza is sent to Guantanamo Bay, and his unjust arrest and imprisonment subverts the metanarrative of equality, justice, Enlightenment, freedom, and human rights. Through his story, the novel looks at Guantanamo Bay with irony as it is a prison owned by the super power in order to detain Muslims and interrogate them without following any rules related to human rights. It also shows that, in this prison, there is no place for the words like honor, value, morality, humanity, and love, rather, here, the journey starts with a trauma and ends in a disaster. The novel has a circular plot that lacks a neat ending, and the last chapter connects with the prologue that leaves certain questions unanswered. It provides no solutions, no hopes, no strategies, rather, it puts the reader in an absurd reality. In short, the last chapter does not give any definite conclusion about the story and the characters.

6.3 MULTIPLICITY OF HISTORY(S)

The novel generates plural perspectives with respect to various historical events and it presents diverse viewpoints in order to challenge the unified approach of traditional history. It attempts to retrieve a sense of the past, and such representation involves a degree of fictionality that constructs the small histories. In the same sense, the novel prefers its literary aspect over referential quality, and, while narrating the past, Shamsie shows her presence in the form of personal comments. She, as an author, is at once removed from the text, and then, she appears again in order to construct the imaginative stories. This style challenges the reader's perception about the role of fiction as it transgresses the border between history and fictional construction. Hutcheon states:

Historiographic metafiction shows fiction to be historically conditioned and history to be discursively structured, and in the process manages to broaden the debate about the ideological implications of the Foucauldian conjunction of power and knowledge – for readers and for history itself as a discipline. (“The New Novel” 843)

The first section explores Nagasaki atomic bomb attack incident that occurred in 1945, from various viewpoints such as, from the mouthpiece of German, Japanese, Indian, Muslim and American characters. It is constructed with the help of memory and fictionality, and it also points towards the problematic representation of the past. It manifests the postmodern fact that history cannot be represented accurately; rather, it can be constructed through different discourses that can only represent reality, but cannot claim the reality. The characters like Sajjad and Hiroko possess a strong obsession to know the past and various reasons behind different tragedies, and also they are eager to know that how to avoid any such disaster in the future. I divide this section into following sub-headings in order to discuss each historical event separately.

6.3.1 NAGASAKI ATOMIC BOMBING 1945

The novel constructs a fictionalized account of the worst tragedy ever happened to humanity in August 1945, when Nagasaki, Japan, was turned into ashes. It records the impact of immense destruction that was caused in the form of countless killings,

displacements, hazardous radioactive rays, psychological traumas, and devastation of eco-environment. Textual analysis highlights the significance of this historical event in the lives of many characters who happened to witness it and face its negative impact. In this way, the personal histories of the characters are connected to the national and global contexts. It provides various perspectives based on the individual memory of various characters including Hiroko, Konrad, Raza, Sajjad and Elizabeth. The protagonist of the novel, Hiroko, presents a direct and personal commentary on this tragic incident of atomic bomb attack. Through her character, Shamsie explores history from a lay man's point of view, and her narrative contests the conventional history's claim of taking the humanity towards progress. It also deconstructs the myth that traditional history records the project of civilization and attributes it with some logic. The horrors which are related to this incident deconstruct the assumptions as Hutcheon states, "According to Jean-Francois Lyotard, the postmodern condition is characterized by an active distrust of the "master narratives" that have always made sense of our world" ("Postmodern Paratextuality" 306).

The characters demonstrate distrust on the metanarratives of traditional history, war, and progress. Through Hiroko's narrative account of Nagasaki atomic bombing, the novel presents the local responses towards various decisions made by different governments. She is born in Japan and she lives there until this bomb attack happens. She reconstructs the past by constructing various mini-stories on the basis of her own experience, and she depicts that few characters do not idealize these nationalist strategies; rather, they react and show their resistance. Her father is one such character, who disagrees with the narratives of nationalism and patriotism. He does not worship the institution of military, rather he doubts its transparency, the text writes:

Matsui Tanaka had been walking past a neighborhood house and saw the cherry blossom festooning it to commemorate the sacrifice of the fifteen-year-old boy who had died in a kamikaze attack. Without saying a word to Hiroko who was walking silently beside him Matsui Tanaka darted forward, pulling out a book of matches from the pocket of his trousers, and set fire to the cherry blossom. (13)

The text shows that he does not hesitate to display his anger towards anyone, who blindly follows the slogan of patriotism. He transfers this questioning nature to his daughter as well, “Hiroko once said she learnt how to question the world’s rules from her father’s example rather than his instruction” (19). Later part of the novel reveals that Hiroko is constantly blamed for being his daughter that creates a distance between her and Konrad. The text writes, “Ever since Germany’s surrender he has told her it isn’t safe for her – a traitor’s daughter – to spend too much time with him” (17). However the theme, of the novel, is not taken up wholly with violence, rather it also keeps the faith in humanity alive. It depicts that various characters come closer despite their national, religious, and cultural differences. Hiroko and Konrad, even being Japanese and German nationals respectively, come closer to each other. They fall in love, but their relationship turns into a constant torture as “they have been meeting only twice a week, for an hour at a time, always out in public, sometimes trailed by the military police” (18). They plan to get marry, but, unfortunately, Konrad dies in the bomb attack along with millions of other innocent people. The text narrates this incident in these words:

Hiroko steps out on to the verandah. She looks out towards the mountains, and everything is more beautiful to her than it was early this morning. Nagasaki is more beautiful to her than ever before. She turns her head and sees the spires of Urakami Cathedral, which Konrad is looking up at when he notices a gap open between the clouds. Sunlight streams through, pushing the clouds apart even further. And then the world goes white. (23)

Her metaphorical description of bomb attack as “the world goes white” fuses fiction and history. It also shows that she does not focus on the narration of a realistic account of history, rather her depiction concentrates on ‘the poetic awakening of the people who figured in those events’ (Dhar 12). In the aftermath of Nagasaki atomic bombing, she gets displaced from her native place to India, but she does not get a cultural shock after getting exposed to an entirely different tradition and custom. Her traumatic displacement questions the legitimacy of historical decision of World War Two that was fought in the name of progress. Her geographical movement, from Japan to India, transforms her experience and provides her with a chance to live with people belonging to different

cultural and social set ups. As a postmodern subject, she use to remember her horrible past in the form of flashbacks, especially, when she happens to see the burnt shadows marks on her back. The story flows back and forth in order to portray her distant past, and she also keeps on finding the justifications of Nagasaki tragedy. Textual analysis reveals that she remains unable to get out of this trauma that engulfs her present as well. The novel does not present history in the form of mere facts or figures, rather it dramatizes the past events with the help of memory. Hiroko re-tells her painful past through memory as, “Even now, she could feel her face burning at the memory” (180). After the attack, the bodies were fully burnt and they were unable to be identified or buried. She could not find the body of her lover, but she just assumes a shadow as the final or symbolic remains of his dead body. In this way, she arranges a proper burial, she shares this painful experience with Sajjad as:

But there was no sign of any God there, no scent of mangoes, just of burning. Days -, no weeks – after the bomb and everything still smelt of burning. I walked through it – those strangely angled trees above the melted stone, somehow that’s what struck me the most – and I looked for Konrad’s shadow. I found something that I believed was it. On a rock. Such a lanky shadow. I sent a message to Yoshi Watanabe and together we rolled that rock to the international cemetery, and buried it. (77)

No matter wherever she goes, she carries the horrible memory of Nagasaki with her mentally as well as physically, in the form of three bird shaped burn marks on her back. These marks were accidently printed on her body, because she was wearing her mother’s silk kimono at the time of this tragic happening. This constant and lasting influence, of Nagasaki, on her life reflects the fact that history is not a bygone event, rather it is very much relevant in the present and future time. Hiroko’s grief stays with her permanently as the novel writes, “She had thought Nagasaki had taught her everything to know about the loss but in truth, it was the only horror with which she had become completely familiar” (239). Her experience becomes a never ending mental agony because “She’s lost everyone” (56).

Through her memory, she recalls every moment and shares it with Elizabeth, she says:

I keep on thinking of Nagasaki.....my father, Ilse, I saw him in the last seconds of his life, and I thought he was something unhuman. He was covered in scales. No skin, no hair, no cloths, just scales. No one, no one in the world should ever have to see their father covered in scales (100).

The novel investigates the ontological issues by questioning the legitimacy of doing massacres, bombs, wars, and conflicts. It also tries to find out if there was some other way to avoid this destruction?. The characters get doubtful towards the reality behind the notions of patriotism, nationalism, justice, and progress. Hiroko plays with the historical facts and provides her own commentary, such as, she tells Elizabeth, “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” (99). This textual extract exhibits the postmodern approach that believes in telling different stories, rather than relying on a totalizing account.

Hiroko constructs multiple narratives related to this event, and, at one point, she refers to her country’s surrender that she comes to know, when she herself was lying on hospital bed as a war wounded patient. The text writes, “She was dismayed by how high-pitched and feeble the Emperor’s voice was. She felt betrayed by that voice more than by anything it said” (290). Like her, majority of the characters as common citizens do not trust the policies of various governments because they are aware of the selfish motives behind such moves. Through depiction of various incidents, the novel focuses on the negative consequences of Nagasaki atomic bombing and it also suggests future precautions, measures, and alternative routes, which should be taken in order to avoid such huge catastrophes. The story rapidly shifts from one conflict to another in different continents such as from Nagasaki to India. Though all these past events stand as historical reality, but not all the narratives exist in the official record, rather, only a few of them are chosen by the authority and labeled as facts. Similarly, the novel revisits the Partition of the Indo-Pak subcontinent in an unconventional way, and it does not glorify the event, but it reflects its traumatic side.

6.3.2 THE PARTITION OF INDO-PAK SUB-CONTINENT

The Partition is still a controversial historical event that is interrogated in terms of its necessity, validity, objectivity and consequences. *Burnt Shadows* represents the stories of personal loss during the Partition and post-Partition times. It challenges the official narratives of Pakistan and India that emphasize more on the notion of freedom than on the division. The official record glamorizes the role of political leaders, who took active part in this struggle. It presents the event with respect to three perspectives, that is, government, anti-government and separatist groups. However the official record neglects the stories of individual people who have really suffered during this traumatic happening. Shamsie contests this totalizing representation as she presents multiplicity of perspectives, and she does not focus on a coherent picture of this event. Moreover, she represents the contrasting perspectives related to this tragedy through a blend of history and fiction. The text shows that Hiroko comes to Delhi in search of peace, but, here, she again witnesses the tragic Partition of Indo-Pak subcontinent.

The specific chapter, of the novel, that narrates the Partition event is named 'Veiled Birds'. Hiroko Tanaka synchronizes the progress of her life with various historical events, such as, after Nagasaki is ruined, then she moves to Delhi to stay with Konrad's sister Else Burton. She is introduced to Sajjad Ali, a Muslim and a worker at Burtons' who is not very educated. Textual analysis reveals the formation of certain paradoxical relationships between different characters in the wake of the Partition clashes where three nationalities including Pakistanis, Indians, and English are in a conflict. These characters develop a kind of warm feelings for one another despite being political enemies. Hiroko's friendship with German Else and Muslim Sajjad, the bossy relationship of colonizer James with the colonized Sajjad, and the unconditional intimacy between English Henrey (son of James and Elizabeth) and Muslim Sajjad represent unconventional relationships. Their intimate bonding challenges the nationalist culture that was prevailing in the wake of the Partition. The people were supposed to fight for their parties, but these characters remain indifferent and they choose to form friendly relationships amid violence. Hutcheon comments on this very aspect as, "Not only are

fiction and history mixed here in what I will argue to be a typically postmodern way, but class and race and nationality as well. Difference and ex-centricity replace homogeneity and centrality as the foci of postmodern social analysis” (*Politics* 5).

The negative effects of the Partition are visible on the personal relationships, for instance, Sajjad is displaced from his own land. This is the irony of the situation that he was deeply in love with his land and he never thought to leave Delhi, but, now, he was displaced. In fact, the characters’ pain and pleasure are juxtaposed as it happens that, on one side, they experience the loss of families, but, on the other side, they form new relationships that are based on mutual feelings of love and care. The text shows that immediately after their forced migration, the newlywed couple (Sajjad and Hiroko) gets settled down in Pakistan. Hiroko, once again, joins a school as a teacher, and Sajjad seeks an employment in a soap factory. He has to endure the pain of the traumatic killings of his family members, and he reflects his pain in these words, “My oldest brother, Altamash, was killed in the Partition riots” (161). He further narrates his grief as, “My brother Iqbal left for Lahore. He said he couldn’t stay in the city that had murdered Altamash. He left behind his wife and his children – they tried to follow him but they were on one of those trains. The ones that arrived with the dead as their cargo” (160). Displacement becomes a common factor between Hiroko and Sajjad, as both are forced to leave their native places and make their home at some unfamiliar place. They undergo the same pain of homelessness and “not only was their former homeland partitioned and transformed into a foreign country, but their homes and most intimate relationships were also demolished” (Lal and Paul Kumar 4). However, Sajjad and Hiroko possess strong mental power to cope with the disastrous experiences as, the “Partition and the bomb,” Harry said, “The two of you are proof that humans can overcome everything” (181).

The novel reflects another perspective of the egoistic approach of British Raj, especially, with reference to the private life of Burtens’ family. It shows that their relationship is not based on loyalty or love, rather it stands on a strong sense of superiority complex. Their loveless life is juxtaposed with the ideal conjugal life of Hiroko and Sajjad, and their marriage is quite relevant today as, in the global world, such intra-cultural marriages are not really appreciated. As a matter of fact, the taboos of honor

killing or forced marriages are still very much prevalent in the contemporary times, especially, in South Asian countries. The tragic experiences of Hiroko, do not only affect her past, but, also, ruin her health, her family, and her son. She, even after so many years, feels the destructive impact of the Partition on her son. She gets pregnant during the Partition riots, therefore, the pain and misery are transferred to her son. He is born of a mother who is not only a bomb survivor, but she is also an eyewitness of the Partition's bloodshed. The text comments on his condition:

The drifting sense of hopelessness that had taken over Raza's life after his second failed attempt at his exam had sharpened into self-pity. She wondered if his acute sensitivity was the result of her anxiety during pregnancy communicating itself to him as he grew inside her (181-182).

These lines show that her horrible past is biologically and psychologically transferred to her son. She compares her son's confused mental state with that of the newly formed immature country, "She didn't worry for herself but Raza was still so unformed that it troubled her to think what the confusion of a still-forming nation might do to him" (182). The stories, of these characters, reveal that though the Partition was based on the narratives of religion and freedom, but actually, these were least followed during the whole chaos. There were many Muslims and Hindus who were involved in the un-Islamic acts of massacres, lootings, robberies, rapes, and killings. The destructive aspects of the Partition in form of homelessness, bloodshed, and trauma speak volume of uselessness of the theory of two-nations i.e. Pakistan and India. One of the consequences, that novel reflects is the eviction of the Muslim population from their own land, and this news came as a blow to them. They were subjected to face dislocation, displacement, and forced migration. They were extremely shocked to hear about violence in their home towns, but later, unknowingly, they also became part of it.

Sajjad experiences the trauma of the Partition struggle, and instead of believing in the freedom slogan, he still feels pre-colonial sentiments of love towards the united India. The greater shock comes to him, when he is not allowed to go to his village to pay even a last visit. Hiroko shows her sympathetic concern towards him when he says, "They said I'm one of the Muslims who chose to leave India, they said I can't go back to Dilli. I

can't go back home" (125). He reflects his disgust over this separation of Pakistan and India, he says, "My world does not exist anymore. This Pakistan, it's taking my friends, my sister, it's taking the familiarity from the streets of Dilli. Thousands are leaving, thousands more will leave" (113). In fact Sajjad's loss depicts the powerlessness of the common people in the wake of worst political situations. This condition is simply out of their control and even out of their understanding. He symbolizes the whole community of Muslims, who were totally unaware of whatever was happening around them, on political or national fronts. Though, the Partition does not make any difference to their daily affairs, they were unable to understand the reasons for this fuss of freedom.

The novel highlights that the characters try to co-exist in the worst circumstances, and this approach also makes their extreme pain as a shared grief. They struggle to endure these tragedies while, at the same time, maintain their humanity intact, such as, Hiroko and Sajjad prove to be "world's greatest forward movers" (146) and they encourage one another to move ahead. Sajjad becomes Hiroko's "Ghum-khaur – grief eater" (77) who also provides him with a mental support. She loses her father, home, and a dream of future, but dares to fight her fate and gets Sajjad. She experiences another nightmare as she loses her unborn daughter. Hiroko is deeply disturbed when India and Pakistan test their nuclear weapons. She has "no interest in belonging to anything as contradictorily insubstantial and damaging as a nation" (204) and, happy just to be human, she flees to New York. She simply wishes "the world to stop being a terrible place" (292).

The natural environment, as a reality, is connected to fiction in the postmodern sense, and Hiroko, after witnessing immense global tragedies, regains true spirits of her life due to its soothing impact. In the novel, almost every character is in love with the natural environment that helps human beings to meditate, relax, and soothe. Similarly, Hiroko, in a conversation with Harry, acknowledges its healthy impact of the green environment on her mind as she says, "But I don't want you to think my life is haunted by the past. Here I am, breathing in the sea air, watching for salamanders and hermit crabs with a Wiess while my husband and son build forts on the sand" (179-180). The description of these natural scenes gives aesthetic pleasure to the readers' senses and

imagination, who may feel depressed while reading a catastrophic historical novel but now may feel a relief. The natural living and nonliving entities like seas, animals, plants, earth, mountains and deserts give strength to human being, and the novel relates this aspect, it writes, “Look there is loveliness here, really there is, a seashell with an ocean roaring behind its pursed lips” (237). Similarly, Sajjad feels a sense of profound happiness to feel the nature:

Rainbows bubbled at the edges of the puddle. He wished he could sift them out into his palms and take them home to Hiroko. He’d walk into the courtyard, toss the rainbows up so they’d catch in the limbs of the neem tree and call Hiroko out to sit under the canopy of colour (237).

Once Sajjad tells Hiroko about the incident that how he met Konrad, and, with the passage of time, they became very close friends. The text writes, “Sajjad was remembering then how Konrad Weiss had walked him around this garden and told him the names of flowers, and explained which ones attracted birds with scent and which with colour” (76). The novel appears different as compare to conventional historical fiction because of its approach towards truth with reference to past. It remains firm with the postmodern attitude towards truth that is based on multiplicity of truth or truths. Shamsie has, successfully, demonstrated this view of truth in her novel as various characters such as Hiroko, Konrad, Sajjad, and Raza face this crisis of representation. They all have their own different version of historical events, and, in this way, they challenge the traditional historical discourse and its claim of imitation of history. These multiple stories and viewpoints challenge the legitimacy of official history as objective and monolithic. It also reflects the significant role of language as in Hutcheon’s words it generates “an awareness of their linguistic constitution” (*Narcissistic Narrative* 7) and it highlights that language constructs the reality, and it also emphasizes the point that now objective representation is not possible.

The novel demonstrates that the common man working in Karachi (Pakistan) are indifferent towards any nationalist boundaries, as a laborer tells Harry, “People here are from every nation within Pakistan. Baloch, Pathan, Sindhi. Hindu, Sikh even. Everyone. Even an American can come and sell fish here if he wants” (160). Then he further adds

that there are generations of other nations too who are living in Pakistan, such as, “The Makranis. They are descended from African slaves” (160). The novel, in the end, takes the reader to the present situation where Pakistan and India strive to become nuclear powers. Hiroko is again scared of the possible disaster, as Khodadadegan et al. state:

The recurrent anxiety of another destructive event in the contemporary world has not disappeared yet due to the prevalence of nuclear weaponry and terrifying forces of destruction. The nightmare of the two World Wars left the world frightened by another challenge of the same sort during the 1980s in a way that much of the eschatological literature since Hiroshima has concentrated on the nuclear explosion as the new agent of death (65).

On the other hand, Harry, despite knowing all the official policies, does not disclose any such tragic news to Hiroko. The novel also contests the narrative of nationalism with significant focus on the power structures of America and New York. It demonstrates that how various characters including Kemal (a Turk), Abdullah (an Afghan), and Raza (a Pakistani) are victimized by FBI. Harry Burton, an American, distrusts the policies of his country especially he perceives ‘War on Terror’ as a continuation of the previous wars, and he challenges its legitimacy of ensuring justice and peace, he, as an American states, that “we make a desolation and call it peace” (347).

Sajjad glorifies the past, while describing Delhi as a beautiful city that has been ruined as a result of division in the wake of the Partition. Ayesha Jalal comments on the beauty of Delhi as, “There was a city of this name in Hind. Nor was Ghalib oblivious to the fate that had befallen Muslims in Delhi after the suppression of the revolt” (31). In fact, it seems that Sajjad is very much interested in knowing his past and he admires Mughal kings by presenting his own opinion in the light of his literary reflections. He is proud of his city, and, in a conversation with Hiroko, he describes and explains the history of his city as he says, “My ancestors were soldiers in the armies of the Mamluks – I believe your English historians call them the slave kings. The Qutb Minar is the greatest remaining monument of those kings” (80). He narrates the story of Razia, who is a famous character in the Muslim history and she is known for her wisdom and bravery.

Sajjad seems very impressed from Razia, a historical figure, he says:

The story of the Slave Dynasty which I most love is that of Altamash's daughter, So he named her his heir. Of course, when Altamish died one of the sons seized the throne, but Razia soon defeated him. She was an amazing woman – a brilliant administrator, a glorious fighter (81).

The novel moves on from historical events to the present situation of post-Partition conflicts as Shamsie is of the view that, nothing happens all of a sudden, and events are, in fact, very much connected with one another. Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, and it influenced Pakistan, in a way, that it was badly indulged in an international proxy war led by America. It was named as Jihad and it involved all the Muslims, emotionally and physically, from across the continents. It resulted in an influx of huge number of Afghan refugees, ammunition and arms into Pakistan, moreover various training camps were established to train the youth. The past events are related to the current conflicts that are prevailing between Muslims and America, where the former are stereotyped as 'terrorists'. In fact, the disastrous tragedy of 9/11 has always been a crucial event that has divided the humanity into two factions; Muslims as 'terrorists' and Americans as 'anti-Muslims'. The textual analysis reveals that Americans suspect Raza Konrad, for the fact, that he is a Muslim as Mansoor comments, that "Earlier on, Hiroko had been the repressed victim of the bombing of Nagasaki, this time, it is her Muslim son, with his Afghan features who end up being stereotyped as a terrorist by Steve, Harry's long-term friend at the CIA" (78). Steve, an American, blames Raza for killing Harry, on the basis of his own (Steve's) bias attitude towards Muslims while, in reality, Raza is innocent, he says:

"I loved Harry", He (Raza) said it quietly.'

But Steve is determined to blame him" (308).

Elizabeth's son Harry joins a Private Military Corporation, as a contractor, and for official reasons, he visits Afghanistan during the War on Terror. He also takes Raza, along with him, as a translator. Raza symbolizes the plight of all Muslims who are stereotyped in the West as 'terrorists', even without any solid proof and without being given a chance to justify their position. The text reveals that Raza's religious and national identities act as a

barrier, in a global world, as, “Nothing in the world could possibly show him to be Harry Burton’s murderer seemed barely to matter in the face of all that could be done to his life before that conclusion. He had never felt so sharply the powerlessness of being merely Pakistani” (307-308). Shamsie’s novel is a great contribution to break stereotypes, and “she has done so in circumstances where the religion of Islam is becoming increasingly synonymous with violence and fundamentalism” (Karim Khan 55). It depicts the hopefulness of the characters to find a solution in any situation, for instance, Hiroko, after feeling grieved for Sep 9/11 victims, goes to donate her blood to the survivors, but, to her surprise, Red Cross lady stops her and tells her that as she belongs to a material country, so she cannot give her blood. However the lady appreciates her effort, and she says, “Intention matters. When Hiroko said that the Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) made exactly that point – surprising herself by the need to say such a thing – the woman smiled and said, ‘I’m sure he did’” (289). Their intimate personal interaction, in the wake of 9/11, where Pakistan, Afghanistan, and America are in a kind of rivalry, is paradoxical. The novel depicts anti-Muslim attitude of some American characters, for instance, when Harry recruits Muslims for his firm, he faces severe objection from Steve who asks him to select non-Muslims only. He says, “Go with guys from Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Philippines, Indians are OK, so long as they’re not Muslims” (280).

6.3.3 HISTORY RELATED TO ISLAM

The novel represents multiplicity of perspectives in order to trace the political history of the world, but it also re-writes the history of various religious events with respect to famous Islamic events and personalities. The novel mentions Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H), and the famous incident of spider related to him. It demonstrates such occasions where characters do comment and share their opinions on this incident. It focuses on the common message of peace and harmony, and Sajjad, Konrad, Hiroko and Kim discuss this famous story and, in this way, they show a bright side of Islam that is stereotyped, especially, in the aftermath of September 9/11. This historical religious story is symbolic that represents that any kind of help should be spread everywhere for the betterment of the society. Sajjad and Raza tell Hiroko and Kim that Muslims pay great

reverence to spider, because it rescued their Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) from the enemies. The text writes:

When the prophet was on the run from Mecca to Madina, he stopped in a cave knowing his pursuers would follow his tracks. Abu Bakar saw a spider scuttling frantically across the mouth of the cave, then he heard his pursuers voice, ‘No, he’s not here. No one’s been here for a long time’. (350)

Textual analysis of the novel shows that this story of spider is narrated and transferred to two families/generations, “Harry had pointed this out and said, ‘You need to tell it to Kim. Weiss-Burtons and Tanaka-Ashrafs - we are each other’s spiders” (350). Therefore, the novel, as a historiographic metafiction, re-writes the story of spider, and it also demonstrates the importance of language that reconstructs the past. Here the word ‘Spider’ symbolizes the helping hand among the characters right from Konrad to Hiroko, Elizabeth to Kim, Sajjad to Raza, and Raza to Abdullah who help each other. Konrad helps Sajjad to get a job at his sister’s home. Similarly, Hiroko loves Konrad who is a German, and she remains loyal to him even when her nation assumes him an enemy. On the other hand, Ilse or Elizabeth (German) not only provides shelter to Hiroko (Japanese) thrice in Delhi, Karachi, and New York, but also, she and her husband James ensure safe escape of Hiroko and Sajjad after their marriage amid the Partition bloodshed.

The concept of symbolic spider moves from first generation to the next, as Raza, in the later part of the novel, asks Kim to help Abdullah, but she, mistakenly, asks the police to arrest him. Therefore, Raza becomes spider as he pretends to be Abdullah by wearing his coat, hence, police arrests him. Kim immediately recognizes him and, at the same time, she realizes her fault. Raza asks her to remain silent so that Abdullah can escape and reach out of their access. She requests police to set him free but she gets silence in acknowledgement of Raza’s command and he appreciates her behavior. He becomes thankful to her even though she does not cooperate in the beginning but, “he still saw the spider as well as its shadow” (357) in her behavior. This story of spider subverts the stereotypical image of Muslims of being terrorists, extremists or fundamentalists, and it represents them as a friendly community who knows to spread its helping hands to everyone out there.

There is another religious reference to which the novel draws its attention, that is the story of Eve and Adam as Hiroko recalls “Konrad saying the Garden of Eden would never have had a story of its own if it had’nt contained a serpent” (97). The novel generates mini stories in order to subvert the fixed notions as Mahrukh Bokhari, a researcher, comments, “Contestation, within the narrative, between different religions such as Christianity and Islam serves to challenge all grand narrative concerning faith, existence and death” (“Globalized Mobility” 42). Similarly, Khadija Ashraf, Sajjad’s mother, subverts the idea of going through pain for eternal salvation. She says, “It’s the Christians who believe we were put on earth to suffer. But Muslims know that Allah---the beneficent, the Merciful---forgave Adam and Eve their temptation” (102).

6.4 DOUBLE INTERTEXTUALITY

Textual analysis reveals that the novel refers to various literary works, allusions, phrases, and quotations. In this way, it focuses on the contribution of other texts in the production of historical discourse, and it does not ignore the role of reader as well. Linda Hutcheon comments on the same fictional construction of history as, “The “world” in which the text situates itself is the “world” of discourse, the “world” of texts and intertexts. This ‘world’ has direct links to the world of empirical reality, but it is not itself that empirical reality” (*Poetics* 6). Similarly, the reader, while reading *Burnt Shadows*, strives hard to connect multiple texts together as he/she finds the influence of both i.e. eastern and western fiction. The final section’s title “The Speed Necessary to Replace Loss” is taken from *The English Patient*, and in fact, *Burnt Shadows* begins where Michael Ondaatje’s novel ends. Ondaatje’s novel concludes with the twenty-first birthday of a Canadian protagonist *Hana* in 1945, while Shamsie starts her novel with Hiroko who is twenty one years old, and the time is August 1945. Shamsie introduces the name Hana in the very first section when Konrad says, “I went closer to look. And what do you think I saw? A woman’s name. Hana” (17).

Hana, like Hiroko, loses her unborn child, lover, and father, and she, in order to detach herself from her immense tragic loss, joins the profession of nursing to serve the World War Second’s survivors. Similarly, Hiroko also loses her German lover, father, and her first child due to the effect of radioactive rays on her productive system. Hana

marries a Sikh man, Kip, and, just like that, Hiroko marries an Indian Muslim, Sajjad Ali. Both the protagonists remain headstrong in making their decisions to marry the men of their choice despite the stereotypical differences of race, religion, and nation, between them and their lovers. Sajjad and Kip are similar, in a way that they both resist their traditional professions as the former chooses law over calligraphy, while Kip selects army, instead of medicine. In this way, *Burnt Shadows* revises the plot of *English Patient*, and it takes its story to different contexts and the time periods. This is the most obvious sign that, explicitly, indicates the intertextual relation between his/her text and a predecessor work. On the other hand, by utilizing historical textual accounts the novel distrusts in history as a reality that exists outside the text. The novel is significantly based on intertextuality that depicts intertextual relation between various texts and it draws attention towards the intellectual pleasure too.

The novel connects with other renowned authors such as Virginia Woolf, E.M. Forster, Michael Ondaatje, and Ahmad Ali. It refers towards their important works and it discusses and places them in a new context. For instance, James and Sajjad discuss Ahmad Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* and they share their opinion on this novel. Through their conversation, the reader finds the perceptions as well as a commentary, through the perspectives of colonizer, and the colonized. James, initially, gets a copy of this novel, but he does not read it, rather he gives it to Sajjad. On the other hand, Sajjad appreciates the novel, but, at the same time, he is surprised to see the indifferent approach of James. He perceives that he is unable to digest an Indian's success as a novelist. He praises the artistic skill of Ahmad Ali, and he tends to beautify his language by incorporating various quotations from the novel. His appreciation is a self-reflexive reference towards the text, as it writes:

He (James) had read no more than two pages before deciding it an overblown piece of hyperbole and thrusting it in Sajjad's hand, but Sajjad loved the novel, and had taken to peppering his conversation with quotations from it in the hope of revealing to James the beauty of its sentences. (39)

He highlights Ahmed Ali's effort to write in a non-native language, and he asks James, "Do you think an Englishman will ever write a masterpiece in Urdu?"(39). He also views

his city Delhi through the lens of *Twilight in Delhi* when he calls it as “insidious as a game of chess” (39). He positions it in a direct contrast to post-Partition Pakistan, especially, Karachi as the text writes, “Sajjad was one who needed to find ways to imagine a future in this place so removed in its architecture and its air and its pace of life from the city he had wanted to live and die in” (237). Similarly, textual analysis reveals the intertextual reference towards another novel *A Passage to India*, written by E.M.Forster. Hutcheon comments at this self-reflexive reference towards other works of fiction, and she is of the view that it, “manifests a certain introversion, a self-conscious turning toward the form of the act of writing itself” (*Narcissistic Narrative* 9). This style involves various characters and their responses towards various novels, such as, “James looked over Sajjad’s shoulder to see Elizabeth and Hiroko standing there, ‘we have been here since E.M Forster,’ Elizabeth said” (112). Later on, Sajjad and James, in a conversation, talk about representation of Foster’s contradicting perspectives related to Hindu/ Muslim controversy and on the decision of the Partition 1947. The text writes:

“I just read *A Passage to India*, James said.

Ridiculous book. What a disgrace of an ending. The Englishman and the Indian want to embrace, but the earth and the sky and the horses don’t want it, so they are kept apart” (111).

The novel incorporates certain catch phrases, slogans, and proverbs which are used to understand conceptual aspects. For instance, Raza gets familiar with his mother’s past experience of Nagasaki through texts, magazines and photographs, “He had looked from the photographs of burnt lumps of humanity to the picture of Uncle Konrad” (178). Hutcheon comments on this very aspect of double intertextuality, as “past and present are judged in each other’s light” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 39). Hiroko comments on this very aspect as she tells that Raza has come to know about her past through various texts. She says:

He once received a history book for a birthday present which had a full page about Hiroshima, with a paragraph appended about Nagasaki. It showed a picture of an old Japanese man looking sad, and holding a bandage against his bloodied

head. Raza showed it to me, nodded his head, and never said anything about it again” (178-179).

There are some other references to some other specific local concepts that pose difficulty for the global reader, who is not familiar with the particular social, cultural, political, and religious contexts. However Shamsie translates few religious concepts taken from the holy books (*Quran* and *Bible*), for instance, when she describes the tragic scene after atomic bomb blast, “The next morning, I went to the Urakami Valley; it was what the priest had spoken of when he taught me from the Bible – the Valley of Death.” (77). The novel takes various title of other texts in order to incorporate these in its own title, and this very phenomenon represents authorial sanction that the text is to be interpreted in its relevance to a prior work. The novel does not attempt to make the intertextual title explicit within the text itself, by explaining it. However it is also possible that it may mislead the reader, as a chapter referring to a certain intertextual title, but having nothing similar to the prior text confuses her/him. The reader may find a new novel or story taking the name of the predecessor. The novel also gives reference to famous fairy tales as, “I feel like Alice in Wonderland stuck in that house” (306). At another instance, when “Elizabeth picked up her cup of tea from the windowsill and felt as though she posed herself for a portrait, *The Colonial Wife Looks upon her Garden*” (89). This repositioning of intertexts, is viewed by Hutcheon who states, “That demands of the reader not only the recognition of textualized traces of the literary and historical past but also the awareness of what has been done – through irony – to those traces” (*A Poetics of Postmodernism* 127).

Hiroko is a self-conscious character, and, throughout the story, she makes metafictional claims in order to validate the reliability of her account. She constructs her stories, with the help of imagination, for instance, when Harry asks her that how did she tell her child about her tragic experience of Nagasaki? She replies, “I made up fairy tales” (177). She constructs her tragic experience of Nagasaki in a figurative language through intertextuality, metaphors, and similes. Her imagination decreases her pain, and, at the same time, it helps her son to stay least affected even while listening the horrible tale of atomic bombing. Her imaginative construction of the past challenges the realistic mode

of representation, that claims to depict the exact picture of reality. It also shows the difficulty to represent the real tragedy of Nagasaki, therefore, she constructs this historical event in her own way. The text writes:

There was the one about the girl whose dying father slithers towards her in the shape of a lizard. There is another one, the men and women who walk through shadow-worlds in search of the ones they loved. Monsters who spread their wings and land on human skin, resting there, biding their time. (177)

She deliberately focuses on the self-reflexive construction of her experience, and, at the same time, she also refers towards Shamsie's role of being the author who also constructs these stories without even witnessing these events. The above lines consciously draw the reader's attention towards fictional status, creativity, constructed-ness, and imagination, working in the process of telling a story. Hiroko, in Hutcheon's sense, reconstructs the past, as she argues that history is not discovered, learned, or acquired, rather it is made. She further illustrates that historical truth becomes known to the world through discourse, and it is not something that physically exists and needs to be discovered. She contends that, in fact, it is socially and linguistically constructed, she states, "Facts do not speak for themselves in either form of narrative: the tellers speak for them, making these fragments of the past into a discursive whole" (*A Poetics* 56).

Similarly, Shamsie constructs the little narratives through imagination, and her characters, also, pay remarkable respect to poets, authors, singers, painters, and other artists. Textual analysis reveals the presence of some metafictional characters, in the novel, who write stories and comment on poetic language. For instance, Sajjad appreciates and acknowledges the worth of a poet's creativity when he says, "One day a Dilli poet who wrote verses on leaves because he couldn't afford paper, he gave an armful of leaves to Sajjad, and Sajjad pasted them directly onto the inside of their tent, just above the bedroll" (237). This literary acknowledgment enables the reader to appreciate art, and, at the same time, it reflects Sajjad's immense respect towards poetic creativity. Similarly, at other such occasion, Konrad praises the craft of a skilled artist as he tells Hiroko that he saw a name beautifully written. He admits that the name was written by

some skillful hand that captured his attention. He further shares his excitement by sharing her pleasure in these words:

I went closer to look. And what do you think I saw? A woman's name. Hana. It had been written in red ink by someone – either a skilled artist or an obsessed lover – who knew how to paint on the water in the instant before the ice froze the characters into place (17).

These textual lines show that, here, Konrad takes the position of author and he passes judgment on the creativity of the craftsman. Similarly, at other instance, Hiroko Tanaka praises the portrait of Burton's family, and, in fact, like Konrad, she reflects the voice of the novelist.

6.5 DISMANTLING THE METANARRATIVE OF WAR

Burnt Shadows, as historiographic metafiction, subverts the grand narrative of war as it does not glorify it, rather it challenges the legitimacy of the slogans of progress, civilization, conflict resolution, human rights and peace, which are usually employed to justify any war. Textual analysis of the novel highlights that it provides a fictionalized depiction of the war-torn continents in order to explore that how different characters question the very idea of war by exposing the post-war destruction that is caused to humanity as well as the natural environment. The novel depicts that a war never stops, rather it only changes its forms such as Nagasaki war turns into 1947 Indian sub-continent conflict that further leads to Sep 9/11 New York attacks to Afghanistan war, and then Afghanistan's War on Terror and, finally, Paris attacks and it goes on. The novel begins with the description of World War Two horrors and ends at the disasters caused during the War on Terror, in Afghanistan. This postmodern anti-war spirit can be related to W.B. Yeats' distrust on war as expressed in his poem "The Second Coming", as:

Things fall apart; the center cannot hold

Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world

Like Yeats, Shamsie too challenges the legitimacy of various decisions related to different wars, waged by various governments, in different parts of the world. The novel highlights the sad fact that such decisions are always one sided and the common people

are not involved, but, later on, their pain is totally ignored. Shamsie, as an author, does not view the war torn countries from any specific national perspective, rather she, laments on the atrocities committed against the innocent people anywhere in the world. On the other hand, Kim and Raza, highlight the far-reaching consequences of war and its impact on the next generation. It shows that a war has a global effect that is not just limited to a single generation, who witnessed the event, but it, also, cast a disastrous effect on the younger lot as Shamsie states:

Too many people seem to think I'm making a particular comment on America, but really I'm taking about nations in wartime and the particular inhuman logic they start to follow when they decide what is an acceptable price for some other nation's people to pay. (Singh 160)

Through the little stories of different characters, she demonstrates the loss that comes with any war in the form of displacement, rootlessness, unemployment, depressing memories, and identity crisis. For instance, Hiroko's mental and physical health gets deteriorated as a result of experiencing Nagasaki atomic bombing, and, as a result, she remains unable to conceive another child after her first born Raza. The novel highlights that any war, rarely, poses a long lasting solution to a conflict, rather it proves destructive for the humanity not only at the time of its happening, but it also damages the future.

The characters highlight the negative side of the war, such as, Konrad says, "War fractures every view" (6). His comment refers towards uselessness of war, and one war will lead to another, and this series will never stop. Moreover, no nation can claim for ensuring justice in the name of brutal massacres and manslaughter. He challenges the idea of any war that is associated with some national cause, because it stops "people moving toward each other" (68). He is of the view that a war is not waged only, on national level, between forces of different countries, rather it affects the lives of many people. He himself was affected by war, and he loses his family, lover, and then his life in World War Two. On the other hand, Hiroko wants to live a happy life with her fiancé Konrad, but it is due to ongoing war that she has to wait. She gets depressed and she contemplates, "When will the war end?" (16). They both plan to get marry "as soon as the war ends" (16). Unfortunately, their love life ends as Konrad gets killed in Nagasaki

bombing, and Hiroko is displaced from her native country to Delhi. After the description of Nagasaki atomic bombing, Shamsie leaves two pages (24 & 25) blank that symbolizes the emptiness that is forever going to stay with Hiroko. The text describes her state, “She had thought Nagasaki had taught her everything to know about loss but in truth it was only horror with which she had become completely familiar” (239). It also refers to the brutal act of erasing the humanity and its respect from the face of earth.

Hiroko, being a victim of war, finds it difficult to come out of her first traumatic experience of the Nagasaki atomic bomb attack. After experiencing this tragedy, she chooses to live in Tokyo, where she gets a job as a translator. She happens to meet an American, who, on behalf of his nation, justifies the self-centered policies of his nation. Hiroko narrates, “The American with the gentle face said the bomb was a terrible thing, but it had to be done to save Americans lives. I (Hiroko) knew straight away I couldn't keep working for them” (62). She disapproves these double standards and, hence, leaves the job, even at a crucial time of her financial need. In fact, “Hiroko’s migration to India where Konrad’s British relatives, the Burtons, live becomes an act of resistance against this dominant ideology which has the prerogative to victimize while proclaiming itself to be the victim” (Mansoor 70). After coming to Delhi, Hiroko marries Sajjad who knows her painful past and helps her come out of it. He asks her:

“Do you still think about it a lot? About Nagasaki?”

She touched her back, just above the waist.

‘It is always there.’”(176).

The text highlights that, even after moving to Delhi, the horrible memories of the past keep on haunting Hiroko. The sad death of her father, Mitsui Tanaka, is one such horrible memory. Her father was completely burnt during the bomb attack as she expresses her deep grief in these words, “In the last seconds of his life...something unhuman. He was covered in scales... no one in the world should ever have to see their father covered in scales” (99). Such pictorial description revisits war with irony, and Hiroko represents the voice of a common man, who is helpless against these decisions of wars. She wonders, “And the thing is, I still don’t understand. Why did they have to do it? Why a second bomb?” (99). While talking to Elizabeth, she expresses her condition as she says,

“nothing in the world could ever be more unfamiliar than my home that day” (99). In the later part of the novel, it is revealed that she, in order to avoid a nuclear war decides to move to America and it shows that she wants to avoid another catastrophe. Her fear also represents a natural desire of human being to escape any upcoming tragedy. Ironically, she ends up again by undergoing loss as her only son Raza is being caught by the American police and is sent to prison.

Although war boosts up the economy of a country in terms of creating job opportunities, however, the countless killings of innocent human beings can never justify its occurrence. These tragedies cast a negative impact on Hiroko’s entire personality, and she reflects the same psychological grief over the loss of her roots, native land, family, relationships, memories, and career. The novel reveals that it is not only human relationships but also friendships, which are destroyed during the wars, for example, the warm bonding between Konrad and Yoahi Watanabe was very strong before the conflicts but then “in a conversation of less than a minute, it ended” (12). It also shows that war affects everyone in one way or the other, and, like Hiroko and Konrad, Sajjad also faces loss in the form of forced displacement during the Partition 1947. He expresses his agony when he “wished simply to find a way of indicating that such sorrow should not come to anyone in the world” (75). He does not believe that his “childhood friends have become murderers” (125). On the other hand, Elizabeth also expresses her traumatic displacement as a result of war as she asks Sajjad, “I was made to leave Berlin when I was a little younger than him (Eight years old Henry, her son), I know the pain of it. What do you know about leaving, you, whose family has lived in Delhi for centuries?” (88).

The novel highlights, the fact, that these wars construct some fixed identities, which are often derogatory, such as, Konrad was known as ‘fugitive’, Hiroko is labeled as ‘hibakusha’ her father Matushi Tanaka is called a ‘traitor’, her husband Sajjad Ashraf is named as ‘muhajir’, while Raza and Abdullah being Muslims are known as ‘terrorist’ and ‘mujahid’. Raza’s religious identity of being a ‘Muslim’ becomes his fault, especially, in the wake of the prevailing anti-Muslim post 9/11 conflicts. He is unable to interpret religious rituals, and it becomes evident when he fails in the subject of Islamic Studies. He believes in himself as he says, “There are no intermediaries in Islam. Allah

knows what is in my heart” (144). Hiroko gets worried for her son, and she thinks that, “Raza was still so unformed that it troubled her to think what the confusion of a still forming nation might do to him” (182). Through the character of Raza, Shamsie propagates the idea that religion should not be imposed on others, as it is, totally, a personal choice. At other point, Sajjad feels annoyed due to “the government which kept trying to force religion into everything public” (147). Shamsie’s approach can be compared with Hanif’s idea of religious freedom in his novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* (chapter 4 of my research) where Dr Pareira asks the medical nurses to keep their religion away from professional lives in order to avoid conflicts. Moreover both the authors give a message that fight/war on religion reflects ignorance on the part of the followers, as no religion preaches the lesson of spreading hate or violence.

Kim, as an engineer, works for the restoration of war-damaged buildings while Harry, her father, is a contractor in an Afghanistan based private security agency that makes war-related strategies. She is a confused character whose loyalties are divided as, at one side, she wants to be a spider and a helping hand, but, at the same time, she suspects Muslims for doing wrongs. She says, “It wasn’t Buddhists flying those planes, there is no video footage of Jews celebrating the deaths of three thousand Americans, it wasn’t a catholic who shot my father” (361). The novel emphasizes that it is not only human beings who can feel the pain, loss, and grief, but animals are also affected by war. They get sad if there is any destruction going outside or around them. A war also brings destruction to the green environment, for instance, Abdullah remembers pre-war Afghanistan with a profound sense of pain. He is the victim of the War on Terror who views war from an altogether different angle:

War is like disease. Until you’ve had it, you don’t know it. But no. That’s a bad comparison. At least with disease everyone thinks it might happen to them one day. You have a pain here, swelling there, a cold which stays and stays. You start to think maybe this is something really bad. But war – countries like yours they always fight wars, but always somewhere else. The disease always happens somewhere else. It’s why you fight more wars than anyone else; because you understand war least of all. You need to understand it better. (344)

These lines clearly express his deep grief, and, at other instance, he shows some pictures to Hiroko as he says, “Kandahar. Before the wars. He ran his palm across the photograph, as though he could feel the texture of the ripening pomegranates pushing up against his skin. He says, “First, they cut down the trees. Then they put landmines everywhere, cluster bombs” (311). His description challenges the justification of war, by exposing that, it actually destroys humanity as well as the precious green environment that is necessary for human beings to survive. There are other minor characters too, who, like Hiroko’s father Matsui, resist the government’s policies related to war. For instance, Willie, Ilse’s cousin, was involved in helping the illegal migrants and, this very act, shows a resistance towards the policies of government. The text writes, “Only in 1945 had she discovered he’d been working with the underground in Germany, helping Jews and homosexuals to escape the Nazis” (72). At other occasion, Elizabeth, like Hiroko, remembers her tragic past that still haunts her present life, she expresses her grief in these words, “I’ve lived through Hitler, Stalin, the Cold War, the British Empire, Segregation, apartheid, God knows what. The world will survive this, and with just a tiny bit of luck so will everyone you love” (271).

In short, textual analysis reveals that the human thirst for power does not make the nations understand the lessons that they get from the disastrous outcomes of their decisions. The questioning of grand narrative of war is peculiar to South Asian context, as it has always remained a site for wars and conflicts. *Burnt Shadows* pleads to look for alternative peaceful measures in order to solve the serious issues prevailing between the nations.

6.6 CONCLUSION

The present chapter has critically analyzed Kamila Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* through the lens of Linda Hutcheon’s theory of historiographic metafiction and Lyotard’s subversion of metanarrative of history. The literature that romanticizes and glorifies war gets a postmodern response in *Burnt Shadows*. It is based on the fictional representation of various crucial historical events including Nagasaki atomic bomb attacks and the Partition of the sub-continent. The study proves that the novel highlights the significance of the history with respect to the present conflicts such as post 9/11 World Trade Tower

and War on Terror. The novel textualizes the past with the help of memory, multiple histories, and double intertextuality. By employing these techniques, it problematizes the grand narrative of official historical discourse.

My study has observed that *Burnt Shadows* generates alternative stories against the hegemonic traditional historiography. Instead of imitating history, it tends to blend the reality with the fiction and it also questions the conventional approach of top-down record of the past by focusing on the little stories of the common people.

Next chapter is the last chapter of my study that sums up the overall research and suggests recommendations for the future research.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

The present study substantiated the impact and influence of postmodernism in the selected south Asian novels with respect to language, fictionality, and history. The selected novels included *Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie, *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* by Muhammad Hanif and *The Glass Palace* by Amitav Ghosh. These novels are nationally and internationally recognized for their literary contribution to the existing South Asian English literature. These works have not been evaluated so far by the researchers from the specific theoretical perspectives proposed by postmodern theorists and philosophers namely Jean Francois Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon. The main objectives of this research were: To investigate the ways in which postmodern occasions are traced in the selected novels, to analyze the dismantling of metanarratives in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* through paralogical moves, to investigate postmodern fictionality in *The Glass Palace*, and to critically evaluate *Burnt Shadows* as historiographic metafiction.

The research questions formed on the basis of the above-mentioned objectives were: In what ways are the postmodernist occasions traced in the selected texts? What are the strategies employed in *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* that subvert the concept of grand narratives through paralogical moves? How does *The Glass Palace* highlight postmodern fictionality and challenge the representation of reality? How does *Burnt Shadows* play out the idea of historiographic metafiction vis-à-vis traditional historical discourse? In order to find out the objectives, the selected novels were analyzed in the light of postmodern theories proposed by Jean Francois Lyotard and Linda Hutcheon.

7.1 FINDINGS

The present study has captured and evaluated various postmodernist occasions in the selected novels regarding language, fictionality and history. It proved that *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* incorporates playful yet ironic language that subverts metanarratives of

faith, nationalism, identity, professionalism, and science by employing the technique of minimarratives. The paralogical moves falsify the concept of metanarratives which brought immense suffering to the humanity especially after World War Two. There are different characters who subvert these modern notions of Enlightenment and its claims of emancipation and liberation of the humanity. My study has proved that *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* incorporates strategies like inter-textuality, irony, and linguistic playfulness. It transforms the traditional role of author as God and it invites the reader to participate in the process of production and interpretation. By using localized English, Hanif incorporates indigenous concepts in original slangs or jargons and this inclusion of local terminology informs the global reader about the tradition, culture and society of Pakistan. The novel incorporates local puns, slogans, phrases, and idioms without giving any explanation in the form of footnotes or translation. Hanif does not translate all the local words or phrases used in his novel in order to preserve the essence contained in the original concepts. Such inclusive language demands active reading on the part of the reader who has to interpret the denotative as well as the connotative meanings.

The study highlighted that the themes of the novel are based on experiences of love, hatred, death, life, religion, nation, profession, home, and society. It also challenges the notion of fixed identity as the characters exhibit multiple identities/selves and this phenomenon reflects that identity is a fluid concept. On the other hand, the novel laments at the use of certain Urdu words that construct a negative identity of Christian community in order to disrespect it. Through intertextuality it acknowledges the presence of other texts such as newspapers, songs, portraits, books, and poetry collection. The fact, that the main characters belong to a minority religion in Pakistan makes the novel unique as it shows that the writer, Muhammad Hanif is himself a Muslim, but his humane concern follows no bounds. The novel does not adhere to the conventions of modern fiction, including proper beginning, middle or end rather it develops in flashbacks. The epilogue is added at the end of the novel that gives a circular ending because it leads to the start of the story.

The novel criticizes the stereotypical mindsets in an ironic way that also makes the narration light yet serious. Unlike modern fiction that emphasizes on science, it

focuses on spiritualism and it also blurs the difference between fact and fiction. It contests the grand narrative of class by raising voice for the marginalized sections of the society. It laments at the behavior of people who exclude Christians from the normal dealings on the basis of the difference of religion. It analyzes historical roots of the current marginalization of Christian community since creation of Pakistan. It exposes moral corruption in the field of medicine, police, and national institutes. The study has proved that the main protagonist of the novel *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti* does not adhere to the suppressive rules rather she is headstrong and she plays her part in the language games by making a move through her resistance.

The novel also criticizes the freedom narrative that even after the creation of Pakistan everyone is in chains of class, religion, and status hierarchies. My study has found that the novel challenges the metanarrative of history by presenting multiple perspectives on the Partition of the subcontinent. It transforms the traditional single-stranded history as different characters comment on various historical events from various perspectives. This evaluation also involves real historical figures and in this way the novel fuses personal history with the official discourse that establishes a link between the two. The novel presents a link between past and present events that reflects that history matters in the present day affairs. It sensitizes the reader about the fact that past is quite relevant in the present age and that, the governments should think of alternative plans to avoid catastrophic events in the future.

Textual analysis of *The Glass Palace* has found that it is a novel about the military invasion of Burma, forced exile of Burmese King, horrors of science, imperialism and war. It does not glorify the military invasion rather it portrays the sufferings and traumas of laymen that occurred in the form of displacement, loss of relationships and native lands, nostalgia, and immense bloodshed. The study proved that the novel subverts the totalizing story pattern of a traditional novel through incorporation of multiple stories. It does not focus on the logical development of most of the characters from their childhood to adulthood, adulthood to youth, and from youth till old age. Moreover, the inclusion of postmodern characteristics such as dreams, hallucinations and visions not only project the postmodern fusion of reality and fiction but they also replace

the concept of a fixed reality. My study has observed that such fictional construction with the help of self-reflexivity, intertextuality and parody asks for the reader's attention to co-create the story. The novel, like *Our Lady of Alice Bhatti*, develops through flashbacks and temporal displacement, and the characters move back and forth without any sequence. Other than the human characters, the novel also attributes special roles to animals and plants that effect the overall narration of the story. Textual analysis of Gosh's novel proved that it blurs the boundary between the reality and fictionality through telling multiple realities.

Textual analysis of *Burnt Shadows* has proved that as a historiographic metafiction it provides a fictional account of the past through incorporation of postmodern devices such as double intertextuality and self-reflexivity. Moreover, the plot does not follow any particular time frame or a fixed location and it re-writes history in an ironic language. It questions the legitimacy of national decisions made by various governments in the name of progress. It also negates generalization of the stereotypes which are functional in the context of current political and religious scenarios after September 9/11 World Trade Tower attacks. The characters belong to different nations and, therefore, they do not carry any blood relation between them but irrespective of that they form strong relationships on the basis of humanity.

The study has found that the characters in *Burnt Shadows* belong to diverse locations and even from rival countries such as Germany/America, India/Pakistan and America/Afghanistan. The novel contests the legitimacy of war by exposing that it is not always waged for the betterment of humanity rather it has certain political agendas. It also re-tells the history of various events occurred in the past in different locations. It is divided into chapters where each chapter is dedicated to a single event. It writes about the horrors that occurred during the Nagasaki atomic bomb attack and World Trade Tower incident in Sep 9/11. The study has shown that the novel deconstructs the myth of the traditional history by exposing the serious consequences of various historical events on the coming generation in form of their psychological and physical abnormalities. Through poetic and dramatic description of tragic events the novel fictionalizes the official history. It records the tales of displacements, emotional tortures, killings,

murders, and loss of property that, in a way, reflects Shamsie's own disbelief towards the legitimacy of national decisions.

The present study proved that all the selected novels demonstrate postmodernist occasions regarding language, fictionality, and history. These texts manifest the current postmodern condition in the sense conveyed by Jean Francois Lyotard and they also depict that there is no single reality in this age of meaninglessness and chaos. As postmodernist fiction they depict the occasions of failure of grand narratives which were once believed and practiced by modern age. The selected works as historiographic metafiction question the claims of traditional history by highlighting the selfish motives of the stakeholders involved in the decision-making process. To conclude, I would like to say that my study has made it clear that these selected novels as postmodern fiction do not follow any boundaries of nation, identity, or group rather they give an idea to look for peaceful alternatives to formulate a harmonious world.

7.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study give way to the following recommendations for future research as well as the researchers:

There is a dire need to conduct research on South Asian English novels from the perspective of postmodern globalization. The emerging fiction writers from this region are writing on contemporary social, political, national and global issues and their efforts need to be highlighted in the international research scholarship. This will not only promote the literature itself but it will also highlight the regional issues and carry the message into the literary world. South Asian literature, in particular, can play a very effective role in highlighting the humanitarian efforts of the novelists through their work. Moreover the comparative analysis of the novels written by Pakistani and Indian writers would be of great help to shed away the differences between these officially declared rival countries, therefore, similar study needs to be conducted in order to deconstruct the myth of West/East rivalry.

There is a need to explore other English novels belonging to other South Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Maldives with reference to the

representation of postmodernist resistance towards grand narratives of science, power, identity, law and capitalism. The novelists write in various contexts such as post 9/11, human rights violation, political conflicts and religious clashes. The research on South Asian fiction will not only promote their literature in the international market but it will also generate awareness in the reader about the stance of this region with respect to the contemporary world. Moreover, the fresh researchers can conduct research studies on postmodern fiction by applying Jean Baudrillard's theoretical concepts of simulacra and hyper-reality as it will be highly relevant in the present age of very advanced computer system that has given the concept of virtual reality.

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