



**A Critical Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's Burnt  
Shadows**

**تحليل نقدي لرواية الظلال المحترقة للكاتبة كاملة شمسي**

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## التفويض

أنا إيمان محمد علي العميشات أفوض جامعة الشرق الأوسط بتزويد نسخ من رسالتي ورقياً وإلكترونياً للمكتبات، أو الهيئات والمؤسسات المعنية بالأبحاث والدراسات العلمية عند طلبها.

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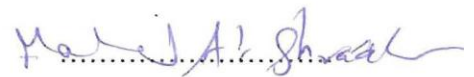
## Thesis Committee Decision

This thesis "A Critical Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*"  
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**Researcher**

## **Dedication**

**The thesis is dedicated to:**

**my beloved mother, who always believed in me ,**

**and to the soul of my father.**

**Researcher**

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## Abstract

# A Critical Analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*

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The present study seeks to explore the fiction of the contemporary British- American-Pakistani novelist, Kamila Shamsie, (b.1973), in particular her novel, *Burnt Shadows* (2009).

The study also shed light on the post Colonial aspects of the novel by tackling this Pakistani novelist who lived the Partition under the military rule. The researcher analyzes the novel in terms of a post colonial angle. However, the researcher finds that it is an important example of the "empire writing back", made all the more powerful as it is written in the "Centre" for the "Centre". Shamsie by picturing Hiroko, a woman character, implicitly alluded to the west policies towards the east. In tackling Hiroshima bomb, the Partition of the sub-continent, 11 September 2001, Guantanamo Bay and how the Muslim prisoners suffer. The researcher also finds that the Empire is for the west. This is what Shamsie tries to tell, the west responsibility for the east suffering.

Due to the great scope of this novel, the researcher finds it apt to divide the study into chapters. The first chapter is introductory in that it gives the cultural, political and social background of the novel and its writer. It also presents the questions of the study, objectives and statement of the problem. Chapter Two is about the review of related literature, both theoretical and empirical. The third one is about the methodology and procedures used in the study.

Chapter four is the core of the study in that it gives a detailed analysis of this novel, characterization, topics and the political events surrounding the life of the female character. Chapter five is the conclusion where the main items are summarized and highlighted. It also answers the questions of the study.

**Key words:** Kamila Shamsie, *Burnt Shadows*, Postcolonialism, Feminism, Politics, history, Pakistan, 9/11, Nagazaki,

## المخلص باللغة العربية

### تحليل نقدي لرواية الظلال المحترقة للكاتبة كاملة شمسي

إعداد الطالبة: إيمان محمد العميشات

إشراف الأستاذ الدكتور: صبار سلطان السعدون

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إبراز أدب الروائية الباكستانية- الأمريكية - البريطانية كاملة شمسي (1973) و بشكل خاص روايتها "الظلال المحترقة" (2009).

وتلقي الدراسة الضوء على الكاتبة الباكستانية التي عاشت الانقسام وقسوته، وعانت عندما كانت دولتها تخضع للحكم العسكري. وترى الباحثة أن الكاتبة اختارت شخصية هيروكو لتعبر عن معاناة الشعب والمرأة خاصة. وأنها تتناول مواضيع هامة عالمية ك انفجار هيروشيما، والانقسام الهندي الباكستاني وأحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر ومعاناة سجناء معتقل غوانتيمو، أرادت أن تثير تساؤلات حول مدى تورط الغرب بالإساءة للشرق والمساعدة على إخضاعه والسيطرة عليه.

ونظراً للمجالات الواسعة التي تتناولها هذه الرواية ترى الباحثة أن من الملائم تقسيم الدراسة إلى أربعة أجزاء إذ يكون الفصل الأول فصلاً تمهيدياً وتقديمياً حيث يعرض الخلفية الثقافية والسياسية والاجتماعية للرواية ولكاتبتها وتتضمن أسئلة وأهداف وأهمية الدراسة ويتناول الفصل الثاني الدراسات النظرية والعملية السابقة أما الفصل الثالث فيسلط الضوء على المنهجية والإجراءات التي اتبعتها الباحثة في الدراسة و يعرض الفصل الرابع تحليلاً مفصلاً للقضايا التي تتناولها الرواية وهو محور الرسالة الأساسي ففي هذا الفصل تتناول الباحثة القضايا السياسية المحيطة بحياة البطلة أما الفصل الأخير فهو الخاتمة والتوصيات حيث تركز الباحثة على المواضيع الأساسية المطروحة في الفصل الرابع و تسلط الضوء عليها. كذلك تجيب على الأسئلة التي تطرحها الرواية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية :** كاملة شمسي، الظلال المحترقة، حركة ما بعد الاستعمار، الحركة النسوية، السياسة، التاريخ، أحداث الحادي عشر من سبتمبر، ناجزكي،

## **Chapter One**

### **Introduction**

The following chapter is introductory in that it sheds some light on the nature and characteristics of South Asian Literature which is the background of Kamila Shamsie's literature. It also gives an idea about the position Shamsie aptly engages in contemporary Pakistani literature as well as the Western literature.

#### **1- 1. South Asian Literature and its characteristics**

Any serious study of Kamila Shamsie's fiction can be best approached through locating it within the wide framework of South Asian Literature. The reason behind such a view is that Shamsie is a contemporary novelist writing within a certain tradition prevalent in South Asian countries such as India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Srilanka. These writers share many cultural and political concerns. In fact these countries provide some common points as regards the relation between the writer and his reading public, the expectations of readers and above all the real concerns of those people in relation to the dominant political factors.

World War II and the difficult political situations left their impact on the type of writing and its orientation. Muneeza Shamsie sees that "Pakistani writers employ English as a creative language live between the East and the West, literally or figuratively, and had to struggle to be heard. They write from the extreme edges of both English and Pakistani literature." (M. Shamsie, 2008:1)

Another equally significant factor which has to be taken into account is the Partition of India and its traumatic effects on the inhabitants of the Sub-continent. The drastic outcome of this event is the atomic armament of the warring countries i.e. India and Pakistan, a point that Kamila Shamsie will explore in her novel, *Burnt Shadows* . As Joe Cleary argues, in such partitioned societies, cultural narratives play a number of very important functions:

They represent one of the media through which the traumas of Partition is subsequently memorialised and understood by peoples involved; they can also help either to ratify the state of divisions produced by Partition or to contest the partitionist mentalities generated by such divisions.

(Cited in Didur,2006 p.5)

Pakistani literature differs from Indian in that it is concerned with the Middle East, Central Asia, East Africa, and beyond that drive from its Muslim identity. The new generation of Pakistani writers include Mohammad Hanif, Mohsin Hamid, Kamila Shamsie who have lived during the Zia administration. They have similar thematic interests, like their Indian counterparts. They often write about state, military rule and the position of the individual under such circumstances.

In fact, modern Pakistan shares many concerns with other Third World countries such as lack of justice, military rule, poverty and cultural problems stemming from the encounter between the local and universal, traditional and modern. These pressures which will be reflected in the works of Kamila Shamsie and her generation are: globalization, international organizations, the spread of new global norms, global interdependency, ease of transportation, reducing isolation, loss of control

over international communications [...] rising regionalism, ethnicity, criminal organizations, and the breakdown of state control and authority. (Hayes, 2004)

This mixture between the eastern and western will be the feature of the emerging writers from Pakistan, who have been educated and/or lived outside Pakistan. These writers are preoccupied with the memories of Partition of the Indian subcontinent, the war of 1971 or the Islamization of the state. Others write about the immigrant experience. Most of them tackle issues of identity, hybridity, home or exile.

### **1-2. Kamila Shamsie: Reputation, Distinction and Achievement**

Although Kamila Shamsie is very young, she has succeeded in distinguishing herself as one of the important Pakistani writers living in Diaspora. Her academic achievement is in line with her writing interests since she got her B.A in creative writing from Hamilton College (New York), and another degree from Massachusetts, Amherst. Her novel, *In The Cityby The Sea* (1998), was shortlisted for the John Llewellyn Rhys prize in the UK (Yoan, 2011:1).

A passing look at the number of reviews, interviews held with her and the seminars and events she continuously holds testifies to the fact that she has achieved a firm position in the western literary scene as well as the Pakistani one. In addition to fiction writing, Shamsie herself is a successful reviewer and columnist-primarily for *the Guardian*- in addition to many other Pakistani newspapers. In her articles, Shamsie is keeping up writing and commenting, on every new issue related to her country Pakistan and other Islamic countries of the world. She has been a judge for several literary awards for new writing and the Guardian First Book Award.

Shamsie works as a trustee for English pen, and often counted as providing a voice for women in Pakistan. (Khan, 2011)

As one of the most prominent young women Pakistani novelists, Kamila Shamsie occupies an important position. From her early beginnings, Shamsie has attracted the attention of critics as well as common readers. For example, Salman Rushdie and Anita Desai give appraisals of her fiction. She is able to make her characters, male and female alike, appeal to the readers. This is because she uses different situations where the passions, fears and anxieties of these become evident.

In order to understand Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*, for example, there is a need for understanding and appreciating the political and cultural background of the work, without which it is impossible to understand it. In her novel *Kartography* (2002) she writes describing this country "In a Land that is always on the edge of riot and despair" (p.54). As Mark Stein has pointed out, Kamila Shamsie's work tends to undermine the "habitual classification of literary texts in terms of national or regional literature" (2009, p.251).

One of her fellow writers, Pankaj Mishra, author of *From the Ruins of Empire*, and *An End to Suffering* praises her recent novel saying that:

*A God in Every Stone* confirms Kamila Shamsie as a very rare and uniquely rewarding writer. She can brilliantly dramatize conflicts of characters and weave intricate and absorbing plots while also crisply fulfilling the newer, and indeed more formidable, obligations of the contemporary novelist; to set individual destinies in the enlarged and uneven arena of our globalized world. (May 30, 2015: The Atavist Magazine. "A God in Every Stone") ([https:// atavist.com/stories/a-god-in-every-stone/](https://atavist.com/stories/a-god-in-every-stone/))

Another reviewer goes on to say that:

In Pakistan, she is considered as a strong national voice and is assigned an ambassadorial status, regardless of her in -continuous geographical relations with the nation. Shamsie has explored the notions of terrorism and nationalism from a postcolonial angle, encouraging her readers to access these phenomena from alternative and unfamiliar position (Khan, 2011: p.55)

Her novel, *Burnt Shadows*, has highly inventive imagery and lyrical prose, which brings to mind some of the strategies used by Salman Rushdie. Indeed the influences of Rushdie's writings on her own have been pointed out in the following:

There was no need to announce that dinner was served-the aroma was dinner-gong enough. There was *Pulao* with peas nestling in the rice; *prawnvindaloo* which made Hasan's eyes stream and throat burn just from looking at it; *murghmussalum* made with such tender pieces of chicken that Imran was seen hugging three members of the Bodyguard after he sampled it[...] At the end of the table a basket of na'an was surrounded by various a *chaarschutneys* and the delicacy which Aba claimed Shakespeare had foretold: " Such stuffed chillies as dreams are made on (Shamsie *In The City By The Sea* ,p.66)

The influence of Rushdie is in the use of an individual's life as a way of writing about national and international politics. Rushdie's preoccupation with other writers like Sterne or Marquez is so central and striking that his art becomes a subject of reproach. Given that "Rushdie has freely acknowledged his many debts to earlier writers, it is not surprising that some readers reproach him with a lack of true originality." (Brians: 2003p. 32).

In more than one situation, Shamsie acknowledges her debt to Rushdie and other writers who mix successfully between the realistic and

fictional, especially "the sense of wonder and possibility that I allowed to be awakened in me by Salman Rushdie and Desai and Carter and Garcia Marquez. Anything was possible in history! Anything was possible in the novel!" (Smith, et al, 2014p.30)

Agha Shahid Ali, the Kashmiri American poet who was one of Shamsie's writing teachers, supported her imagining nostalgia for a past not experienced, a willingness to entertain alternative histories, an active reaching out for and incorporation of Islamic traditions along with western literature. Agha Shahid Ali also encouraged Shamsie's use of extending a poetic image throughout the novel so that it takes on multiple significances. (King, 2011.p.150)

### **1-3. Kamila Shamsie: The Woman, Writer, Politics, *Burnt Shadows*, and the East-West Cross-Cultures.**

Kamila Shamsie (b.1973) is the author of six novels. She chose Karachi as their setting. Her international experiences have given her a different perspective on her home environment. For example, Khan argues that "This sense of double belonging sometimes categorized as an enabling homelessness, empowers Shamsie with the ability to ask questions as an insider and an outsider simultaneously" (Khan, 2011:55). She often tackles cross-cultural relationships and historical background. For example, about her fourth novel *Broken Verses* (2005), she says during an interview with her Shamsie said that it was:

Difficult to be in Aasmani's head. One time I had to go for along vigorous swim to clear my head. But because I am writing about actual Pakistanis, rather than stereotypes, the knock on effect is to confront those stereotypes people come up and tell me that my novels give them a very different idea of the place (Brown, 2005).



Given her cultural dislocation as she finds herself in a totally new environment (Britain), it is natural that Shamsie will devote her creative energies to highlight the place of her childhood and early experiences. Of course, she is not an exception here as there are so many writers who have initiated or followed similar ways, including Salman Rushdie, Vladimir Nabokov or Tayyeb Saleh. Salman Rushdie is her mentor especially in style and, choosing topics, particularly in *Midnight's Children* where he "successfully broke down normal English rhythms to release a subcontinental sound" (Lal, 2007, p. 257). As such, it is helpful and relevant to quote his Rushdie's view about the nature of narrative craft:

Description itself is political act. The black American writer Richard Wright once wrote that black and white Americans were engaged in a war over the nature of reality. Their descriptions were incompatible. So it is clear that redescribing a world is the necessary first step towards changing it. ( Cited in Mader,2009:6)

Thus Shamsie chooses London as her permanent place. Other Pakistani writers have done the same such as Mohsin Hamid and Nadeem Aslam. One of these, Aamer Hussain has the following to say regarding this experience:

I haven't discarded notions of commitment and belonging. But a modest lack of ideological dogma is crucial to the engaged writer. I claim, with fiction as my only instrument, the native's right to argue and discuss my history with my compatriots. I guess that makes me a Pakistani writer (Lal, 2007:256)

Shamsie emphasizes the idea of the "other" according to religion, nationality and geography. This applies to her view of history as well as those with whom she lives. As the writer Zahid Hussain puts it " There is an attendant danger of abstracting Muslims from the historical record

(when often writers are not practicing or not interested in Islam)" (Chambers, 2012:270).

Pakistani writers such as Bapsi Sidhwa, Zulfikar Ghose, and Adam Zameenzad have received good reception and approval. Many of them have earned higher education in the US or the UK, but they did not assimilate themselves into American or English tradition and culture. "Instead, they focused on their Pakistani identities and write novels from that perspective. And they try to raise voices for the repressed ethnic minorities." (Sachi, 2012:10).

Shamsie's novel has attracted the attention of different critics and fellow writers. For example, Bruce King describes Shamsie as a "writer of political fiction" who tackles many themes, including a background of political events starting from Partition, the ethnic conflicts of 1971 and 1990, down to the Women's Movement against Zia ul Haq's partial Laws against women. The main theme in her novels is the need to look fearless at the past to understand the present. According to Shafieque and Yaqoob "History and culture of the subcontinent, and Pakistan in particular are her other themes, in all her novels" (2012, p.1). For example, her most recent novel, *A God in Every Stone* (2014) discusses war, colonialism and gender. The recurrent themes in her fiction continue to be the encounter of people from different cultures, especially in the West as well as the great impact of history and politics on people's lives.

Among all Shamsie's novels, the one which has biographical elements of her life is *Salt and Saffron* (2000). The protagonist, Aliya, like Shamsie herself, is returning to her family in Karachi after studying in the US "which eventually makes her see her culture from a different perspective" (Nyman, 2009:109). In this novel, as in her other novels,

Shamsie emphasizes the nation and the traumatic consequences of its division within the notion of the family. It is represented in several personal and political traumas that challenge straightforward reading. Ambreen Hai (2000) proposes, in an article on Bapsi Sidhwa's novel *Cracking India* (1989), that it deals with the disturbance associated with the Partition, that This "bi-national" trauma has only recently become an object of interest. Shamsie herself has the following to say:

We are all the walking wounded. Take this relative we were about to meet: Baji. Fifty years on from Partition, and according to Samia she still couldn't talk about those who left for Pakistan without rancour. That whole generation of my relatives mystified me. How they sustained, for so long, the bitterness brought on by the events of 1947? I could believe it of one person, or two, but good God! Our family was huge and yet there was never any word of conciliation across the borders of India and Pakistan. They grew up together: Dadi and Baji and the triplets and scores of other cousins *Salt and Saffron*. (Shamsie, 2000:33)

In her *Broken Verses* (2005) she carries on raising the same national, political and cultural problems in Pakistan. The main character is Samia Akram who goes abroad and remains for fourteen years as a result of her emotional shock resulting from her lover's death. She does this, leaving behind her fourteen years old girl, Aasmaani.

Shamsie evokes a mother - daughter relationship, which is a particular and deep relationship that determines the future progress of the woman. This is because the mother is the fundamental role model and teacher of cultural values.

Her type of fiction is characterized by a great extent of authenticity and credibility. Her female characters appear to be similar to the type Shamsie herself represents. For this reason, her female characters in this

novel as in her other novels are educated, emancipated, entitled, and diasporic like herself. The choice of the professions of Samina and the poet gives a view into Pakistan's socio- political and literary scene (Dabir, 2008:245)

The following is just a representative example from Shamsie's third novel *Kartography* that shows different themes in her fiction.

Back then, of course, maps weren't used for travel. They were mainly used for illustrating stories. There stands Mount Olympus. That's where Theseus fought the Minotaur. That kind of stuff. So maps weren't about going from point A to point B; they were about helping someone hear the heartbeat of a place. (*Kartography*, 2002:164)

In this novel, Shamsie depicts Karachi's map as register of the historical event that happened in 1980s with a back story of flashback to the war of 1971 which led to the independence of Pakistan's eastern wing as Bangladesh.

Shamsie attended Al- Sharjah International Book Fair held on 7 November,2014, a literary forum about literary and personal experiences. This forum highlights some of the Arab writers like, An 'am Kachachi,Dr. Saleh Huwaidi and the moderator Fathiya AL- Nimer. During the discussion Shamsie emphasized the importance of the writer's own and first city, which is the source of inspiration of all his/her writing and events, when she started to write about her city, Karachi. There she found deservable real places that swing between development and conflicts, while the human feelings running through it. But she discovered that writing about other places is no less interesting than Karachi. (<http://www.Saudigazette.com>)

Also Shamsie discusses in her novels like *Burnt Shadows*, *BrokenVerses* and her volume of Essays *Offence: The Muslim Case* (2009) that Islam must be located in the " Nation", the homeland. In other words, she is a writer who is quite aware that she is addressing a cosmopolitan audience with different cultures and religions. Shamsie believes that it is not possible in the post-September epoch that Muslims keep themselves away from other cultures and modes of living .This idea is reinforced in Abdullah's observation in *Burnt Shadows*: " Everyone just wants to tell you what they know about Islam, how they know so much more than you do, what do you know, you've just been a Muslim your whole life?" (*Burnt Shadows*, p.352). So Shamsie is interested in clarifying the misunderstanding about Islam since Islam goes in line with her ideas about the necessity of not imposing it on others (Ahmed et al, 2012:p.211). However, they have to be open - minded to other views and concerns.

Sometimes her tone becomes apologetic and defensive when she states in *Offence*, that " Muslims are not a monolith.... placed on one side of a divide, lobbing grenades at the west" (Shamsie, 2009:15).

This is what Shamsie wrote about the importance of fiction in conveying the actual life events in *The Guardian* entitled " More Honest than Facts":

Fiction writers go where news reporters and historians dare not tread: into characters' heads, into the dreams they lose at the moment of waking, into the memories forgotten, the fears never articulated even to themselves. We do all this, even while making stuff up or distorting and embellishing "what really happened" for the sake of a dramatic arc; and, in so doing, we claim our ability to convey emotional truths, more revelatory about a time and place than any series of facts.

Shamsie is obsessed with history, and politics as already mentioned. This provides a good material for her fiction. Like her more recent novel *A God in Every Stone*, she states " That's what I want for my life. I want to go to Peshawar [...] Because there's more past than Two and a half thousand years of history beneath its soil. How long a list of reasons do you need?"(p.42)

Shamsie's attraction to Urdu poetry is evident as she quotes poets like Sir Mohammad Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz in many epigraphs of her chapters which are connected with the theme of the Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. This is clear for example in the epigraph of her novel *Burnt Shadows* when she quoted the Kashmirian poet Agha Shahid Ali in his *ANostalgias'MapofAmerica*:

.....A time  
 To recollect  
 Every shadow, everything the earth was losing,  
 a time to think of everything the earth  
 and I had lost, of all  
 That I would lose,  
 of all that I was losing.(p.II)

The influence of the Kashmirian poet Agha Shahid Ali on Shamsie is obvious in her fiction writing such as the following examples reflecting her ability to absorb such writers.

'I 'll fall'

'You won't fall'.

'I 'II fall. I' II fall and I' II die'. As I said it,

I could see it happening. The foot stepping on air, pulling the rest of my body with it, tree limbs breaking as I plummeted down.

'No, 'he said, his voice assured, ' you'd never do that to me". (Kamila Shamsie, 2002:p.16)

There is a sensitivity to language as noticed in her fiction's frequent use of puns, allusions, and wordplay. Her fourth novel *Broken Verses*, as shown by Rana Dagupta's (2005) review, depends on similar linguistic strategies in its "delight in words and all their shades of meaning". The following passage shows the definition of the word "current" which reflects the impossibility of fixing the meaning because of the intermediate power of the metaphor. It goes without saying that such a stand brings her fiction closer to the post- modernistic type of writing with its too much emphasis on the various connotations and implications of the word or phrase:

Down the definition of COMBUST. I flipped past CONTRA MUNDUM and CORUSCATE and CUMULAS until I reached CURRENT. I knew currents move in gyres, clockwise in the northern hemisphere and anticlockwise in the southern hemisphere. I knew the poet had told me, years ago, that if we could only view the motion of currents as metaphors for the gyres of history-we'd know the absurdity of declaring the world is divided into East and West. I knew my mother's voice at the beach, cautioning me against undercurrents (*Broken Verses*, 2006:24).

The novel, as the passage quoted above illustrates and emphasizes the characteristics of language using the metaphor of the sea. Its undercurrents are risky and troublesome working against the intention of the speaker and oppose control. (Nyman, 2011:6)

As post-colonial texts, Shamsie's novels employ untranslated words to represent cultural practices and objects with no correspondents in English. These cover, for example, terms referring to clothing Shalwar Kameeze, Kurta- Shalwar, dishes, Pakora, biryani, Seekh Kabab, Jalaibee, and practices of eating (iftar, Sehri), and religious, Political, and aesthetic terminology (eid, maulan), Ummah. Their importance lies in the attempt to make a sense of cultural difference. And it also creates a sense of foreignness in the text. (Nyman, 2011:6)

Thus Shamsie's subtle use of the language, its use and implications is vital in giving her fiction its distinct brand. The themes are deep and varied, taken from actual life. The narrative devices are fresh and in line with the writings of important names like Salman Rushdie and Garcia Marquez.

#### **1-4. *Burnt Shadow*: Particularity and Implications**

The idea that sparked *Burnt Shadows*, while Shamsie was still a University student in America, was when she once heard someone say,

Even if you accept the argument used to justify Hiroshima, how do you justify Nagazaky? For some reason this stuck in my mind - how could anyone witness the devastation of Hiroshima and three days later decide to repeat the act? Shamsie added in an interview with Michele Filgate entitled " Why a second bomb (27 Apr 2009) (<https://www.bookbrowse.com>).

She fictionalized this main argument in her novel which is discussed here in the following unanswerable question:

And the thing is, I still don't understand. Why did they have to do it? Why a second bomb? Even the first is beyond anything I can [...]. But a second. You do that, and see what you've done, and then you do it again. How is that....? (Shamsie, 2009, 99).



The nuclear race between Pakistan and India is a reason for her interest in what happened in Japan in 1945. She was interested in Nagasaki, she read a book by John Hearsy. In section 46 of his book *Hiroshima*, Shamsie read this passage: " On some undressed bodies, the burns had made patterns of undershirt straps and suspenders and, on the skin of some women (since white repelled the heat from the bomb and dark clothes absorbed it and conducted it to the skin. The shapes of flowers they had had on their Kimonos" (Hearsy, 1946:p.46)

*Burnt Shadows*, Shamsie's fifth novel, was shortlisted for the Orange Prize in England. It is the first novel to move outside Karachi. *Burnt Shadows* covers a wide space of history from the Second World War to Guantanamo Bay. It traces the final days of the Second World War in Japan, and India before Partition in 1947. Also it talks about Pakistan in the early 1980s, New York in the aftermath of 11 September and Afghanistan in the wake of US bombing campaign. All this is set around the stories of two families who join individuals of several different nationalities and several cross- cultural relationships. (Duce, 2011:6)

It opens, after -9/11, in Guantanamo Bay. An unknown man shackled and scared asks as he is asked to the cell 'how did it come to this?', bringing to mind Hamlet's famous shock at the terrible realization of his mother's remarriage " that it should come to this". The main character is a Japanese woman, Hiroko Tanaka, whose beloved German fiancée, Konrad Weiss, was killed by the Nagasaki atomic bomb. In search of a new beginning, Hiroko travels to India to find Konrad's relatives. (Duce, 2011:66). The scene of bombing on Hiroko is described as follows:

The light is physical. It throws Hiroko forward, sprawling. Dust enters her mouth, her nose, as she hits the ground, and it burns. Her first

response is a fear that the fall has torn her mother's silk Kimono. She raises herself off the ground, looks down. There is dirt on the Kimono, but no tear. Yet something is wrong. She stands up. The air is suddenly hot and she can feel it on her skin. She can feel it on her back. She glides her hand over her shoulder, touches flesh where there should be silk. Moves her hand further down her back, touches what is neither flesh nor silk but both. She wonders if this has something to do with the burning she felt as she fell. Now there is no feeling. She taps the place that is neither flesh nor silk. There is no feeling at all. (Shamsie, 2009:26).

After this disastrous event in Hiroko's life in Japan. She manages to leave to India searching for a new beginning in India.

Several cross - cultural relations are established: Hiroko falls in love with her employee the Muslim, Sajjad Ashraf and gets married to him. After the Partition of British India, Hiroko and Sajjad take their son Raza to live in Pakistan. In such a way Sajjad loses his homeland, Delhi. Likewise, Hiroko lost Nagasaki.

Shamsie has been praised for writing this fiction with its universal appeal. She has covered a wide range of events, situations and cultural issues. It is because of this novel's ability to move beyond the local and regional that Shamsie won all types of admiration and respect. The Indian novelist Anita Desai praises the novel as follows: " *Burnt Shadows* is audacious in its ambition epic in its scope. A startling expansion of the author's intentions, imagination and craftsmanship. One can only admire the huge advances she has made, and helped us to make, in understanding the new global tensions.

(<http://us.macmillan.com/burntshadows/kamilashamsie>)

The same applauding of appreciation was given by Nadeem Aslam who wrote about it saying: " In this brilliant book, Kamila Shamsie, opens a vista onto the century we have just lived through pointing out its terror and solace. She is so extraordinary a writer that she also offers hints about the century we are living through- the dark corners that contain challenges as well as the paths that lead to beauty's lair"

(<http://us.macmillan.com/burntshadows/kamilashamsie>)

This novel has been translated into more than 20 languages. One finds it a little bit surprising that in the Arab world only one translation and it is (Al Thelal al Mohtariqa translated by Iman Hirzallah) has been conducted as its worlds are not far from the concerns and cares of the Arab region. Indeed, *Burnt Shadows* addresses questions of home, family, loss, political history, identity, gender equality and presents them from a post-colonial perspective. It traces many conflicts as lived by different generations.

The way in which Shamsie sees the relationships between the civilizations is totally different. This is embedded in the character of Konrad Weiss, who is a scholar and artist, trying to see how Eastern and Western civilizations could live in harmony. Konrad once told Hiroko that ".....Barriers made of metal could turn fluid when touched simultaneously by people on either side....." (Shamsie, 2009:82)

The romance between Konrad and Hiroko is interrupted by the flash of light that renders Konrad a shadow on stone and burns the birds on Hiroko's Kimono into her back exemplified by this quotation:

"There. See? There'.

'How can you be sure it's him?'

'No one else in Nagasaki could cast such a long shadow? (Shamsie, 2009:29)

This novel is different from Shamsie's other novels since it is one of the longest books she has written. The different sections of the book serve one important function: showing the evolution of the characters in a very hectic situation. The protagonist is a Japanese woman who cannot be identified with the writer herself. Thus the reader is in a position to perceive her character as the only survivor of the atomic bomb and all the great implications involved. As one of her critics puts it, " In the novel by Kamila Shamsie *Burnt Shadows* the characters depicted belong to a plethora of seemingly disparate cultures (the Japanese, the English, the Indian, the Pakistani, the Afghan and American) that progressively reveal their shared and interwoven history." (Dagnino, 2013)(*Trans cultural Studies*", No.2.)

### **1-5. Stylistic Aspects of *Burnt Shadows***

Kamila Shamsie's style of writing is unique, and this is clear in her novels. One of the important features is that she paints pictures through the rhetorical devices and visual images she uses in her fiction. This can be seen in the following example: " She seemed lodged, like a tear, in the corner of my eye, evaporating in the instant I turned to look at her." (Broken Verses, p. 65) In one of the press reviews about Shamsie's fiction, the following emphasis is placed on her type of writing:

"I love Shamsie's beautiful painting with words. I've enjoyed her previous books for the way that the sweep of human history touches and turns the intimate lives of her characters. Unsurprisingly, this book ... has already achieved widespread critical acclaim" – ShamiChakrabarti, 2014.

The clever way of describing cities, characters, situations is memorable. She gives the reader a full understanding of the situation. For example, in describing Afghanistan after the cold war:

The sky and ground were in different centuries - one cut open by the blades of a Huey chopper, the other smothered by a collapsed fort and the remnants of mud houses. After two decades of war, barely anything lived here other than juniper bushes and small groups of villagers. (Burnt Shadows, 2009, p. 279)

Shamsie has her special way in describing events of the novel, when she describes Raza's fear of the CIA accusation after Harry's death:

Raza stepped out of the jeep and unbuttoned the soft top. The stars glittered malevolently. One phone call from Steve - perhaps that call had already been made - and he would enter data banks the world over as a suspected terrorist. His bank accounts frozen. His mother's phone tapped. His emails and phone logs, his Internet traffic, his credit-card receipts: no longer the markers of his daily life allowing him to wind a path back through a..... (307)

The simile is skillfully conducted by Shamsie as in the following quote of Hiroko's vision of teaching: " images of classrooms swooping into her thoughts the way memories of flight might enter the minds of broken-winged birds."(5)

The detailed descriptions in the novel in her narration of the shelter in Nagasaki is but an outstanding way of narrating as if such an event is being directly reported to a new agency:

Someone new enters the shelter, and everyone else is squeezed back even further, though there is nothing but polite murmurs of apology to signal the indignity of being so closely pressed up to the armpits and

groins of strangers. Hiroko finds herself moving back into a gap which has opened up from necessity rather than any physical possibility, and finds herself beside two boys [.....].(Burnt Shadows, 2009, p.19)

Shamsie's novel is dense in information that is in this novel she tries to write as much historical information as possible. In this novel she traces world history from the end of the Second World War II to 9/11 2001. The events are interwoven and interrelated with suspense.

The setting of her novel mixes between fiction and reality, history and imagination. Also there is a striking variety and shifting in place and time. History is certainly there when she informs the reader about painful factual details such as the Partition of the Indian subcontinent, the destruction of Nagasaki, the Afghan war, the Sept.11, 2001 and the war against terrorism. Her mixture between memory and reality, past and present, factual and fictional are brilliantly presented as seen in the following excerpt:

Although it was December the afternoon sun was still hot, and the sea breeze which had been so refreshing just a couple of miles back seemed unable to force its way through the thick fumes. Harry distracted himself with architecture, admiring the loveliness of an enclosed balcony jutting out from a yellow-stone colonial building, its lower half fashioned from delicate woodwork, its upper half coloured glass. (Burnt Shadows, 149)

The tone of the novel shows a great extent of wit as seen in the following excerpt:

“I’m an uppie. A yuppie no longer young. Sameer suggested prefixing ‘geriatric’ but I will not be a guppie.” I wouldn’t allow myself to laugh, so instead I said archly, “Nothing less than smoked salmon for Dadi.” “I

was thinking along the lines of a swordfish.” Had she always possessed this virtue of self-parody? (107)

Shamsie's writing is self-conscious in pointing to her use, even parodies, of literary models, whether Shakespeare's plays or popular romance. Thus the pages already pointed show that Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* is a good example of the East - West relation and its problematic nature. The characters, situations, events and attitudes are driven to one central point i.e the author's interest in presenting the eastern expatriate among the westerners and what sort of problems ensues as a result. This theme is presented with great stylistic and technical dexterity that the reader can only appreciate the subtle structure and brilliant language.

#### **1-6.Kamila Shamsie: A Brief Biographical Account**

Kamila Naheed Shamsie is a Pakistani British novelist; she grew up in Karachi. She is the daughter of a fiction writer and literary critic, Muneeza Shamsie, and the grand-niece of the author Attia Hosain. She grew up during Zia-ul-Huq's dictatorship and misogynist military government in 1980s, when women's freedom in Pakistan was threatened (Mader, 2009:5). Shamsie was partially educated creative writing at Upstate New York, and now based in London (Yoan, 2011:33). She has a B.A in creative writing from Hamilton College, and an M.F.A from MFA program for poets and writers at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, where she was influenced by the Kashmiri poet Agha Shahid Ali (Yoan, 2011:6)

She has written six novels, the recent one being *A God in Every Stone* (2014), which tackles historical, postcolonial aspects of the past. *In The City by The Sea* (1998) was her first novel, when she was just 25, and her third novel is *Kartography* (2002). The first and third novels were

both shortlisted for the John Llewellyn Rhys prize. *Salt and Saffron*, her second novel, followed in 2000, after which she was selected as one of Orange's 21 writers of the 21 century *Kartography* and *Broken Verses* (2005) have won the Patras Bokhari Award from the Academy of letters in Pakistan . She was chosen by Granta as one of the best of young British writers of 2013. (Mader, 2009:96).

In the previous pages, there have been references to the great admiration Shamsie holds as regards the writings and art of the Indian Salman Rushdie. Obviously the admiration is mutual as seen through his evaluation of her work when he says:

Kamila Shamsie is a writer of immense ambition and strength. She understands a great deal about the ways in which the worlds many tragedies and histories shape one another, and about how human beings can try to avoid being crushed by their fate and can discover their humanity, even in the fiercest combat zones of the age.

<http://us.macmillan.com/burntshadows/kamilashamsie>)

Woman rights is one of her recurrent interests that she mentioned in her recent novel *A God in Every Stone* she has the following to say:

But, Miss Spencer, I should strike a note of caution. I know there 'v been women archaeologists in Greece, in Turkey. Even Egypt. But this is Peshawar. Pathan men don't much like the idea of woman...

"Don't like the idea of women doing what?

Don't much like the idea of women."(Shamsie: p.98).

It is because of Shamsie's interest in the question of woman's rights that the present study devotes much space to her feminism and universal issues.



### **1-7. Statement of the problem**

Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* is one of the contemporary novels where the writer raises a host of questions. The present study seeks to explore some of the feminist and post-colonial aspects of this famous novel.

### **1-8. Questions of the study**

The current study will answer the following questions:

1. What are the main characteristics of Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*?
2. What are the common and recurrent themes in Kamila Shamsie's novel particularly feminism and post-colonialism?
3. What are the main techniques and stylistic aspects used in her fiction?
4. What is writer's current status in terms of her novel?

### **1-9. Objectives of the study**

The current study aims at achieving the following objectives

1. To define the characteristics of Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*.
2. To identify the common and recurrent themes in Kamila Shamsie's novel in particular feminist and post – colonial aspects.
3. To define the main techniques and stylistic aspects of her fiction.
4. The position of this novel in contributing to the writer's current status in comparison with other Pakistani novelists.

### **1-10. Significance of the study**

The significance of the present study is that it handles a Pakistani writer (Kamila Shamsie) about whom few studies have been written in this part of the world. Thus, the researcher attempts to shed light on feminist and post-colonial aspects of her novel *Burnt Shadows*. Also it shows some aspects manifested in her fiction. Moreover, it highlights the stylistic and techniques sides of the novel.

### **1-11. Limitation of the study**

The current study is limited to exploring the main aspects of *Burnt Shadows*. As such, it is expected that it will not cover the other novels, although there are casual references here and there to these where relevant.

## Chapter Two

### Review of Related Literature

#### 2-0. Introduction

#### 2-1. Theoretical Studies

In this section, the researcher examines some of the literature that deals with the subject of the current study. These will form the basis of the present analysis of *Burnt Shadows*. The researcher will cite these writers and scholars writing about this particular novel and its writer, as well as the underlying sociocultural movements such as feminist or cultural studies that represent the background of the study.

Fetterley's (1900) through her investigation of the American novels; Judith scrutinizes eight novels observing it through a feminist standpoint. In this work Judith suggests stopping what is called emasculation. Bowl by (1997:29) defined emasculation as "the process whereby traditionally women have been brought to read culture like men, accepting male attitudes and understanding their own". This definition makes it clear that women want men to correct the way of looking at women's lives as these men have been nourished in patriarchal society that denies women. While studying these literary works, Judith wants the readers to refuse the typical attitude toward females regardless how they are pictured in any work of literature and to consider alternatives. Judith also directs the readers to avoid men representation that also found in male literary works in which women are pictured as representing anything which is negative or evil. For instance, if a woman murdered or tormented, the readers might defend this inhuman act by replying that they were treated like this manner because of

their beliefs and concepts. It is important to note the frequency with which this happens, and the fact that it may be a reflection of deeply-held beliefs.

Fanon (1961), argued that: "For colonialism, this vast continent was the haunt of savages, a country riddled with superstitions and fanaticism, destined for contempt, weighed down by the curse of God". (211)

Fanon analyzed the psychiatric and psychological dehumanizing effects of colonization. He highlights the violent reactions of colonized nations which are manifested in their condemnation and discontent against the colonizers. The objective behind the reference to this book is the fact that the psychological effects of woman's suffering are no less painful than the colonial experience undergone by the colonized people. So far, the two have not been given equal amounts of attention by any means.

Weinrich's (1979) states that since women are living in a patriarchal society that believes on men empowerment in all aspects of life; feminists need to work in order to eliminate all aspects of discrimination. Feminists have called for women's liberation, freedom of access to abortion, freedom of choice, equality in terms of jobs opportunities and pay, empowerment of women in order to bring an end to the oppression they face (p.97). Significantly enough, this vigorous call for liberating woman is not a twentieth century move. Rather, it dates back to the nineteenth century as seen in the poems and novels of the Victorian women.

Robert Young (1990) tries to deconstruct Western capitalism, through rewriting the western reasoning from Hegel to Michel Foucault. He views Western capitalism as no mere legend. Young's name is one of those prominent in the field of postcolonial studies as well as criticism, literature, and history. History is not neither neutral nor objective; rather it is relative,

depending on how people or authorities view it. Accordingly, Shamsie's presentation of her historical material remains personal and full of subjective overtones and judgments.

Edward Said (1993), explained the effect of the European literature on other people. It is a remarkable work that closely analyses the imperialist experience and its far-reaching effects on the colonized population. He achieved all this through analyzing the works of Western writers and their cultural and intellectual orientation. In this book, Said tackles literature in specific novels, rather than in culture as a whole. By analyzing literary works of the 19th and early 20th century, he sheds light on culture, colonialism and imperialism. Said justifies choosing such works as follows: "first of all I find them estimable and admirable works of art and learning, in which I and other readers take pleasure and from which we derive profit."(xv)

Homi Bhabha has been heavily influenced by Said and Jacques Derrida, especially the arguments about the colonized and colonizer culture. In Homi Bhabha's seminal collection of essays *The location of Culture* (1994) Bhabha stated that: "When historical visibility has faded, when the present tense of testimony loses its power to arrest, then the displacements of memory and the indirections of art offer us the image of our psychi survival" (18). Bhabha sees that the continuous interaction between the colonized and the colonizer will lead not only to emphasizing the colonial authority but threatening its stability. This apparent opposition is possible because the colonized identity is not stable; rather it is in an isolated position, marginalized while the colonizers' identity is already established.

Tandon's (2008) argues that feminism as a trend that was brought up into being in the 19<sup>th</sup> century with partiality against women. It is in his book *Feminism: A Paradigm Shift* (2008) that feminism shows how each period of time is developed and summed up into three movements. The first trend was limited to the turn of 20<sup>th</sup> century, seeking for setting women free from the patriarchal societies in which women play a passive role during their lives with men. The second trend characterized the decades from the 1960s to the 1980s. This trend attacks bias against women in the eyes of law and official power. Throughout the centuries men have been superior due to the rights given to them by the legislations while excluded women's rights. The third trend flourished in 1990 and is still in progress. It came as a reaction against the second trend's failure because it did nothing to help support women's equality (p.65). In this book Tandon sees that feminism is "a theory of the political, economic and social equalities of the sexes". (26) According to this definition, feminists asked for women's fairness in all life levels: the economic level, their rights to have a political position and to be treated equally with men.

Dabir's (2008) probes a multidisciplinary examination of fiction works written by South Asian women novelists like Neelum Saran Gour, Kamila Das, Monica Ali, Bapsi Sidhwa and Kamila Shamsie. Dabir studies many subjects linked with socio-cultural aspects of patriarchy, identity, sexual diversity, and socio-psycho-political-historical portrayals. Dabir argues that: " Kamila Shamsie's *Broken Verses* incorporates various aspects of Pakistan. It is a compassionate book, which intelligently discusses the dilemmas of educated women in Pakistan."(p.237)

Cilano's (2013) shows how literary texts work imaginatively: delve into the past, bring the present, and project a future in terms that facilitate a

sense of collective belonging. Novels like this, including Shamsie's work, take up many historical movements and development, such as pre- 20th century Islamic history, the momentous Partition of the Indian Subcontinent in 1947, the Zia era, and post 9/11 Pakistan, also many other themes, like ethno-national tensions. It also highlights the contributions that the Pakistani novel in English makes to the wider fields of postcolonial and South Asian literary and cultural studies in general.

Cilano's book concludes by arguing for the defense of national identities. Instead, its argument focuses on the protagonist, Hiroko Tanaka, a Japanese woman who survived the US nuclear of Nagasaki and lived during the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan, Islamization under Zai, the Afghan war, and 9/11. In this book Cilano states that:

Shamsie's *BurntShadows* incorporates the power of the muhajir mythology to illustrate how its characters establish a sense of belonging to Pakistan. In contrast to these visions of an ideal or true definition of natural belonging, other articulations of the nation reflect a greater sensitivity to the linguistic, cultural, religious, and social diversities in the areas that comprise Pakistan. (p.4)

Cilano's (2014) examines how literature by the writers who maintained their Pakistani identity and particularly how its focus seems to be a cultural response to the threat the war posed to a national identity. Cilano attempts to analyze the writing by Pakistani authors in their attempts to handle the radical shock of the war and explains how fiction about the war helps readers understand what the division of the country means for any articulation of a Pakistani group identification:

Despite the central tension of the novel, which arises from the occurrence of a broader (West) Pakistani bias against Bengalis in which the muhajirs also take part, Shamsie's novel exempts from criticism the

claims to belonging muhajirs make. As in Husain's story, then, *Kartography* reinscribes the figure of the muhajir as the origin of Pakistani identity. (p.37)

The author also discusses the issue of 'Pakistaniness', understood as a national collectivity rather than an elite nationalist project. Cilano sheds light on how literary narratives provide another sense of Pakistaniness, that is not based on the Indo-Pak binary division which is seen to be obsolete.

Khan's (2011) deals with the forces of nationalism and transnationalism, and especially the ways in which they are linked in Kamila Shamsie's novel, *Burnt Shadows*. It analyzes the novel in terms of its nationalistic rhetoric, arguing the case for its attempt to critically analyze the status of Pakistanis and Muslims in the post '9/11' world order, particularly within the contemporary discourse on terrorism, capitalism and Islamic fundamentalism. The article tried to link the novel's alternative version of nationalism with the forces of feminism, via the novel's unusual heroin, the indelibly marked Hiroko Tanaka. It argues that while Hiroko poses serious challenges to existing and normative power structures, her physical body serves as a manuscript upon which national and political changes are metaphorically inscribed, echoing the novel's examination of how women's bodies are used as sites of conflict between nationalism and colonialism. Khan argues that: "Shamsie has explored the notions of terrorism and nationalism from a postcolonial angle, encouraging her readers to access these phenomena from alternative and unfamiliar positions" (p.55).

Bahlaq's (2011), M.A. thesis presents Doris Lessing as a writer who discusses many issues through this thesis. These themes range from women's position in society to, colonialism and its impact upon the



colonized. It also shows how Lessing is interested in portraying women's suffering especially in a world where women face systematic and institutional repression. Bahlaq's view of the protagonist of the novel " Her reaction toward his control over her usage of money and objects inside the house is an example of women's sense of secondariness suffering around the world" (p.87).The significance of this work lies partly in the fact that Lessing has written about the effects of colonialism an racism in South Africa, a nation which shares some societal with Pakistan.

Shafique and Yaqoob's (2012), article (Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* as an intersexual re-writing of Forster's *A passage to India*) examines Kamila Shamsie's use of inter textuality in her novel *Burnt Shadows*. Like other postcolonial writers, she aims to write back to the centre. Also it is a deliberate and self-conscious reply to a colonial novel *A Passage to India*. The study explains that authors of literary works select not only words from a language system, but also generic features, aspects of characters and even entire phrases and sentences from existing literary texts and literary traditions. Shafique and Yaqoob find that:

Postcolonial literatures seek to address the ways in which non-European (Asian, African, South American, but also settler colony) literatures and cultures have been marginalized as an effect of colonial rule, and to find, if possible, modes of resistance, retrieval and reversal of their 'own' per-colonial pasts.(p.479)

Postcolonial writers, influenced to various degrees by colonial oppression and marginalization, repeatedly raise questions about identity, instance and discontent in their work. They display resistance in their literature by re-reading and re-writing the colonial texts. This re-reading and re-writing, being important tools of intertextuality, has been seen to be very helpful for the purposes of postcolonial literature studies.

Mallot's (2012) book is a thorough study of the pervasive nature of memory in its role in shaping contemporary culture in South Asia, Also it explores the ways in which memory's empire is continually challenged and re-imagined. The book's lively analysis of literature, film, and urban planning examines the diverse processes and politics of remembering the Subcontinent, and their impact on memory. This work constitutes the examination of the relationship between recalling and forgetting, and the deeply ambivalent responses to these diametrically opposed compulsions. Mallot reveals how writers such as Salman Rushdie, Michael Ondaatje, Kamila Shamsie and Amitav Ghosh create unusual ways of looking at event, some as momentous as the very rise of states and the creation of nations and borders where none had existed.

Mallot states that:

Decades after the 1947 division of India- an event sparking one of the most widespread traumas of the twentieth century, and the greatest forced mass migration ever recorded at the time- the issue of memory has only increased in importance. Even as historians, ethnographers, and novelists sought to preserve and process Partition experience some 50 years after the event, a series of new disasters beset the region, each seemingly inspired by as well as generating traumatic memory: the destruction of the Babri Masjid in 1992, the Mumbai riots of 1992-3, the Gujarat carnage of 2002 [...] memory continues to figure prominently in how India sees its past and negotiates its present. (p. 25)

Chaudhary's (2013) PhD Dissertation investigates the suffering and resistance of these women against patriarchal structures as presented through the fiction of the selected female writers. This study analyzes the works of female Pakistani Anglophone writers including Bapsi Sidhwa and Qaisra Shahraz. The final section of the thesis is the analysis of a novel by

Umera Ahmad a present-day Pakistani female writer who writes in Urdu. Chaudhary claims that " A feminist analysis of literature allows the reader to understand the role of the female figure within the society in which she is being described, along with the social changes around her" (p.33). He also emphasizes the importance of literature and its role in giving the female figures a 'voice' to aid their struggle against patriarchal structures. These works are critically examined to understand their role and importance in addressing, exploring problems faced by women in patriarchal society, specifically through a literary medium.

Immerman and Goedde's (2013) explore the effects of the global cold war by scrutinizing the staggering variety, originality, and range of the new literature, in particular the huge range of different studies. They explore the ways in which countries contributed to- and were affected by- the conflict. These places were never the main actors, instead they had supporting roles partly due to their location and influence: in Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, and in Africa. In this book the editors tried to reassess the cold war based on the new standpoint of these emergent intellectual and theoretical structures, constituting theories that have evolved gradually in the framework of international history.

Immerman and Goedde focuses on the significance of Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* as a work of historical fiction, offering as it does an important means of recovering the complex, multiple global histories which are still in the process of being transformed by the cold war. In *Burnt Shadows*, the story's backdrop is a fabric rich in cold war references, ranging from the 1945 bombing in Nagasaki, to a Karachi teeming with international espionage, to late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21 century wars in

Afghanistan. Immerman describes a snapshot of the lives of Sajjad and Hiroko immediately after their marriage:

Exiled from Dilli, they settle in Karachi and raised, Raza, their son, their lives are overtaken by cold war perils: the threat of nuclear war between India and Pakistan; the growing repression under the US-backed Pakistani military dictatorships; and the shadowy and ubiquitous presence of the CIA and its alliance with Pakistan's ISI (Inter- Services Intelligence). As the agencies police the Pakistan/Afghanistan border, reaching into the border camps and far beyond, Raza is drawn into the intrigue, deceit, and divided loyalties of private military corporations. (p.462)

The impact of these background facts impacts Hiroko's life in a number of interconnected ways: her personal tragedies are tied to those of the city and the region itself, were it not for the US arming of Pakistan and pragmatic support of military dictatorships, along with the pervasive CIA presence in Pakistan and Afghanistan, Sajjad would not have lost his life to an assassin, nor would Hiroko have found herself in Karachi in the first place, living in the shadow of yet another feared nuclear explosion. Eventually she lost her son to the CIA's secret prison complex.

Raibaud et al (2015) assert that the Pakistani English novel came into its own with the arrival of a dynamic younger generation of writers. These included Mohsin Hamid whose novel *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* is an exploration of a young Pakistani's identity crisis, living in New York, immediately after the catastrophic events of 9/11. Mohammed Hanif's satire *A case of Exploding Mangoes* is another work in this category describing Pakistan's involvement with the Afghan fighters in the 1980's. These fighters progressed to form what became known as the Taleban, a particularly uncomfortable fact that many would like to forget. Kamila

Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* is a dizzyingly prodigious in its geographical and historical scope, ranging from Japan to South Asia, and North America, in the hectic period from World War II to the present day.

These writers' work provides an "example of that world literature [...] [which brings] together in novelist from the experiences of the individual when directly confronted by the effects of geopolitics" (Cited in Raibaud et al, p.15). All of the discussed writers have lived between Pakistan and the West. Their novels, published between 2001 and 2011, portray a crisis, not at the relatively superficial level of culture or religion, but at the level of individual identity and belonging in a world that is paradoxically globalized and riven by inequality and existential angst.

For most of these writers, Pakistan's involvement with and support of different fighting groups during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan was the open secret that was a part of their formative years.

Kanwal (2015) is particularly interested in the second- generation writers. In this book Kanwal discusses the many interpretations of the word 'Diaspora', used by theorists since the authors in question are in fact part of this diaspora, eternally preoccupied with the vast range of issues that is symptomatic of this postcolonial condition. Kanwal gives a detailed analysis of fiction by Nadeem Aslam, Kamila Shamsie, Uzma Aslam Khan, Mohsin Hamid, Mohammed Hanif, and other contemporary Pakistani fiction writers, central to which are the themes of home and the implications of the Pakistani Muslim life in the works of these novelists whose work has come to characterize this period. In this book Esra Mirza Santes so uses the term "disorientation" to refer to the unique identity crises of Muslim immigrants in the west, saying: "At the core of disorientation lies the ability to hold ambiguous loyalties, which contest, but at the same

time, constitute each other. With that in mind, disorientation can be creative engagement with new-found agency or a reactive response to severe alienation" (p.20). It is precisely these effects of border crossing on Muslim migrant characters in Shamsie's and Aslam's novels that form the basis of Mirza's work.

## **2-2. Empirical studies**

Deborah's (2009) examination finds that Shamsie's complex fifth novel, spanning the years between August 1945 and September 2001, is a story of two connected and politically influenced families. Konrad Weiss and Hiroko Tanaka, his translator, meet in Nagasaki and plan to marry. But after he is killed by the bomb and she is left permanently scarred, Hiroko journeys to Delhi, where she meets Konrad's half-sister, Elizabeth Burton, and her British husband, James. Hiroko gets married to James' assistant, Sajjad. With Partition between India and Pakistan looming, they join the Burtons as they return to England where their son Henry is still at school. Although Hiroko and Sajjad are married, they're not allowed back into India, since Sajjad is a Muslim who "chose to leave". The novel continues 35 years later in Karachi, where they have one son, Raza, after a number of miscarriages. Henry Burton reappears, seemingly interested in finding out more about his past, and offers to help with Raza's education; by 2001, they're working together for the CIA in the U.S. Shamsie provides a look at the " complicated shared history" of these two families, whose common fate is one of the results of our increasingly globalized world.

Mader's (2009) MA thesis, examines the role of the subaltern within the works of Kamila Shamsie. Mader aims not to disprove or discredit Spivak's theories but to identify and examine the origins of her theory, how she has shaped it, and, of course, how it can be of use to us. Not only is it

important to locate Spivak's work among those of other influential and foundational postcolonial theorists - particularly Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi K. Bhabha - but it is also useful to continue to analyze Spivak's own theory of the subaltern, which has become itself canonized. Three of Kamila Shamsie's texts- *in the City by The Sea*, *Salt Saffron*, and *Kar to graphy*- were used to illustrate how we can use fiction to find useful and effective strategies of resistance, by paying attention to Spivak's theoretical concepts, within the framework of economics and global politics. Mader states that:

Kamila Shamsie's novels, taken in the concert with one another, offer a useful point of entry into an important discussion: if the wealthy and the privileged cannot speak for subaltern women, what might they be able to do, ethically and responsibly? *In the City by the Sea*, *Salt and Saffron*, and *Kartography* each takes a nuanced and creative approach to incrementally making the seemingly impossible possible. (p.12)

Nyman (2009), examines the importance of home and global mobility in contemporary Anglophone diasporic fiction, especially in light of globalization and increasing transnational mobility. This book also demonstrates the construction of identities and homes in the migrants' new homelands by examining wide-ranging case studies dealing with a variety of black and ethnic-American writers. It also shows how the subversion of traditional understanding of nation, citizenship, and history by diasporic novels inscribes hybridity and multiplicity in formerly uniform spaces- an act of rebellion in itself, as well as using the transformation of traditional literary genres such as the Bildungsroman and the Picaresque to explore the question of migration and transformation. The authors discussed include Cary I Phillip, Jamal Mahjoub, Kamila Shamsie and others. Nyman tackled Shamsie's novel *Salt and Saffron* and part of his analysis was:

The story of Aliya the protagonist in this novel is a good example of contemporary migration of a particular kind, involving study in a foreign country, dispersed family members, and diasporic experiences of varying kinds which at least challenge the values of home. The issues of trauma stem from (and also pre-date) the Partition of India and related disruptions in familial relations. These rifts are repeated from generation to generations and affect the lives of diasporic family members in various parts of the globe. (p.76)

Alimam's (2010) M.A thesis shows the themes that Woolf examines, relating to the feminism, financial independence, freedom of mind, and the pressures women may face during the course of their relationship with men whether as a husband or a friend. For example, in Woolf's essay 'A Room of One's Own', she examines how women are excluded from academia and the effects of this exclusion, namely the unequal distribution of wealth.

In 'Three Guineas', Woolf takes up the cause of radical political action in order to mobilize against the rise of fascism and the drift towards war. Besides the analysis, this study is a careful examination of the ideas of those critics who have already given their opinions in this matter." Mindi Kniss, in her review of 'A Room in One's Own' concludes that Woolf's essay is a powerful vehicle for women's independence in creative endeavors. The essay asserts that Virginia Woolf challenges the patriarchal system that allows a man to choose any livelihood he desires, but requires a woman to live her life in full support of his choices instead of choosing her own path. (p.24)

Duce (2011), argues that some postcolonial authors use romance and interpersonal relationships to illustrate the larger political and social forces that affect their relatively marginalized experiences in a global context, as opposed to the writers of traditional fiction who relied on love and romance



for their plots. Duce used postcolonial theory to examine respective novels. One of those writers is Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*, which rests on cataclysmic events of history: the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in 1945, the Partition of India and the formation of Pakistan in 1947, and the consequences of 9/11 in Afghanistan and America in 2001-2002. Shamsie presents the idealized global citizen: Hiroko Tanaka, as the only consistent character, her life spanning the dropping of the bomb on Nagasaki, the partition of India, "Through Hiroko's travels within the novel, Shamsie is able to visit some of the events of the past that explain the present global condition."(p.6) According to Duce, this connection between politics and literature is a fundamental concept in postcolonial studies and it is a defining feature.

Shamsie's primary purpose in the novel appears to be the drawing of parallels between previous and current conflicts and how the past connects to the present. (p.65) Shamsie's country shares relatively the same geographical boundaries of the other three authors (Mohsin Hamide, Uzma Aslam Khan, Nadeem Aslam) as well as their history of colonialist occupation and independence. More significantly, her autobiography is similar to other writers in this article and mirrors theirs in lots of ways.

Poonam's (2011) article seeks to identify the female characteristics in Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*. Naturally, the analysis of the gender question must be based on an understanding of the socio-political condition and historical factors. The study concludes that Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows* is a feminist text which explores the psyche of its protagonist Hiroko and other female characters. It is in some ways a process of psychoanalysis of a woman's experiences throughout her journey from youth to old age. The study tries to explore Shamsie's presentation of

women who fully know the challenges they face yet choose to fight against the entrenched system and norms that make up their environment. What is strikingly new and distinctive about these women is their willingness to face the results of their choices.

Ahmed (2012) asserts that fiction by writers of Muslim background has come to constitute the most diverse body of work being produced today: namely the writing of Salman Rushdie down to Hanif Kureishi. They have defied political and racial orthodoxies in the 1980s with works such as those of Mohsin Hamid, Nadeem Aslam and Kamila Shamsie. This collection reflects the variety of this subgenre. Academics in the fields of English, South Asian, and postcolonial literatures address the nature of Muslim identity: from its response to political shifts since the 1980s to the inherent tensions between religious and secular models of citizenship, and the all-too-frequent emergence of these tensions as conflict between generations. When studying the perceptions of Muslims, contributors also explore the roles of immigration, class, gender, and national identity as well as the impact of 9/11. In an essay (within this book) written under the title "Resistance and Religion in the work of Kamila Shamsie", Ahmed examines Shamsie's relationship with the politics of representation and counter-representation of Islam and Muslim identities, and he is especially interested in the overlapping parameters of gender, religion, secularism and female emancipation. Shamsie's first four novels "delineate instead, the political manipulation of religion by all parties and governments through Pakistani's history" (p.209).

Itakura (2004) is interested in the different ways trauma is represented – and this translates into the ways the dominant narratives of (9/11) are undermined through a re-imagining of trauma in a broader context - in

Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*. Understandably, the greater part of (9/11) narratives have focused on white Americans' struggle to recover from the trauma inflicted by the events. This repetition compulsion is often characterized by the 'foreclosed ability to mourn in global dimensions' (Judith Butler), the blindness to the pain of the others, or those who are excluded from the literary landscape of such writing. Shamsie's text disrupts this pattern and enables other voices to emerge and counter the blindness. The redefinition of (9/11) as 'so tiny a fragment in the big picture' enables those 'others'- Japanese and Pakistanis - to make claims where they had been excluded before: the predominantly White American territory of (9/11) melancholia which was an example of exclusivity of outrage. Significantly, *Burnt Shadows* is also a narrative of personal trauma: the atomic bombing of Nagasaki, life as refugees in the post-Partition India, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan:

This dehumanization is already apparent in the prologue, where an unnamed man who might be Hiroko's son, Raza Ashraf, is made to take off the clothes and anticipates wearing an orange jumpsuit, a reminder of the Guantanamo Bay detention camp. In this way, Shamsie's text invites the reader to hear grief or agony of those who are dehumanized and realize the 'precariousness of life. (p.1)

Clearly, Khan's work is an invaluable resource when dealing with the subject. This is due to its clear presentation and persuasive reasoning. Therefore the researcher will refer in more than one situation to this book due to its convincing arguments and the validity of its thoughts.

## Chapter Three

### Research Methodology

#### 3-0. Introduction

The methodology used throughout the current study will be both descriptive and analytical. It seeks to explore the main aspects of feminism and post-colonial elements, as well as, the reflection of Kamila Shamsie's personal life on her fiction, by subjecting the novel *Burnt Shadows* to keen analysis.

#### 3-1. Descriptive Approach

The descriptive approach depends on collecting data from the novel, such as events, characters and setting. The researcher describes the text as it is in order to show, for example, the characters at the present time and how they were or how the events were and how they are in the immediate situation. This method depends entirely on describing how the characters are built, what their characteristics. It also describes the setting, time and place, because it is a key role in the events of the novel. Moreover, this method raises the question 'what' in order to be familiar with the events and incidents in the novel. For instance, why did this incident occur to a certain character instead of another? In other words, one can see the importance of this method in the analysis of any literary text.

#### 3-2. Analytical Method

In this approach, the examination of a literary text focuses on how the creative work is built. This examination is fulfilled through breaking the text down into its basic components, such as characters, events and setting which make it easier for the reader to understand the text as a

whole. Since the components of the text are studied separately, the text becomes clearer. Then, the researcher studies the relationship between these components. For instance, the researcher studies the effect of the surrounding environment upon the character's feeling, actions and attitude. Moreover, this approach helps the reader to find out the writer's way of conveying his/her themes and ideas as well as the message she/he has in mind. After analyzing the components of a literary text, the reader has to give his/her opinion whether the writer has succeeded in this task or not.

### **3-3. Sample of the study**

The sample of the study will be Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*. It will be explored thematically and technically in order to verify the main postulates of this research.

### **3-4. Procedures of the Study**

The study will conduct the following procedures:

1. Collecting the material that is relevant to the study.
2. Reading previous studies related to the main topics of the novel.
3. Summarizing the main characteristics and themes in the novel.
4. The study will handling Kamila Shamsie's other writings and novels and their relationship to her life.
5. Answering the study questions and hypotheses.
6. Discussing the findings
7. Suggesting some recommendations and a conclusion based on the results of the study.
8. Writing references according to APA style.

## Chapter Four

### Critical Analysis of *Burnt Shadows*

This chapter takes up the different thematic and technical aspects from the Feminist school of criticism and the Post colonial theory perspective.

#### 4-1. Introduction

Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* consists of four parts, each of which tackles a particular period of time. Section one treats 1945, the year of the bombing of Nagasaki ; section two handles 1947, on the brink of Partition scheme; the third tackles 1982 Pakistan, while the fourth is devoted to the 2001-2 , the post 9/11 event period.

#### 4-2. First: *Burnt Shadows* as a feminist work

The novelist Kamila Shamsie has emphasized heavily the feminist sides of her work. As a woman, Shamsie can give a convincing account of how a female character views life and situations around her. Although the novel depicts terrible and even catastrophic situations such as the devastation of Nagasaki, the reactions and sentiments of woman are present and striking. Moreover, one can easily notice the way Shamsie presents her female character so that all sentiments of pity, sympathy and horror of those situations are fully represented.

The scarcity of women writers in Pakistan stems possibly from the "dismally parochial and indiscriminatorily gendered systems of education, opportunity, modes of acculturation, and general devaluation of the arts" (Hai 386), thus making the work of current Pakistani woman writers even more worthwhile and admired. In addition to their marginalized positions

in terms of gender, the hybridised status from which most of Pakistan's female writers currently express themselves is also significant. Living diverse cultures and inhabiting the East and the West simultaneously, many Pakistani women writers profess their mode of writing to be a stabilizing and emancipating process, whereby geographies, histories, nations, races and genders are reconciled.

As a woman writer, Shamsie speaks on behalf of South Asian women and Pakistani women in particular who have long suffered from the suppressions of governmental and patriarchal societies. Shamsie's women characters are strong-willed, emancipated, well- enlightened, responsible for their decisions and bold like Shamsie herself.

According to Pratt:

Even the most conservative women authors create narratives manifesting an acute tension between what any normal human being might desire and what a woman must become. Women's fiction reflects an experience radically different from men's because our drive towards growth as persons is thwarted by our society's prescriptions concerning gender.....We are outcasts in the land (1981, p.75).

In her fifth novel Shamsie chooses a very unique woman character "Hiroko Tanaka", a young Japanese woman, a schoolteacher who teaches German and speaks English very well. A very gifted woman falls in love with "Konrad", a German idealist whom she is about to marry. In the last days of the Second World War II when Germany surrendered " Hiroko refused to back away from Konrad when her world turned him into an enemy" (p.350).

Though it is implicitly pictured, the wrongdoings of white Americans do not show in fictions that have always focused on the

Americans' attempts to recover from the trauma strike. This holds true when it jumps to the minds of non-Americans to make a comparison between the Japanese when two cities were demolished by the American bombs. This fact is always shown on Hiroko's back as a reminder of what the Americans did. Apart from that the Americans usually do not show remorse at a time that they want third countries people to be brought to justice even though they know that they have the right to defend themselves and their countries. For example Abdullah in his conversation with Kim, told her that they do not fight Americans for their being Americans, but they look at them as invaders to the Islamic country; here, Kim did not see the logic of his words thinking that 9/11 gives America the right to invade, demolish and jail people in Guantanamo.

Hiroko's mother was dying when her father "Matsui Tanaka" was branded as a traitor because of his "outburst against the military" (Shamsie: 13). After the death of her mother she told Konrad that her mother wouldn't accept this marriage if she were still alive as a sign by Shamsie about Hiroko's character and that she is aware of what is going on in her own world.

The bombing of Nagasaki has left its traumatic effects on Hiroko physically and mentally which is described by Shamsie as: "Diamond cutting open the earth, falling through to hell" (27). That is during this bombing Hiroko lost her fiancé and her father:

My father, 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 clothes, just scales. Noone, no one in the world should ever have to see their father covered in scales" (*BurntShadows*: 99).



The bombing left scars on her back that stayed with her as a reminder of the bombing until the end of her life. Hiroko felt displaced in Japan after the explosion where she has no reminder of her past. Shamsie describes the moments before the bombing, when Hiroko was happy preparing herself to a new life with Konrad after the war:

Hiroko steps out on to the verandah. Her body from neck down as silk column, white with three black cranes swooping across her back. 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. Hiroko. And then the world goes white. (Shamsie, 2009:23)

For any human being, the greatest trauma is to lose her/his home where she/he spent the loveliest memories of childhood and youth which remind her/him of the past. Nagasaki, the home of Hiroko is displayed in two pictures: a beautiful and charming one before the explosion and a catastrophic one which turned Hiroko's life into a terrible hell.

Her problem is both personal and impersonal; at the personal level, she herself has to live with "the hideously compelling bird-shaped burns on her back which goes a long with the brunt of the monstrous and destructive form of nationalism for the rest of her life."(Khan, 2011 p.58) Thus, it is noticed that her suffering is both physical and moral, in addition to this the loss of her fiancé; and at the impersonal level, it is the entire community of hers which suffered the devastation and would keep suffering the aftermath for years and years to come. As stated in Itakura's article:

Hiroko Tanaka is not only saddened by the loss of her fiancé, Konrad Weiss, who vanished into a 'lanky shadow,' but also exasperated by the medical and social discourse in which she always remains a 'hibakusha', an existence '[reduced] to the bomb' or the exposure to radiation. (Itakura, 2014,p.1)

Decidedly, the atomic bomb implies a risk to her freedom as an individual; as a human her scars will keep as stigma throughout her entire life. This is death- in- life for Hiroko:

She glides her hand over her shoulder, touches flesh where there should be silk. Moves her hand further down her back, touches what is neither flesh nor silk but both. She wonders if this has something to do with the burning she felt as she fell. Now there is no feeling. She taps the place that is neither flesh nor silk. There is no feeling at all. (Shamsie, p.26)

Hiroko decides to leave Nagasaki seeking for a new life in Delhi trying to follow her late fiancé Konrad's relatives. Konrad has a half-sister in India married to a colonial British conservative called James Burton. As soon as Hiroko arrives in their home Shamsie alludes to the patriarchal culture dominating both the British and Indian societies in that period exemplified in the dialogue that existed between Hiroko and James when he asks her how she has come to Delhi from Tokyo:

Tokyo. I've been working in Tokyo since soon after the war ended. As a translator. Someone I knew there told me about a friend of hers who was coming to India, to Bombay. We met, and I convinced him to let me travel with him. And from Bombay I took the train to Delhi'. 'What, alone? 'James glanced over at Elizabeth.....'Yes. Why? Can't women travel? Alone in India? 'Elizabeth almost laughed. James gives his justifications as, " but there are rules, and there is common sense. I certainly wouldn't allow Elizabeth (Shamsie, 2009:46-47).

Shamsie displays Hiroko's position in India which certainly reflects a feminist stand as she finds herself in a typically patriarchal society where she was trying to prove herself to James. One critic puts it this way:

Hiroko hosts in India, led by the patriarchal figure, James Burton. In his predominantly masculine society of colonial India, where women were consciously denied any voices or agency in colonial or anti-colonial discourse, noting how the experiences of imperialism and patriarchy often mirror each other and how the confluence of the two results in a "double colonization" (Khan :57 )

Shamsie is drawing a picture of the colonizers who used to look down at others in general; the problem is doubled here because the subject of this scene is a woman. This obviously reflects gender-discrimination.

James was oddly perturbed by this woman who he couldn't place. Indians, Germans, the English, even Americans.....he knew how to look at people and understand the contexts from which they sprang. But this Japanese woman in trousers. What on earth was she all about? (Shamsie: 46)

Hiroko arrived at Delhi two years after the bombing of Nagasaki to encounter a new problem which was the Partition of the Indian Subcontinent deliberately done by the British to create a religious entity rather than a political one where the name Pakistan is immediately linked with the phrase 'Muslim country'. She and her husband Sajjad came back from Istanbul where they spent their honeymoon, but they were denied entry to their city, Delhi. Thus Hiroko had to start again in a new place. Hiroko's fate takes her from one place to another, adding up to her disasters everywhere she goes and reflecting the traits of her character as a strong-willed, kind, patient, and progressive woman. Hiroko is viewed as a character coming out of mythology. Her destiny led her to keep on the run

from one place to another; not places that people might think of, but places of conflicts and remaining ashes of great fires.

Hiroko is pictured as nationless, religionless, and easily able to cross borders, compromise without surrendering strength or agency. In addition, Shamsie introduces Hiroko as a fearless woman warrior fighting a stubborn enemy. "She had become, in fact, a figure out of myth. The character who loses everything and is born anew in blood. (Shamsie, p.50)

The comments on traits of such woman character are summed up in Pratt's statement:

The vitality and hopefulness characterizing the adolescent hero's attitude toward her future here meet and conflict with the expectations and dictates of the surrounding society. Every element of her desired world-freedom to come and go, allegiance to nature, meaningful work, exercise of the intellect, and use of her own erotic capabilities-inevitably clashes with patriarchal norms" (1981,p.110)

Though Jame's attitude towards Hiroko is a negative one, he has to accept her in his home since Elizabeth likes her, and despite his obvious dominance over Elizabeth, she evokes many ideas related to nationalism due to Hiroko's presence which is a sign that reflects feministic views and certain traits of her character.

The plight of women is embodied in Hiroko, the most important character in the novel where the tragic events she passed through are but what all women may suffer in this world. Not only that, but:" 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." (Khan, 2011, p.54)

Hiroko resents the word 'hibakusha' or the atomic bomb casualty as she explains to Elizabeth, "I don't want to hide these burns on my back, but I don't want people to judge me by them either. Hibakusha. I hate that word. It reduces you to the bomb. Every atom of you (Shamsie, p.100).

Hiroko's character is a symbol for the solution to oppression and power imbalances based on gender-bias, religion, ethnicity, race, language and nationality; the diseases of humanity. Hiroko, being aware of the existence of such diseases, does not mind exposing her back with its scars to the observing of the public, but she feels horrified at being 'reduced' to 'the bomb'. She left Japan against her desire, but at the same time she was resentful to that state of dehumanization.

For Shamsie, Hiroko is a global citizen, but not that stable, secured and recognized one. She does not belong to a specific culture anymore; for her, borders have become meaningless and unidentified. In her homeland, Hiroko suffered and was estranged for what her father brought about on his family, being accused of betrayal. Thus, she escaped her community. She teaches German at the local school and speaks English as well, using her self- rule and facility of national identity. Hiroko has near absolute independence in her mobility, having "not thought of destination so much as departure, wheeling through the world with the awful freedom of someone with no one to answer to. She had become, in fact, a figure out of myth. The character who loses everything and is born a new in blood" (48-9).

Language is of a great importance when analyzing Hiroko's personality. She is a translator by occupation, in addition it adds up to her ability to go above borders and cultural divisions. Hiroko wants to learn Urdu, the local language, even though the Burtons assure her that there is

no need as soon as she arrives in India. Hiroko learns Urdu quickly and both she and Sajjad use it besides English in their communication. This multilingual form of communication implies her ability and willingness to compromise and adapt. She speaks in English to James and German to Elizabeth, demonstrating the ability of language to forge bonds of understanding between divergent groups, an indication of how women are able to prove themselves in any community despite all difficulties.

Elizabeth, being aware of the Indian culture since she was living there with her husband is giving advice to Hiroko prior her getting married to Sajjad. She said that women face a lot of already established barriers in such cultures and therefore, they should adapt:

His is a world you either grow up in or to which you remain for ever an outsider. And maybe he'd give up that world for you-if that's what it took to have you in his life - but when that first intensity of passion passed, he'd regret it, and he'd blame you. Women enter their husbands' lives, Hiroko - all around the world. It doesn't happen the other way round. We are the ones who adapt. Not them. They don't know how to do it. They don't see why they should do it. (Shamsie, p.98)

By doing this, Elizabeth explains the relationship between men and women and that she herself left her home in Europe because of her marriage to James. Fortunately, for Hiroko and Sajjad, Elizabeth's words did not turn to be true. Rather, they found themselves in more happy medium after their marriage. This is a subtle indication made by Shamsie to the fact that Ilse and James class is living in a world of their own which is completely different from that world in which Hiroko and Sajjad lived in.

This may be linked to what Shamsie displayed in the novel where two love cases were narrated: the first is her love to Konrad and the second her love to Sajjad. In the two cases, Hiroko was happy to accept the

opportunities for love without feeling obliged to accept them. She could prove that when she lived happily with Sajjad despite the gaps and differences between their two nations and cultures. Hiroko convinced herself and Elizabeth that she did not have to stay in a loveless marriage, a fact that she was able to prove successful.

And she, Hiroko Tanaka, was the one to show both Sajjad and the Burtons that there was no need to imagine such walls between their worlds. Konrad had been right to say barriers were made of metal that could turn fluid when touched simultaneously by people on either side." (Shamsie, p.82)

Hiroko succeeded in excluding herself from the servant class since she was a school teacher of German in addition to her being a polyglot which in turn, enabled her to adjust to different places and situations and to be treated with hospitality and respect. This is part of Shamsie's personification of Hiroko as an ideal citizen, which in itself is an attempt by Shamsie to side with a woman regardless of her race, color, religion or nation. This can also confirm Shamsie's idea of the global individual as a human being. Elizabeth described Hiroko as "So much for those demure Japanese women of all the stories she'd heard. Here was one who would squeeze the sun in her fist if she ever got the chance; yes, and tilt her head back to swallow its liquid light" (Shamsie, p.46).

Hiroko and Elizabeth have to share the same feeling towards the atrocities of war where Hiroko will never forget devastated Nagasaki and also Ilse will never forget the bombing of Berlin, her dear city. The difference between the two is that for Hiroko, she didn't want to remember because she did not have national feelings due to what her father did, becoming a betrayer. As regards Ilse, it is a different case when she remembered the bombing she had felt entirely German.

Hiroko was an outstanding woman who was far ahead of the feminist features in the three societies of Japan, India and Pakistan. However this great advantage always hindered by the enduring link to her past which itself was not her tragedy. Despite her painful past which lived with her all the time, Hiroko was a voice of peace and rationality throughout the novel and that she worked hard to avoid local and global conflicts which bring nothing to human beings except disasters. Shamsie's picturing of Hiroko as a voice of peace is just an addition to the fact that there is a difference between those who can understand people's suffering, usually people who suffer themselves and those who cannot because they never experienced suffering, a sign that might be referring to Americans represented by Kim. The burns inscribed in Hiroko's body express her ability as a human sensitive woman to suffer and sympathize with other people as if their suffering were hers. In this regard, Emmanuel Levinas (1998) in his book *Entre Nous: On Thinking of the Other's* says that people's sufferings open a humane perspective:

In this perspective there is a radical difference between the suffering in the other, where it is unforgivable to me, solicits me and calls me, and suffering in me, my own experience of suffering, whose constitutional or congenital uselessness can take on a meaning, the only one of which suffering is capable, in becoming a suffering for the suffering . . . of someone else. (p.94)

The suffering of human beings is still suffering regardless of the place or location, but Shamsie tries to show that suffering comes in chain-like circles whereby everybody is involved though places ultimately and locations might be far apart. This means that humanity is indivisible:

from World War II to Old Delhi in the last days of the Raj to the Pakistani city of Karachi, and ultimately to New York City in 2001 --



dragging fragments of each location and culture into the next, binding elements of history and humanity that are both distant and seemingly unrelated.(Duce,2011 )

By adopting this belief, Shamsie is mainly concerned with the central character who represents women in general where such a tendency is also adopted in her other novels like *Salt and Saffron* in which another woman, Alia, is shown as the central character.

Mariam in *Salt and Saffron*, in being a widow who suddenly appears and is accepted as part of the family – one of Shamsie’s females concerned about the treatment of women in the Islamic world. She defends other widows from unscrupulous male in-laws who evict women from their home and take their money by falsely citing Pakistani and Koranic law. The Widow has loyal followers and protectors called the Bodyguard who aid her but, being poorly dressed, cause an amusing conflict with Imran, Uncle Latif’s snobbish cook, who will not work for employers who have bad taste. (King, p.151)

Though the readers of this novel are following what Hiroko was going through, her non-stop suffering represented by the death of her fiancé Konrad, the death of her husband Sajjad and finally the imprisonment of her son Raza, Shamsie's intention was to show the strength of women who are taking the lead of being able to step out from loss. Shamsie has a two-fold intention when she refers to the predominant patriarchal culture in Pakistan as if she called for women to view Hiroko as an example of strong-willed and courageous to have their rights on equal-footing with men. The second intention is to highlight the need to erase the stereotypical image of women in Pakistan in particular, and women elsewhere in general.

Shamsie, through Hiroko's character, is calling for more friendly relationships that have to be created by individuals and nations. Since

Shamsie is one of those Anglophone writers living in the Diaspora, preoccupied with the past of their lives in their countries, she can care about the problems of her nation. As a Muslim writer, Shamsie struggles to clear the blurred vision about reality of her religion and her race.

Shamsie also uses Hiroko's character to show the sufferings of women everywhere and she tries to defend their rights and let them enjoy recognition at all levels, regardless of their status in their communities. She shows Hiroko as a well-informed and highly educated woman, which in itself is a call for women worldwide to educate themselves and become more aware of their rights and status in their families and communities. Shamsie does not stop at calling women through Hiroko to get their rights, but she makes it clear to the reader that Hiroko is going against the established tradition and conventions which enabled her to overcome all difficulties that she has encountered throughout the novel. Such suffering is meant to be a move toward encouraging women before all types of threats and obstacles a wider human perspective that makes individual fears become responsible actions instead of giving up, or indicting dehumanization dimension of the bomb.

#### **4-3. Multiplicity of Topics**

The multiplicity of Kamila Shamsie's themes, in *Burnt Shadows* as well as in her other novels is a prominent element. This novel as well as other novels have covered explicitly and/or implicitly subjects as diverse as familial relationships, history, war and love, global terrorism, feminism, cross-cultural relationships, foreign policy of America, East-West relationship, and culture of the sub-continent particularly Karachi as the hub of Pakistan. These multiple themes have been related to historical settings to explain more modern issues. For example, the increasing effects

of American foreign policy in the world have been tackled by many novels like In *The City by the Sea*, *Broken Verses*, and in *Burnt Shadows* as will be shown in the present analysis.

The East has always been influenced by the West (especially America) in a direct and/or indirect way. Terrorism, wars, divisions of countries, the occupation of the West Bank, wealth exploitation, nuclear weapons, conflicts in many areas in the East have often been attributed to the West. This is what Shamsie said in one of her articles describing the American intervention in other country's policy specially Pakistan:

I grew up in Pakistan with two Americas. One was the America of *tokill a Mockingbird* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, of the young Michael Jackson and Laura Ingalls Wilder, of *Charlie's Angels* and John McEnroe and Rob Lowe's blue eyes. Of Martin Luther King and Snoopy. That America was exuberance and possibility.

But there was another that I lived with. The America which cozied up to Pakistan's military dictator, Zia-ul-Haq, because it served its own interests in Afghanistan to do so. This America threw vast amounts of money at Zia, propping up his rule, strengthening his military, turning a blind eye to its nuclear program, working with him to promote the war in Afghanistan as a jihad for all Muslims rather than a territorial matter between Afghans and Soviets.( 2012, "The sroryteller of the Empie" Guernica, 1, February)

In her fifth novel, *Burnt Shadows*, Shamsie has emphasized history heavily as documental evidence on how to present history formed by past events (Duce, 2011:6). Shamsie intended to show how individual's lives are influenced by history. 'How did it come to this'? Said while wondering one of Shamie's characters when he found himself in a cell in the US maybe Guantanamo Bay wearing an orange jumpsuit, after being told to unclothe.

This man is presented by Shamsie in the prologue. This question along with many other questions have been raised by Shamsie during this important novel. From the very start, it is clear that Shamsie's fictional world in *Burnt Shadows* and other works, is a mixture of subjective experiences and objective events and situations. In a situation like this, it is preferable to sort out these two levels of experience in the novel.

Apart from the topics already mentioned, there is an equally significant and recurrent theme in this novel. It is history and the East-West misconceptions in *Burnt Shadows*. Shamsie has highlighted the vital role of history in orienting the destiny and lives of both communities and individuals. One of the striking situations in the novel is the political implication in the speech of one detainee of Guantanamo Bay. His words are a combination of pain, shock and despair " How did it come to this?" (p.1). This question comprises six words only, but its suggestions and implications are wide-ranging. It raises further questions that have been summed up in the following points:

The appearance of the US as a superpower following the Second World War resulted in involvement with other societies, such as Pakistan and Afghanistan; the Americans supported Pakistan's military and armed the Islamic fundamentalists in the Cold War against the Soviets. In addition to strengthening dictatorships and the extension of the fundamentalist terrorism. (King 2011, p.149).

Here, Shamsie is not only insinuating to the fluctuation of the American foreign policy and that it changes with the interests of the US leadership as well as serving to fulfill the dreams of dominating the entire world. This appears in the two phases of the Afghan- Soviet war: the support given to all jihadists from all over the Islamic countries to fight against the Soviet

Union for the sake of the US. The second phase is about how all of them have become targets to the US military in Afghanistan itself as well as in other Muslim and Arab countries. Moreover the US, together with its allies, forming up the West in its traditional status as opposed to the East, is working hard to distort Islam and ascribe all terrorist acts to this religion. This is intentionally done to create crises where the American interests are served and its role in such places becomes inevitable.

The other topic focused by Shamsie is that of love which is displayed throughout the novel; sometimes and to a certain extent successful, but this success does not last long. Hiroko is a young Japanese schoolteacher who lives in Nagasaki. The love story that takes place between her and the German idealist Konrad is certainly a reminder of the East-West dialectics and how Shamsie sees that this attempt at bridging the misconception between the two parties is often doomed. The reason behind this is always related to politics and its subversive effects. Nagasaki, as everybody knows, was completely destroyed by the American force during the Second World War and the dreams of reaching a kind of compromise between these culturally different countries prove to be abortive.

Thus the tragic sense in *Burnt Shadows* is associated with this big chasm between East and West. Shamsie begins her novel with a prologue where the political background of the events is explained. As it reflects directly the author's views about her fictional world and its political and cultural backdrop, there is a need for referring in some detail to it as well as its function in the novel. The reference to the unclothed man in Guantanamo is very significant. The shadowy man described in the Prologue is Shamsie's terrifying image of the level humanity has reached in torturing and dehumanizing other fellow human beings. The description is

chilling and sinister. The graphic picture of what goes on in such places as Guantanamo Bay is a reminder that Shamsie is involved, in one way or another, in the East- West relation and its problematic issues. As a Pakistani writer living during the reign of the military dictator Zia-ul -Haq, she cannot overlook the atrocities practiced by the British colonizing force. It is not surprising to find in her work this great emphasis on oppression and marginalization and its traumatic effects. In other words, the past of her characters is very painful and the present is full of anxiety and depression. Although the colonization is over, its impacts can be felt in the psychological scars present in the character's actions and reactions.

The novel's title, *Burnt Shadows*, is indicative of pain and suffering. It refers to the burns of the three black crane birds which have been imprinted on the heroine's back; it is a sort of melting of "charred silk, seared flesh" (Shamsie,p. 27) due to the atomic bombing of Nagasaki in 1945. What Shamsie is after is not Hiroko's story as a victim of this war, but it is meant to depict the atrocities of the super powers that do not consider or even think of the individual's life, dreams and aspirations as displayed in Hiroko's case. The international politics which is embedded in the Second World War does not end here, although what has happened is certainly terrific and unbelievable. The author's choice of the time span covered by the novel is deliberate and functional in that it serves very well the cultural and political sides of *Burnt Shadows*. That Shamsie chooses the critical time between the end of the Second World War and September, 11, 2002 is evidence of the author's awareness that humanity's sufferings and points of misunderstanding are still there and untouched by what has happened. The four sections of the novel are in line with the intellectual direction of *Burnt Shadows*. Thus the first section is entitled ' The Yet Unknowing World', 'Veiled Birds', 'Part-Angel Warriors' and 'The Speed

Necessary to Replace Loss'. Although the sections trace two histories of the families in question, the objective aspects are there as well since they directly or indirectly form the background of Shamsie's views and judgments of such world-wide events and their impacts. Shamsie's ideas in this regard confirm the truth of the matter of how the atrocities of the wars cannot be concealed. The three black crane birds which are imprinted on Hiroko's back are concealed from others, but they represent the truth for Hiroko, a truth that is never concealed.

Shamsie is one of the Eastern writers who tackled the issue of how Islam has been viewed by the West after the Sep, 11 events. In particular, the American policy in Afghanistan is a topic that *Burnt Shadows* develops and exemplifies. The advantage of this novel is that it succeeds in linking the personal destiny of the individuals with the public life, especially the political factors. For instance, Hiroko's traumatic experience in Nagasaki is one of the novel's important themes. Her life is a series of losses, beginning with her father's death and the loss of her fiance, Konrad and her own home. Politics has put an end to all her hopes and dreams. Of course, her case is typical of all Japanese people in the eve of the Second World War. The author's description of the destruction of the Japanese city is memorable:

The horrifying picture of Nagasaki makes Hiroko have a flashback of the city when it was full of life and activity:

Hiroko asks if there were an adjective to best describe how changed Nagasaki has, she decides, that would be it. Everything distilled or distorted into its most functional form. She walked past the vegetable patches on the slopes a few days ago and saw the earth itself furrowing in mystification: why potatoes where once there were azaleas? What prompted this falling-off of love? How to explain to the earth that it was

more functional as a vegetable patch than a flower garden, just as factories were more functional than schools and boys were more functional as weapons than as humans. (Shamsie, p.7)

The political aspect of *Burnt Shadows* covers the reasons behind the atrocities and destruction of people and countries in the east, especially Asian countries. One of these reasons is the approval and even support of America and the West in general to the Dictatorships in Japan in 1930s and 1940s and Pakistan. Shamsie's reference to the destructive role of the West policies in these countries can be seen through the terrible fate that Matsui Tanaka has faced. His only fault lies in his criticism of the military life in Japan and its Emperor:

As she was dying, Hiroko's mother had called the Chairman's wife to her bedside with a single request: protect my husband against himself. There was even less place in wartime Japan for an iconoclastic artist than for magazines about modern girls. For a long time, The Chairman's wife had carried out her promise, persuading her husband to regard Matsui Tanaka's outbursts against the military and the Emperor as a symbol of a husband's mourning that was so profound it had unhinged him. But in the spring, 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 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. Seconds later he lay bloodied on the ground. [.....] and the next day three things happened: the military police came to take her father to prison, the principal of the school where she taught German told her she was dismissed,[.....]the Chairman was waiting to tell her she had been conscripted to work at one of the munitions factories.(Shamsie,2009:p.13-14)



Shamsie is not content with devoting much space to the destructive role of politics in her *Burnt Shadows*. Due to its vital and inescapable role, politics is seen at work in some of her other fiction. In *Broken Verses*, Shamsie depicts the position of the poet and his tense relation with the political authorities in his country. The attitudes of the government and the opposition are characteristic: each party views that death from its own perspective. For the government, the poet's death is seen as 'the flower of our soil' while the opposition celebrates the rebellious side in the dead poet by calling him, "the voice of resistance." (Shamsie, 2007, p.37).

Back to *Burnt Shadows*, it is necessary to elaborate further on the drastic effects of politics, ideology and the arrogance of the superpowers in bringing about all the wholesale destruction and radiation in a city that used to be vibrant and full of life instead of death and destruction. Hiroko describes to Sajjad the disastrous effect of the atomic bomb:

Those nearest the epicenter of the blast were eradicated completely, only the fat from their bodies sticking to the walls and rocks around them like shadows [...] I looked for Konrad's shadow. I found it. Or 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 [...] ' She pressed a hand against her spine at the memory. 'And buried it. (Shamsie, p.27)

Thus Hiroko's life will be completely changed by these historical events. She will lose her family, relatives and love in addition to the place of her childhood. Hiroko leaves for India in 1947 at a very critical time. At that time, India was under the British colonization and there were actual steps taken for partition. It is under these uncommon circumstances that Hiroko seeks a refuge through living with Konrad's half-sister, Elizabeth and her husband, James Burton. She will enjoy the company of the Indian

Muslim Sajjad Ashraf. This shift in place and culture and its great consequences justifies the novel's classification as one of the post-colonial works since its concern is laid on the encounter between east and west in terms of political and cultural life.

If the novel as already shown is a work of displacement and dislocation as seen in the position of Hiroko when she has to adapt herself to the life of India instead of Japan and its totally cultural life, the same applies to Sajjad after getting married to Hiroko. He will miss his own Delhi and there is always a sense of nostalgia when he remembers that place when he is in Istanbul because of the dangerous life in India. The description of Hiroko as she notices the differences in manners and attitudes when she is in India:

There was the sound of the front door opening, and then Lala Buksh's voice said, 'Wait, please. I will tell Mrs Burton. 'James and Sajjad heard his heavy tread go up the stairs.

'Wonder who that is?' James said, rising out of his chair. He walked into the hallway, Sajjad following.

There was a woman there, hands in her trouser pockets, looking at the portrait of James, Elizabeth and their son Henry which hung on the wall. [...]'Are you here to see my wife?' he said.

She turned, and James said, 'Good Lord,' as he found himself looking at a Japanese woman.

'I'm Hiroko Tanaka. You must be James Burton. (Shamsie, p.41)

In section two of Shamsie's novel entitled ' Veiled Birds' the author reminds the reader of E .M. Forester's *A Passage to India*. Of course, the reference here is valid and relevant since the position of the Japanese Hiroko in India has nothing to do with Fielding, the British teacher who is

unable to bring himself to full friendship with the Indian doctor, Aziz. The poverty, backwardness and all types of degradation in India are often attributed to the colonizer and his policy in the colonized countries. This applies to the status of Pakistan because of the colonizing experience.

#### **4- 4. Cities and Their Cultural Implications**

Technically speaking it is important to say that the presence of two novels i.e Shamsie's novel and the earlier work of E' M. Forster within the same work, *Burnt Shadows*, is a sign that Shamsie makes use of the strategy of intertextuality where the past comments on the present and vice versa. *Burnt Shadows*, then, is a novel about the meeting or clash between two different cultures. In the same way Nagasaki has been described, especially its destruction, Delhi engages an outstanding position in this novel, simply because of its oriental glamour. The representation of the city in this way is expected since Shamsie is in fact addressing western readers and their preferences and expectations. Section two of the novel presents an interesting description of Delhi as viewed by its native, Sajjad Ali Ashraf. He sees the city as " The rhythmically beating heart of cultural India" (p.33). Some of the details of his account bring to mind the Indian novelist, Ahmed Ali, in his novel *Twilight in Delhi* and his account of Delhi as the place of " by-lanes and alleys, insidious as a game of chess (Shamsie:33). The division of E.M-Forster's account of his Indian city in *A Passage to India* is present here as seen in the speculations of Sajjad when he finds it hard "to locate celestial point at which Dilli became Delhi" (p.33).

In fact Sajjad links the two parts of the present Delhi with the British colonization and its destructive effects. In his view, Dilli is his native city associated with the spontaneous and simple life while Delhi has much to do

with the British colonization. Thus he remembers the Old city (Dilli) and romanticizes it as follows:

".....There, where the sky emptied- no kites dipping towards each other, strings lined with glass; and only the occasional pigeon from amidst the flocks released to whirl in the air above the rooftops of the Old City where Sajjad's family had lived for generations."(P.33-4)

The different situations and relations in *Burnt Shadows* highlight the cultural and psychological barriers between colonizers and colonized. Hiroko Tanaka's presence in India shows this particular side. After arriving from Japan, the words of her dead fiancé remain her guide and inspiration in her environment. Konrad warned her against trusting anyone in Delhi except Sajjad. Putting Sajjad to test, Hiroko realizes the validity of his statement. Thus she gets closer to him. However this move raises only the disapproval of Elizabeth and her husband James Burton. These unfriendly reactions on the part of Elizabeth and her husband carry political and cultural implications about the distance between the colonizer and colonized. The contemporary thinker Huntington comments on the tense and unfriendly treatment the British use in dealing with their Indian subjects as " Second hand citizens on their own Land."(1993, p.22)

In is clear that Shamsie's depiction of Hiroko's character as a liberal, gentle and kind-hearted woman who does not have preconceived views of others irrespective of their religions or races is entitled to be the representative of the author's own message in the East-West relation, Hiroko is kind to all those she has got to know. If there is a misunderstanding and prejudice in the novel, it is practiced by the British rather than the natives. When Hiroko and Sajjad develop their romance affair, Hiroko shows Sajjad the scars on her back. Here it is important to notice that Elizabeth immediately thought of Sajjad as a rapist in the same

way that the British woman in the cave scene accused Dr. Aziz of doing the same in E.M. Forester's *A Passage to India*. Indeed Sajjad has to leave his job for this mistaken surmise. Later on she discovers that she was wrong. Sajjad's reaction is characteristic. It is bitter and sorrowful but not rude. "I am done with the English" (Shamsie, p.105) is the statement he utters, summarizing all his suffering and frustration at the wrong judgments the British hold about him.

Shamsie's viewpoint concerning the implicit and sometimes explicit conflict between the characters in the novel and the racial and cultural differences is felt through the attitudes of Hiroko, the protagonist of the novel. She does not see any barrier between people as embodied in her daily practices. The reader knows from the start that she is Japanese who has a German fiancé. In the course of events she finds herself in India, living with a British family. A minor event in this long series is her acquaintance with the Muslim Indian, Sajjad, whom she plans to marry. Although the countries these people belong to are sometimes at war with each other, Hiroko's belief in collaboration and understanding of others remains firm and unshaken.

A further situation that reinforces the separation between the English and Indian can be felt through the arguments between Sajjad and Burton about the intellectual stand and significance of the intertextual elements used in *Burnt Shadows*. As already mentioned, there is a direct reference to E.M. Forster's *A Passage to India* and its humiliating treatment of the Indians by the British colonizing rulers. In Shamsie's novel the two male characters, Sajjad and Burton, raise the possibility or impossibility of friendship between these two races. James Burton comments on the controversial ending of that novel where Aziz and Fielding choose two

opposite directions and has the following to say: " I just read A passage to India [...] 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 kept apart" (Shamsie, p.111).

Although James Burton's statement is indicative of self-blame and disappointment at Forster's presentation of the problematic relation between the British and the Indians, Sajjad corrects something in that judgment. The problem between them is not a matter of racial differences. There are other factors that deepen and feed the differences. Sajjad puts the matter as follows, " You are right. It's not a question of nation. It's one of class. You would have apologized if I'd been to Oxford" (Shamsie, p.111).

It is quite obvious in the dialogue already quoted that Shamsie considers the power relations and their misrepresentations as a central topic which eventually brings her fiction in line with other post-colonial writers in their presentation of the colonizer- colonized dialectics. However, she uses the imperial language (English) rather than her own local language in handling this very touchy topic. The reason behind this is the fact that English can be a valid and international means of spreading the author's views to a wide audience in different parts of the world. She shares Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin in their influential book, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989) their positive assessment of English in making the author known in the countries speaking English:

Using the imperial language, and its discursive forms of representation, post-colonial societies are able, as things stand, to intervene more readily in the dominant discourse, to interpolate their own cultural realities, or use that dominant language to describe those realities to a wide audience of readers. (p.16)

When writers of the previously colonized countries use English as a medium of expressing their thoughts and addressing English-speaking countries, they are not always safe from negative criticism. The reason behind such judgment is that there is an implicit dependency in such a move.

Part three of the novel, ' Part-Angel Warriors' is devoted to exploring the last three years of the 1980s when the Indian continent was split into two countries, India and Pakistan, The Partition is a key issue in the works of not only Kamila Shamsie but in all Indian and Pakistani writers. It is a traumatic experience that these writers cannot easily get rid of. Shamsie herself comments on this experience when she says:

If he had known then that he and Dilli would be lost [...] he would have wept, recited Ghalib's verses lamenting the great poet's departure from Delhi, [...] He would not ever have believed that he would come to think of Karachi as home, and that his bitterest regret about his separation from Dilli would be the absence of safety nets that the joint-family system had once provided. (134)

Shamsie's theme of memory is very much related to the events lived and witnessed by the heroine of the novel i.e. Hiroko. Hiroko lived through the culture she originally belonged to that is, the Japanese culture with all the good memories she spent with her family and fiancé. It is a lovely memory distorted by the devastation of her home Nagasaki. This is followed by memories from the Indian and Pakistani cultures where she easily adjusted despite the hardships she faced as a woman. Within the same framework, Shamsie is able to show that memories are reflected in the loss of homelands, nations and foreignness which remind the individual human being of the significance of concepts like identity and nationality.

Home and nation then are fluid and dynamic concepts in *Burnt Shadows*, and the novel is interested in what life is like for the same people living in multiple locales, exploring the significance of topographic barriers that are subjective yet meaningful. The stories take place in more than one time period, the present being a gateway to events in the past.

Shamsie has shown that politics is stronger than humanity when she pictured the partition of India which forced a lot of people to side unwillingly to the ethnic or religious groups they belonged to. Sajjad was forced to leave his beloved homeland permanently for no mistake he committed. Hiroko, on the other hand was also forced to leave, but for another reason that is the devastation of her homeland and the loss of her family. Thus, we see that the problem is not the choice of the individual rather, it is the problem of labeling and division. Having lost Konrad to the atomic bomb she loses Sajjad to CIA operations in Pakistan. During this time her son Raza becomes intimately involved in Afghan Mujahedeen operations in North Western Pakistan, as a final desperate attempt at seeking a tangible and pure identity for himself, plagued for too long by a deep sense of “un-belonging” in Karachi. It is only Hiroko, ironically, who perceives in her own words, the meaninglessness of “belonging to anything as contradictorily insubstantial and damaging as a nation” (Shamsie,p. 204).

Such fiction might be regarded as fictions of documentation of memories that recall the past to compensate for the loss. Shamsie, as an author who lived in two different countries and cultures is keen on showing her memories of Pakistan before the Partition of the Indian sub-continent to emphasize the great loss and suffering inflicted on different individuals and families on both sides of concern.



By the time the British left Delhi, Sajjad and Hiroko have already married and by the help of James and Ilse they were advised to go to Istanbul for honeymoon to a property of James where they could be away from Partition riots. Hiroko and Saajjad were prevented from re- entry into India. The third part of the novel takes place in Karachi, Pakistan in 1982-83. It starts after the Partition, Sajjad and Hiroko along with their son Raza, sixteen year old, have lived in Pakistan since the early years of Pakistan formation.

The novel is concerned with the relationship of national and personal events. In addition, politics of social hierarchies such as class, language, culture and origins were also obvious throughout all the events which interact, and are part of each other, so that the narrative about a person or a couple is viewed within a larger, more socially dense, context.

Shamsie shows the impact of history over generations of family. The love story, between Hiroko and Sajjad is challenged by differences of class, culture and ethnicity. Sajjad does not blame the fate and believes in moving ahead, and he and Hiroko exemplify differences that were imposed due to the fact that each of them belongs to a different culture. Despite this fact, they as individuals with the sense and feeling of humanity, were able to meet, and get married and live peacefully. Shamsie deliberately shows that Sajjad and Hiroko have met because the two of them have their own suffering and tragic destiny related to their homelands which is an indicative of how an individual maintains nostalgic feelings for his /her place of birth and childhood. He appreciates his wife as being "directly responsible for Raza's quick mind." (p.134) and "It was in Hiroko's company that he felt his love for Raza most powerfully-it was indivisible from his love for his wife."(pp. 134-5)

As a native Indian mourning his beloved land, Sajjad told Harry that Dilli is: "My first love. I would never have left it willingly. But those bastards didn't let me go home" (p.161). In addition, Hiroko did her best to acclimatize herself to the life of Pakistanis for the sake of her son Raza who feels humiliated by lack of racial purity and his mother's foreign customs for this reason " she had packed away her dresses and taken to wearing shalwar kameezes at home, though previously they were garments she reserved for funerals and other ceremonies with a religious component."(p.130). The narrative describes those whom the main character loves: Hiroko's husband Sajjad and their son Raza. The family forms the subject and the context which provides a social world that the central character is forming up.

Raza fails in Islamic studies for the third time even though he excels in other fields. The implications of this might suggest the difficulty of grasping the essence of religion. For Raza to prove himself, he pretends to be an Afghan who is fighting the Soviet and he befriends Abdullah, a young Afghan refugee who is fooled into believing that Raza is a Hazara Afghan. This is a clever indication made by Shamsie to show that those who pretend to be Jihadists defending Islam are not necessarily aware of what the true teachings of Islam are.

The Partition of the Indian sub-continent and the war on behalf of the US against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, in addition to the aftermath of the 11th of September are all prominent events stated and explored but left vague for one family that lived and passed through the consequent events.

*Burnt Shadows* makes clear the fact that we move from one place to another, but it is time and place that will bring out all our past to where we are. That means our memories and aspirations, past, present and future do

not fade away. This holds true to what Hiroko went through where she lived in different times and places, but she had to remember all what she passed through. Shamsie invented the burns on Hiroko's back to keep this idea in the minds of her readers as well in the minds of her characters. In addition, Shamsie touched upon the sensitive issue of religion where the government imposes Islamic- studies curriculum in the schools in Pakistan, an issue which is related to how people are getting away from Islam as a religion of tolerance and moderation to be pictured as a religion of terrorism. Here she is aiming at harmonizing between secular and religious dimensions. This is clear in what Sajjad said as a response to his son's failure in his Islamic studies exam. The writer expressed this idea via Sajjad when he first heard of his son's failure saying that:

He cursed under his breath the government which kept trying to force religion into everything public. His mother, with her most intimate relationship with Allah, would have personally knocked on the door of Army House and told the President he should have more shame than to ask all citizens to conduct their love affairs with the Almighty out in the open. (Shamsie, p.147)

In terms of the political labeling, Shamsie did not concentrate on the direct effects of the Partition though she displayed how Muslims within the subcontinent over the history of territorial Pakistan have been named as Pakistanis in their identity which is wrapped up with religion in a manner different from what is traditionally known as "national identity". Indonesia, for example, is the nation with the world's largest Muslim population, but still the identity is not wrapped up with religion as it is the case with Pakistan.

Shamsie draws a picture of how Raza, son of Hiroko and Sajjad, is still suffering from moral weaknesses despite the fact that he could have

had many things from his parents who struggled and challenged the harsh life. This picture is introduced to show that Raza easily recognized as belonging to Hazara, an indication that he has no specific identity. On the other hand, Harry recognized as an American though he is the son of a British colonizer and a German mother. This is a good indication of how it was easy for such nationalities to enjoy identity and recognition.

Shamsie moves from one axis to another world-wide; she highlighted more unanticipated centers such as Tokyo, Kabul, Delhi, Istanbul and Karachi in which important turning events of the novel took place. Such places are deliberately used to show that individuals have nothing to do with politics and labeling for Shamsie tried to show how life of different people from different countries together could be possible even if these people are from countries involved recently in war. For example, Shamsie did not show the religious conflicts that have happened between Muslims and other religions after the Partition. Instead, she draws a consistency between many characters especially Afghan fighting the Soviets with Hazara like Raza Abdullah relation:

Before the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Raza knew from the Pathan school-van driver, (Sohrab Goth) was a village on the outskirts of Karachi, where nomadic Afghans lived in makeshift homes during the winter months when their lands in Afghanistan yielded nothing but barrenness and the perennial nature of Karachi's demands-for labour, for goods-beckoned men from their mountains and plains towards the sea."(Shamsie, p.248).

This is how Shamsie described (Sohrab Goth), the place where Abdullah, the young Afghan, lives. The sense of place is obvious here, especially the memories it brings about:

Harry's seeking Sajjad's house was "It was loneliness, he knew, that had brought him here, in search of a past that was as irretrievable as his parents' marriage or his own childhood.[...]to seek out the first person he'd ever been conscious of loving."(p.150)

The negative effect of the political events on the daily lives of people as Harry describes Sajjad and Hiroko's house in Pakistan after Partition is as follows " No dividing boundary walls, no gardens and driveways buffering the space between one house and another; instead, there was a long row of homes abutting each other, a single step leading from each doorway to the street."(p.151)

Sajjad took Harry with him to buy fish. The fisherman on the harbor said to 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."(Shamsie, p.160).

As seen from the above, individuals can easily live in harmony regardless of their ethnicity, religion, country ...etc. It is politic which makes it hard for them to keep living in harmony. For example, America supports the war by: " arms bought by the CIA and transported by the ISI from the Karachi docks to the training camps along the border? (Shamsie, p.162)

At the personal and individual level, Shamsie shows how easy it is to make acquaintance with others. The first meeting between Abdullah and Raza happened, when Sajjad and Harry left Raza in the car and went to buy fish. The situation is:

'Are you Afghan?' Raza touched his cheekbones reflexively. Until the Soviets invaded Afghanistan he'd never heard that question; but in the last four years, as increasing numbers of refugees made their way into

Pakistan, it had become something less than unusual for Raza to be identified as an Afghan from one of the Mongol tribes.

'Yes, 'he said, and felt the rightness of the lie press against his spine, straightening his back."(Shamsie, P.164)

For individuals, it is not the place which matters rather, it is people who reside in that place. Harry loves Islamabad more than his country that what his daughter Kim said " You're obviously so much happier here than even New York, never mind DC or Berlin?" (168) Harry said in response: 'I do hate the place', 'But I love the people. Not the ones in officialdom- the real people. (p.169).

The intended meaning that Shamsie is after is obvious when we find that some individuals reflect the policy of the countries they are identified with. This applies to the US policy of breaking their promises to other countries, and it is displayed through what Harry promises Raza to help in admissions process. But Raza thinks that Harry would help him in scholarship and join an American university. Later on, when Harry is with the Ashrafs family on the dinner Raza and Harry are discussing the subject, Harry tells Raza that he misunderstands him. At that time Sajjad remembers James Burton and his treatment of others in colonized India, again feels betrayed by a Burton because of his son disappointment in Uncle Harry said: " You Burtons! You're just like your father, Henry, with your implied promises that are only designed to bind us to you. He used to tell me there was no one more capable than me- I didn't understand that meant I was the most willing and uncomplaining servant he'd known." (p.194) Then Sajjad fired him.

Shamsie takes up the new notions of 'terrorism' and 'nationalism' as they are understood in the postcolonial phase, encouraging her readership to

access such notions from different and unfamiliar perspectives. Such notions, with their new meaning have spread worldwide after the 9/11 events, and after the highly circulated US phrase "war against terror".

Shamsie stirs some mood in Raza who longs for his private life in a world with no weapons, wars or occupied homelands; a world less concerned with the extended families and honor. His world, as he is well aware of, is not made of two worlds, and it should not be so. He views his life and his existence as a big lie which made him choose one life and abandon another. Like his mother when she was twenty-one years old, it was impossible for her to learn all the facets of loss. Shamsie shows how older age would definitely teach human beings the facets of loss when she mentioned that Nagasaki had taught Hiroko everything about loss in her coming years and many tragic experiences that she encountered. Thus, Hiroko remembered the three birds when Salma told her that Raza informed her about his plans which made her believe that the birds had their prey when they flew inward and caused the death of her daughter, and she imagined the birds could fly outwards and enter the mind of Salma who in turn, will cause them to enter Raza's heart; thus, Hiroko had never truly understood her son's belonging, having in mind the stigma of being defined by the bomb.

Toward the closing chapters of the novel, Shamsie concentrates on the most important events which show how East and West are still far from one another, not in terms of places but in terms of their ideologies which seem to be representing huge misunderstanding, misperceptions that colour their views of each other. This kind of misunderstanding and misperception is closely and mainly concerned with the negative stereotypical image about Muslims and how the word 'Muslims' has become synonymous with

words like 'violence', 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism'. Thus, the trajectory of world religious misunderstanding is pictured and displayed in the ten-hour period of acquaintance between Kim and Abdullah where Kim, being purely American and Abdullah is a simple Afghan with a firm and blind faith in Islam have been on both extremes, representing west-east relations. Consequently, it can be said that Kim is an example of any American with nationalistic sentiments and patriotic feelings and views, mainly towards Muslims. This picture shows how individual Americans are easily convinced of what their leadership does; they take pride in what their country does against other countries; they believe in the pretexts invented by their leaders; they do so because, unlike Hiroko, Sajjad, Raza, Abdullah..etc, they are not victims of wars; and for them, lives of others do not count. Kim, being this American individual, though she is highly educated- an engineer- is not immune to a certain amount of bigotry and prejudice. Thus, Kim reflects the way America itself shows prejudice against others in general and Islam in particular where it has been always seeking pretexts to get rid of Islam.

Shamsie draws a wider picture on how Americans are reminded of their nationalistic feelings when she mentioned that flags are everywhere when she says:

"And yet, though she knew both Ilse and Harry would have rolled their eyes at the display of patriotism she saw something moving in it. But she kept wondering what her Afghan passenger made of it."(Shamsie, p.354)

Again, this event might implicitly be taken to reflect the arrogance and superiority that Americans feel over others. Here, Kim also shows that she is still stuck with irreconcilable gaps and differences that still exist and



identify religions, cultures and nations, in a sign made by Shamsie that the word 'global' falls short of bridging such gaps and differences.

Despite this fact, and that East and West are still two far separate entities, Shamsie clings to a hope of possible relations and a certain extents of understandings which is not viewed possible by some members of her generation who do not see any possibility of a meeting or understanding between the two opposing extremes. The sort of hope that Shamsie sticks to be deliberately focused where she, through writing her novel in English, is trying her best to present the real image of Islam as a religion of tolerance and moderation and real Muslims are after all human and social and they are not terrorists. This is clearly shown throughout the novel where Muslim characters were able to show respect and understanding to others and thus, Shamsie believes that coexistence between members of different faiths and nations is possible.

It is obvious that Shamsie, through these details, arguments, situations and views that she is not strict in presenting the dichotomy between East and West. She is still hopeful concerning possible relations and a measure of understanding. This puts her in sharp contrast to some members of her generation who do not perceive any possibility of a meeting or understanding between the two opposing camps. A glaring example of this tough attitude can be seen through the following excerpt from Narayan's *Waiting for the Mahatma* (2012) when his narrative voice refuses anything "foreign", bringing to mind the painful memories of colonization:

'I want you to understand that you should not be selling foreign stuff. You should not sell English biscuits.'

" All right, sir, hereafter I will be careful, after I dispose the present stock'.

'If you have any pride as an Indian you will throw the entire stock? In the gutter and won't let even a crow peck at it. Do you understand?'(2012, p.117)

Shamsie fills her novel with many topics such as history, the colonizer-colonized relationship, contemporary politics and the anxiety of man under such harsh circumstances.

As the present chapter has shown, *Burnt Shadows* deserves to be called Shamsie's masterpiece because of its multiplicity of topics, the mixture between the historical and the present, East and West, the political and religious. It is a remarkable evidence of the author's impressive ability to put all these in a form that attracts the reader's attention and even admiration. It is because of these fine traits that Kamila Shamsie has been rightly seen as one of the outstanding figures of the Pakistani modern novel.

## Chapter Five

### 5.1 Conclusion

*Burnt Shadows* is a novel where feminism, postcolonialism Islamization, East-West relationship, the effect of war on people's life are the main issues that the novel tackles. Shamsie emphasizes the idea of making the world a place for better life. Having lived between two different worlds Shamsie can convey the real way the west look at the easterners.

It has become clear that Shamsie's fiction is permeated by politics. Her diction and metaphors are often so realistic and the main emphasis of her fiction is given to the political world. It is not the world of dreams and fantasy, rather the present world where people are oppressed by the past wars which turned into permanent conflicts that may result in a third world war.

And Shamsie portrays women as weak and helpless individuals in brutal world. Women suffer a lot, face many challenges, especially in love matters, rendered by social norms, but are still rebellious, courageous. So Shamsie's fiction is concerned with the sufferings of war victims.

Shamsie's pictures a world which is becoming very brutal, dangerous everywhere. However, by giving us a real vision of the universe by means of loss and endless suffering, she manages to weave a comprehensive image of what is local and cosmopolitan, Asian and European. It seems that she wants to warn other women/people about the imperial politics used by the west towards the east, and their destructive effects. It is through the stories that she transmits this important message. She wants the world to

stop being such a brutal place as reported by Shamsie by her main character Hiroko in *Burnt Shadows*.

It is very obvious that Shamsie has made her own image in the contemporary fiction. By tackling focal issues in present-day life, her fiction is "truthful" expression of a woman faithful to the values she believes in. Shamsie is a woman who never tries to minimize her emotions, feelings and thoughts. She presents the world and man as she sees and feels them. Shamsie is a woman who lives in the diaspora and previously she was living in Karachi, the hub of Pakistan and experiences the world in a double vision so that she could reveal the world from more than one standpoint.

**1) What are the main characteristics of Kamila Shamsie's novel (*Burnt Shadows*)?**

It is marked by multiplicity of ideas; some are local and some universal. For example, she presents the theme of colonialism, East-West relationship and its problematics. Love and its manifestations, politics, global events such as Sep/11 destruction of Hiroshima. It is clear that just a passing reference can tell the reader about the great effects of wars, politics and diaspora on the individual and his life.

**2) What are the common and recurrent themes in Kamila Shamsie's novel particularly feminism and post-colonialism?**

She has succeeded in presenting a number of characters of flesh and blood, forcing the reader to sympathize, appreciate, and forgive. It is evident that *Burnt Shadows* has much to say about feminism and its role in

presenting the themes of the novel. The main character Hiroko is a living example of the feminist which is very popular in the late 20 and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. She is self-reliant, she is self-confident, daring and ready to take any risks including moving from one culture to another and easily adapting herself to the requirements of the new environments despite the catastrophes and impending death, she remains strong and self-willed challenging any frustrated circumstances.

Seen from another angle *Burnt Shadows* is a glaring example of postcolonialism. This is not surprising, given her position, as a novelist writing at a very critical time: The time of Partition, the time of Colonization and its formidable effect on people and country. However, when she writes about this subject she does not address her native readers, she has in mind the Westerners she is living among. You find her using a discourse that can be considered as a compromise between what she inherited and what she receives in her new culture. Even so, one can easily notice an implicit and sometimes explicit criticism of the act of terrorism and effects on people.

### **3) What are the main techniques and stylistic aspects used in her fiction?**

As far as the narrative techniques and stylistics are concerned we notice that Shamsie's fiction in general and her novel *Burnt Shadows* in particular does represent the principles and devices and objectives of the post modernistic novel. Her relationship with other fellow writers especially her mentor, Salman Rushdie, has helped in giving her fiction its distinctive touch; her sentences are graceful sometimes laconic and the dialogues contain vernacular and daily language but the narrative tone remains Standard English. Her narration is brilliant and successful. Her style is

simple straightforward, direct and above all impressive. All this can be seen through the different quotations.

#### **4) What is writer's current status in terms of her novel?**

When one reads the huge amount of interviews, reviews, judgments of her fiction, one can easily recognize that Kamila Shamsie is a very distinguished writer although she has not reached the age of 50; that she has come from the Indian sub continent and has found herself in the company of fellow writers in the west is a privilege as she succeeded in bringing together two different worlds and mixes them successfully and brilliantly. She received prizes which means that she has attracted the attention of many types of readers and scholars. In short, Kamila Shamsie represents an interesting phenomena in the field of fiction and certainly will be a great name in the years to come.

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