



POSTCOLONIAL CONJECTURAL ANGULARITIES IN KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *BURNT SHADOWS*

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| Received: 21.01.2023 | Accepted: 26.01.2023 | Published: 01.02.2023

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to find the aspects of the post-colonial philosophy which are mentioned in Kamila Shamsie's book Burnt Shadows (metropolitanism, other, hybridity, nativism, and diaspora). The work discusses the happenings of those who suffered before and during the partition of India. The objective of this research is to examine how British colonizers behaved with their colonized (Indians) and how those colonized responded to their injustice. The history of India before and under the British Raj is also covered in the thesis. Furthermore, it talks about how the earlier oppressors who had already ruled India before the arrival of the English were treated. The British also occupied and ruled India, but they did so in a way that was different compared to all other previous rulers.

Keywords: Colonizers, Colonized, British Raj, India, Partition.

INTRODUCTION

The reaction of a colonized nation, as expressed by postcolonial writers, is post-colonialism. The literature has focused on post-colonial theory, it is described how people were colonized and treated. The major theme of postcolonial writings remains the inequality and brutality of colonizers. The purpose of this research is to analyze and criticize the postcolonial components present in the novel. The novel contains the following elements: metropolitanism, hybridity, other, nativism, diaspora, and unholiness. According to "metropolitanism", colonizers believe that colonized people are undeveloped, and they will never be progressivists without their help. The culture of the colonizers was seen as inferior to their own. Europeans claimed that they had colonized regions to help undeveloped people, yet their claims were completely in contradiction with what they did. They occupied regions to seize the soil's natural riches.

Hybridity is the mixing of cultures. The local population had been entangled in two cultures after colonization. Whether they wanted

to or not, they had to adapt to a new culture. A similar situation applied to Indians. English colonizers in India brutally ruled the country and crushed its inhabitants. Indians were ordered to follow strict guidelines. India had lost its cultural identity during the colonial era as a result of the merging of English culture. The post-colonial term "Other" stands for discarded people. Native people were excluded because colonizers considered that they were different. They were cruelly treated as though they were the worst kind of creatures. Even their access to their colonies and hotels was banned by colonizers, who were unable to join their company. E.M. Forster writes in *A Passage to India* (1924), according to the notice boards at their clubs "Indians and dogs were not allowed". "Nativism" is a representation of a lost culture, showing that people still have a deep affection for pre-colonial society. By re-adopting their ancient culture, post-colonial people betray their oppressors. Ex-colonials express their nationalism by rejecting the laws and culture imposed by their oppressors. Natives demonstrate that no colonizer will ever be able to destroy their culture. It is referred to

as nativism or nationalism to reject western ways of life and readopt their native culture.

People who have been cut off from their own country are classified as "diaspora" or "unhomliness" in post-colonial theory. Native people served a variety of functions during colonization. They were transferred for employment far away from where they lived. They behaved like animals while being held as slaves. From sunrise until night, workers work long hours every day. Sometimes months or even years went by without them being able to see their family members' faces. They had poor nourishment, and at night, they were locked and chained. Diaspora, often known as "unhomliness," is the process of separating someone from the location where they were born and raised. The sensation of being unhomliness is different from the sensation of being homeless. People who are homeless are a representation of those who are not lived in their native place. British colonizers separated Hindus and Muslims in India before ruling over both groups. They colonized the Indians and considered them as Other, which is a primitive, and uneducated term. The protagonist of the book, Sajjad, stands for India, while James Burton, his employer, stands for the British Raj. Indians were seen as culturally inferior by English colonizers, who thought their culture was superior to everyone else's. Metropolitanism is a term used to describe this way of thinking. Another aspect of post-colonialism known as nativism is born out of Burton's sense of otherness toward Sajjad. In this section, Sajjad leaves Burton's position and wears a kurta pajama instead of English clothing. Sajjad has also been portrayed as a cross-cultural hybrid.

The relationship between Sajjad Ashraf and James Burton is technically described in the novel. James is using Sajjad as a puppet. Burton represents British Masters, while Sajjad is a representation of Indian natives. Muslims had no other option but to embrace British rule. Similarly, Sajjad was required to comply with his master Burton's orders. Sajjad is demonstrated to be a "hybrid" of eastern and western cultures. The entrance of Hiroko into Sajjad's life leads to a sense of liberation. He can express his nativist views due to her devotion. The same thing that Sajjad was going to undergo, Hiroko Tanaka had previously gone through. She was mistreated by the Americans. Hiroko Tanaka warned Sajjad to stop playing chess and focus on his education. She said that by diverting his focus away from his academics, Burton was making him look foolish. Sajjad responded, "He's promised, there will always be a place in his law firm for me" (Shamsie, 2009, p.89). The reality behind the chess game was ruined by the partition of India, which forced Sajjad to leave his friends and family.

Research Objectives

- To highlight the concepts of "Otherness" and "Diaspora" in Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*.
- To present the political and historical events in the novel.
- To explore the aspects of post-colonial theories.

Research Questions

1. How has Kamila Shamsie presented the treatment of British colonizers with colonized Indians in her novel *Burnt Shadows*?

2. How does Kamila Shamsie project the political and historical events in her novel *Burnt Shadows*?

Research Methodology

This research is qualitative in nature. The latest research, which is qualitative by nature, analyses the textual-narrative structure of the text *Burnt Shadows* from the perspective of postcolonial literary criticism. Descriptive and narrative data were collected for the present article. To examine the facts, make generalizations, and conclude, qualitative techniques like definition, justification, and interpretation are used. The author of "Research Methodology: Methods and Techniques", according to Kothari, covers the main objectives of the descriptive research and provides a summary of the current state of affairs. What has occurred or is currently happening can be reported through the research. (Page 3 of Kothari, 2008). Furthermore, according to Calmorin et al. (2007), the purpose of descriptive research is to reveal the novel's truths. Depending on his detailed research "in the field of research methodology truth may have different forms such as increased quality of knowledge, a new generalization or a new law, an increased insight into factors which are operating the discovery of new causal relationship, a more accurate formulation of the problem to be solved and many others" (p. 70)

The novelist is very delicate to show the facts of her novel "Burnt Shadows". She considers it an art of pure form and there is no concept of the real world for the readers. She claims in her interview: "A novel is an artifact, a work of art but, on the other hand, it's a work of art that is placed within a world of consequences" (Cilano, 2007, p.160). Ashcroft et al. (1989) maintain the extremely significant component of this literary text, which is that Indians have been colonized and made into slaves in their own country, as far as the postcolonial literary discourse research method is concerned. The research has examined colonized experiences to highlight the tension and pressure they had with colonizers after having a bird's-eye view of the British Raj. The term used by colonizers has been deliberately used by postcolonial writers to highlight how much India was exploited during their rule. Colonizers thought they had significantly accelerated India's development. India was underdeveloped and its inhabitants were primitive and backward before they arrived. Homi K. Bhabha, one of the most prominent postcolonial theorists, states that "form of social criticism that bears witness to those unequal and uneven processes of representation by which the historical experience of the once colonized Third World come to be framed in the West" (Bhabha in P. Mongia, 1997, p.ix). As a result, the British attitude toward Indians is critically analyzed in a postcolonial literary text. Microscopically examining the treatment of English people by native people in the context of postcolonial theory. Metropolitanism, Eurocentric, Other, Mimicry, Diaspora, Hybridity, and Nationalism are the postcolonial theory components that the current paper has chosen to concentrate on. These postcolonial literary discourse components are extremely pertinent to the textual analysis of the book *Burnt Shadows*.

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

i- Metropolitanism

Metropolitanism states that colonists view the "colonized" as underdeveloped and believe that without their support, they would never be progressivists. The way of living, traditions, culture and customs of colonized are superior and considered better to others in

the view of the colonizers. The purpose of European colonization was to advance underdeveloped populations; however, their deeds were completely at odds with their claims. To loot the local natural riches, they occupied territories.

"The colonizers believe that only their own Anglo-European culture was civilized, sophisticated, or as post-colonial critics put it, metropolitan. Therefore, native people are defined as savage, backward and undeveloped. Because their technology was more highly advanced, and they ignored or swept aside the religion, custom, and codes of behavior of the peoples they subjugated." (Tyson, p. 419)

When Sajjad contemplates British India at the beginning of the novel, metropolitanism is first apparent. Sajjad directed a peek at his country's decline and the rapid elimination of its ancient culture. He reflected on how the British initially came to India for trade but eventually gained control, invaded the country, and colonized the natives there. In the history of post-colonial literature, the injustice of the British Raj toward Indians endured. After the English had seized India, they established their colonies. Their settlements were neatly planned, with strong walls serving as the boundary. Indians were never allowed in their businesses.

Sajjad claims: "there was Delhi; the city of the Raj, where every Englishman's bungalow had lush gardens, lined with red flowerpots. That was the end of Sajjad's ruminations on British India. Flowerpots it summed it all up. No trees growing in courtyards for English, no rooms clustered around these courtyards; instead, separations and demarcation" (Shamsie, 2009, p.33). Sajjad's concerns intensified each time he turned to face those dividing flowerpots. The Different Ways of Life of the British demonstrated that Indian people were primitive and lower to them. Sajjad wants the British to leave his nation. Because living with Burtons, he is fully aware that English people who have been beaten with a broom cannot be honest with Indians. Sajjad believes that India is merely a hotel for the English. If not in this era, then definitely in the following one, they must return to their previous residence. They have spent more than three centuries in India, yet they have never been able to integrate into the local society or learn other native languages. As a result, they always have lived apart as foreign bodies.

Sajjad argues: "yes these are interruptions-1857 was one, perhaps the departure of the British will be another-but believe me over the next century Dilli will continue to what it has been doing for the last two centuries" (Shamsie, 2009, p.40). James Burton thought that India was underdeveloped, and its inhabitants were illiterate before the arrival of the English. According to him, the British Raj gave India a new lease on life by introducing contemporary technology to the subcontinent. He believed that nobody would bring about such significant changes in India if the British had not developed communication systems including railways, post offices, telecommunications, bus stops, and roadways. Burton argues, "if that is the case, then you are mistaken in thinking you will live and die there" (Shamsie, 2009, pp.40-41).

ii- Hybridity

Hybridity is a cultural exchange. The local population had been entangled in two civilizations after colonization. Whether they wanted to or not, they had to adapt to a new culture. A similar situation applied to Indians. When the English seized India, they brutally governed it and trampled on its inhabitants. Indians were

required to abide by strict guidelines. India had lost its culture during the colonial era as a result of the merging of English culture. M. A. R. Habib says, "the notion of hybridity is central to Bhabha's work in challenging notions of identity, culture, and nation as coherent and unified entities that exhibit a linear historical development. Hybrid expresses a state of in-betweenness an in person who stands between two cultures" (Habib, 2000, p.750). Being a hybrid, Sajjad sits in the middle of two different cultures. His family enjoys poetry and belongs to Delhi culture. When he hears people reciting poetry in a group, he remembers the old days of his memorable life. He plays chess with James from sunrise until dusk while dressed in English. Between two unfamiliar cultures, Sajjad is imprisoned. He dresses "shalwar kameez" at home, and while on duty, he dresses in English.

"His mind would occupy itself with thoughts of chess games which he and James Burton carried over from day to the next as though they were stories of sultans and dinnis. If there was, to be honest, he missed the day when it was a legal document rather than a chess game that occupied his thoughts each morning but one day, they would return to that no doubt. James Burton had promised him" (Shamsie, 2009, p.34).

Sajjad is fond of playing chess all the time and that is the basic reason for his unsuccessful life. James considers Sajjad Ali nothing more than a pawn of chess. He is hiring him just for the sake of domestic work, but he always indulges in chess. As Burton kept engaging Sajjad in this game all the time, Sajjad did not give any time to the matters of politics. Whenever he asked about the law, Burton always postponed it and kept making excuses. On the demand of Sajjad as he wants to practice law, Burton promises him to do it the next time and assures him that it will surely do, but as result, nothing. Sajjad Ali faces such a sort of injustice from Burton's family. The main purpose of portraying the character of Sajjad Ali is to show imperial India. Through this character, the readers get the exact idea of imperialism. The novel named *Burnt Shadows* has purposely shown hybridity in one's culture. Another example of this aspect is Hiroko Tanaka, a female character in this novel.

The bomb from Nagasaki destroyed her life completely. For instance, she had lost her home even though she did not have any place for shelter. In this atomic attack, her father, siblings, and even her lover died. She is the bold victim of this atomic attack. Her life is full of painful incidents. As she moved to different countries in her life, it's an opportunity for the readers to come to know about many cultures of this huge world. Her character reveals the difference between culture and identity. She used to wear Japanese clothes in her daily life as she belonged there. Moreover, after marriage, she shifts her lifestyle because she wants to live a successful marriage life with Sajjad. This aspect of her life is considered the perfect example of culture and identity. She changes her outlook just for the sake of her husband as he does not want to see her wife in Japanese clothes. It feels like he is embarrassed if she appears in such clothes in front of his friends. These types of characters or appearances by Kamila Shamsie show the political, public, and social scenarios to the readers.

After the attack of "Fat Man" and "Little Boy", she escaped from Japan and went to Delhi, India because Americans consider that they are their real enemies. There, she spent time with Burton's family. They treated her well and she also treated them

well. She finds a safe shelter there. She had an extremely different lifestyle from them. Furthermore, she behaves like a friend of Sajjad Ali. She does not feel that he is a supportive servant of this house and she considers him a member of Burton's. Hiroko wants to learn the Urdu language. That is why she exchanges conversations with Sajjad, but Miss Burton does not like their behavior of Hiroko. She strongly believed that a servant should be

treated just like a servant, not like a friend. Miss Burton claims that the English language is enough for living a life in this place, India. Hiroko enjoys visiting the people of India. At that, Miss Burton resisted her from doing such types of meetings, but she did not. Sajjad liked her boldness.

iii- Nationalism (Nativism)

Nativism shows the love for lost culture and basically, this expression is used to show the deference of one's lost culture. This element of the theory is defined that people wanting to adopt their previous culture after being colonized. They do not accept new rules or implications over their lives. Native people insist that there is no need to change cultural values and they are civilized enough. The post-colonial community sense that the colonizers just want to asunder their values and they only wish to crunch it under their boots. The rejection of western culture and adoption of native culture is named "Nativism" or "Nationalism". This notion has been discussed in depth in today's theory by the memorable critic, Lois Tyson. She claims: "many ex-colonial therefore feel they must assert a native culture both to avoid being swamped by a western culture so firmly planted on their soil and to recuperate their national image in their own eyes and in the eyes of others. This emphasis on the indigenous culture, especially when accompanied by the attempt to eliminate western influences, is called Nativism on nationalism" (Tyson, 2006, p.423).

In *Burnt Shadows*, When Sajjad was going to marry Hiroko then he decided to celebrate his day according to his own will. Now, he is not Burton's servant. On the day of Sajjad's wedding, he prefers to wear pajamas and a kurta and he does not want to see himself more in western dress. He breaks down the boundaries of British culture. Actually, through Sajjad's adoption of native culture, Kamila Shamsie has shown "nativism" and "nationalism". As it is mentioned in the novel: "James turned. Walking through the moist towards him was Sajjad, dressed as had been the first time James saw him, and never since in white muslin kurta pajama. A large umbrella was touched under his arm, leaving a wet imprint down one side of his body. My dear fellow James stepped forward, extending his hand. Sajjad looked at it in confusion, and James laughed and clasped the other man's shoulder. Didn't bring a chessboard with you I suppose; Sajjad pulled away I'm not here to return to my duties" (Shamsie, 2009, pp.110-111).

After his marriage, he prefers to live in Delhi, India because he wants to spend the rest of his life according to his native culture. He kicks off British culture as he says: "I will die in Dilli. Before that, I will live in Dilli. Whether it's in British, Hindustan, or Pakistan that makes no difference. In Sajjad's eyes, his colony is still saved from the effects of the British culture. He says to James Burton that in the next century India will be free from British Raj. And all the lost culture of Dilli will revive soon. Sajjad says "not believe me over the next century Dilli will

continue to be what it's been doing for the last two centuries" (Shamsie, p. 40) The mother of Sajjad hated British culture or especially the English language from the depth of her heart. She thinks that this language is a tool to keep them away from their native culture. She feels disgusted while using some key terms of English, for instance, "Maa-dern". It has been listed in the novel: "Modern? His mother repeated the English word with disgust, and Sajjad tried not to imagine the Burtons laughing at her pronunciation; 'Maa-dern'. Do they tell you that is what your English is? Modern? These are words created only to cut you off from people and your past". (Shamsie p. 52)

DISCUSSION

'Other' is considered an aspect of post-colonialism that shows a discarded community. Colonizers treated colonized people badly rather brutally. They are forced to do labor work. They have nothing for them except to do heavy work. Colonizers clutched all the rights of colonized natives. The worst condition is that colonizers had no right to sit in their company of them or could not be allowed to go to hotels or other places like clubs. *A Passage to India* by the famous writer named E.M Forster has also shown this aspect clearly. He portrays dogs in the novel just to show the place of natives. It has been discussed in depth in the theory by the famous critic, Lois Tyson. "As the embodiment of what a human being should be, the proper "self"; native people were considered "Other" different, and therefore inferior to the point of being less than fully human. This practice of judging all who are different as less than fully human is called Othering, and it divides the word between us (the "civilized") and "then" (the "other" or savages)" (Tyson, 2006, p.420).

Miss Burton also forbids her husband that he should not spend much time with Sajjad. The only reason is that Sajjad is not a member of this house. He is only a servant. Elizabeth, the wife of James, says that Sajjad was not hired for playing, he was hired for domestic help. She also argues that this is not your status, you should spend your time with the members of your status. She claims: "...and in any case you and Sajjad do nothing but play chess all day; let the boy work for his salary again" (Shamsie, 2009, p.20). Another example of "Other" or "Otherness" in this novel is after their recovery treatment of Hiroko. She served there as a good translator for at least one year. Americans considered Japan the worst nation. Even after the atomic attack, they did not lose their hatred for the Japanese. After all happenings, Hiroko's friend, a nurse, went to a parlor with Hiroko there. She cut down her hair according to Americans and changed her dress. She did this act because she does not want to reveal her identity as Americans find the Japanese as their worst enemies. At this, Hiroko argues: "I worked as a translator for over a year. made friends with one American nurse in particular, who took me to take my hair cut short like hers, and let me borrow her clothes when we went to night clubs to gather". (Shamsie, p. 64) Some of Burton's inspect that Sajjad was only for work, he had no right to spend time with us, have parties, wear expensive clothes, etc. To show this mentality, Kamila Shamsie quoted that Elizabeth Burton argues: "I wish you would not give him your clothes Elizabeth said without turning towards James.

He's started looking at everything you wear as if it's his property; did you see how upset he was yesterday when you split ink on your shirt." (Shamsie, 2009, pp.34-35) All these aspects

have shown the superiority of English people. They do not share even a single moment with Indians because they considered them an inferior community of the whole world. They find them as "Other" and show that they have different values, culture, and even language from Indians. Sajjad was a kind, sincere and simple servant, despite having this nature. Elizabeth Burton, the wife of James Burton, criticized him and used to feel inferior to them.

FINDINGS

A long time ago, India was conquered by different nations like Persian, Arab, Mongol, Turk, and Hun and after it, they settled in India. They adopted the culture, traditions, values, and even the language of India. They considered India their land and they felt eager towards India. But, white people could not consider it their homeland despite living at least hundreds of years there. They treated Indians brutally. As Sajjad quoted: "throughout India's history conquerors have come from elsewhere, and all of them- Turk, Arab, Hun, Mongol, Persian- have become Indians. If- when- this Pakistan happens, those Muslims who leave Delhi and Lucknow, and Hyderabad to go there, will be leaving their home. But when the English leave, they'll be going home." (Shamsie, p. 82)

In the light of the theory of post-colonialism, the diaspora is defined as those people who escaped from their native land. There, they consider lower rank people who do not have enough respect because it's not their original land. For colonization, they were used as a toy in their hands as it is considered that they were only made for heavy work in their lives, but as a result, there is nothing special for them, not even proper food or fulfillment of life necessities. In short, where one person grew up and was born, he separated from that place that is named diaspora. There, they missed their native land memories even though they settled down there. They have love in their hearts more than that new land where they even settled. The feelings of revenge are aroused in their minds and hearts for those who were the main cause of Indian separation. From the novel: "being unhomed" is not the same as being homeless. To be unhomed is to feel not at home even in your own home because you are not at home in yourself, your culture identity critics have made you a psychological refugee, so to speak" (Tyson, 2006, p.421).

In the light of the novel *Burnt Shadows*, Sajjad is considered the perfect example of diaspora. He did not want to leave India as he grew up there. He spent his life there. That is the basic reason that he loved it so much. After the conquest of India by different nations, Sajjad had to leave it. It was the time of farewell for him. After that, he moved to Karachi and settled there, but his heart was full of precious memories and old days of happiness. He felt sorrow whenever he recalled old days memories of Delhi. He considered it as part of his "Dill" (heart). "He would not ever have believed that he would come to think of Karachi as home and that his bitter regard about his separation from Dilli would be the absence of safety nets that the joints family system had once provided" (Shamsie, 2009, p.134).

The element of "Other" or "Otherness" is portrayed by Kamila Shamsie in this masterpiece, *Burnt Shadows*. The most prominent example of this aspect in this novel is the character of Sajjad. James considers Sajjad "Other". As it was told earlier, James kept engaging Sajjad in playing chess, but in fact, he was hired for domestic work. From morning to evening, there was no

work or activity for Sajjad except for enjoying this game. Sajjad wants to acquire knowledge of the law. He had asked James for it many times. As usual, James only made a lame excuse and postponed it with a strong assurance. James does not help him learn politics or law. At one stage, Sajjad comes to know that the British are not interested in improving the life of Indians. They should not be a helping hand to Indians. On this avoidance, one day Sajjad says to James: "Is this what you call a flourishing life? Spending my days playing chess with" (Shamsie, 2009, p.41).

The whole aspect reveals the thinking pattern of English people. Here, James is the representative of the English people and Sajjad is the true representative of Indians. Sajjad lives in the world of the British Raj. English people do not bear the improvement of Indians. These people hated India so much. It shows from the fact that despite living in India for hundreds of years, they did not adopt their single cultural aspect, tradition, value, and even a single word of the Urdu language. When Hiroko wants to learn the Urdu language while spending her life in India, Miss Burton resists her many times and says that English is enough to communicate with each other. She considers it an inferior act. She does not like meetings of Hiroko with native Indians, even her friendly behavior with Sajjad, a servant. It has been quoted in the novel by Kamila Shamsie that Hiroko demands: "I'd like to learn the language they speak here, she had said. It's not necessary. English serves your fine" (Shamsie, 2009, p.57).

CONCLUSION

The main purpose of this research is to mention the theories of post-colonialism in the famous novel *Burnt Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie. Kamila Shamsie has portrayed life-like characters in this novel. This work reveals that English people took charge completely in India brutally. They considered Indians, native people, like animals. Previous conquerors of India, like Mongols, Turks, Persian, Arabs, or Huns, considered it their homeland. They did not treat the people of India badly. They treated them well and were friendly. But, on the other hand, we can see the element of greed and a superiority complex in British people. In this novel by Kamila Shamsie, James and Sajjad were the representative characters of that concept. Sajjad was the true representative of Indians and James was the perfect representative of the British Raj. Sajjad is playing his role in the novel like a toy in white people's hands. Hybridity is shown in his character clearly, but after his marriage to Hiroko, he lives his life according to his own will. Hiroko's love gives him the freedom of living life. Then, he spends his life like a native.

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