



Subversion of Conventional Narratives in South Asian English Fiction: A Postmodern Analysis of Language Games and Metanarratives

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigates that South Asian English fiction subverts conventional narratives through the use of Jean-François Lyotard's concept of language games. The study examines the constantly changing and context-dependent storytelling techniques employed in Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner*, Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies* and Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*. These techniques challenge established cultural, social, or moral norms. These novels utilize language techniques such as code-switching, ironic symbolism, and idiomatic phrases to highlight the ethnic backgrounds and complex identities of the protagonists. Authors demonstrate the evolution of meanings across time, as well as the varying ways justice is given to various individuals at different periods. They also emphasize the perpetual openness of truth, in accordance with Lyotard's belief that knowledge is generated through conflicting narratives about reality. The findings clearly demonstrate that individual experiences and the socio-political environment continually influence and reshape our concept of morality.

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1. Introduction

Postmodernism emerged in the mid-twentieth decade and sparked a literary controversy, succeeding the modern epoch in chronological order. The phrase "modern" originated from the Latin expression "modo," which meaning "of today" or something that is contemporary and distinct from previous periods. Postmodernism has had a significant influence on various domains, including musical instruments culture, theology, architecture, history and language. The consensus among postmodern scholars is the belief that extensive advancements in economics, politics, philosophy, technology, and culture during the latter part of the 20th century fundamentally altered many aspects of life, thereby giving rise to what is known as 'the postmodern experience'. According to Brooker, "the terms 'postmodern' and 'postmodernism' were briefly used during the forties or fifties to describe shifts in social customs, as mentioned in criticism writings" (Brooker, 2014). The writing of the present day has been altered due to many modifications resulting from postmodernism, as stated by Selden et al in *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*, "Art that engages with the postmodern understanding of diversity and variety will, as a result, analyses and disrupt the finality of modernization. It will explore the 'unsayable' and 'invisible'" (Selden, Widdowson, & Brooker, 2013). Jean Francois Lyotard, distinguished French postmodern as well as post-structuralize theorist, was brought up in France during 1924. In his renowned work the *Postmodern Condition* (1979 in French and 1984 in English), he has expounded upon his notion of mini-narratives and language games. His ideology is founded on the concept that reality does not inherently exist, whereas every concept is constructed via the use of linguistic acts. Lyotard poses a substantial challenge to science and its underlying concepts. He believes that the current postmodern condition is the ideal era for engaging in philosophical discourse. He

describes himself as "a philosopher rather than an authority on the subject" (Lyotard, 1984). He elaborates that while he could fail to have flawless information, he is adept at posing inquiries, especially in the absence of definitive answers. In his work, he argues that postmodernism is connected to modernism as it arose in reaction to scientific and materialistic progress. His theory of mini-narratives challenges the contemporary ideological frameworks, and he views this change as a characteristic of the postmodern era. He asserts, "Science appears to be fully subordinate to the dominant power" (1984:8). He characterizes postmodernism as an ideology that exhibits skepticism towards overarching narratives, as it questions established beliefs and conceptual structures that rely on notions of objectivity or reality. A 'metanarrative' is a narrative that refers to another narrative. It is a narrative created by humans that asserts its impartiality and clarity. Lyotard argues that the discussion of science is founded on the human inclination to exert control therefore does not accurately reflect objective reality. He posits these ideas of enlightenment function as "language games," a concept that Lyotard has adopted from the Austrian philosopher Wittgenstein. Lyotard observes as there exist particular types of statements, such as performative, interrogative, denotative, promissory, and prescriptive, and he emphasizes that each of these types of statements follows particular regulations in their execution. In addition to scientific findings, Lyotard regards past as a linguistic game in which the traditional historian, acting as a participant, exhibits a limited range of knowledge. Malpas agrees with Lyotard's perspective as these statements adhere to specific laws and are closely connected to power. He asserts,

Different types of conversations follow distinct values. The different forms of communication that are accessible to the public at large, whether they are scientific articles, works of fiction, legal documents, cultural norms, or even gossip, all adhere to different sets of guidelines that determine what is considered to be true statements. Lyotard refers to these different narratives simply "language games" (2005: 21).

Michael Ondaatje, a novelist and poet born in Sri Lanka and now a Canadian citizen, frequently delves into themes of memory and identity. His novel, *The English Patient*, is set in the closing days of World War II and revolves around the intertwined lives of four people in an Italian villa. The narrative poignantly explores themes of love, loss, and the lasting impacts of war. Ondaatje's poetic style and complex storytelling have earned him comparisons to writers like Virginia Woolf and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, who are celebrated for their introspective and richly detailed prose. His historical novels, including his *Sea of Pess Zacharias* series, have earned Amitav Ghosh, an Indian writer, a place among the most significant South Asian novelists. Opium is the central theme of his first novel, titled *Sea of Poppies*, which is part of the *Ibis Trilogy* that is based on the era of the opium trade, dated the 19th century. The novel depicts the adventures of several individuals on board the *Ibis* bound for Mauritius. Ghosh weaves their fate and stories beautifully together, exploring colonialism, displacement, and the formation of national identity. Comparing the author to other writers, it might be easier to comprehend his writing: Salman Rushdie and Gabriel Garcia Marquez write more poetically, and the novel's structure is incredibly complicated. Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-American novelist who quickly gained popularity due to his deep and sensitive narrative that encodes the thrilling richness of human feelings and the complexity of social and political issues. *The Kite Runner* is the first novel by the author and is a story that narrates the lives of the main character, Amir, a young boy from a wealthy family in Kabul and Hassan, the son of his father's Hazara servant. It spans some time, allowing the reader to understand atonement, betrayal, and the aftermath of the Afghani situation. It is often compared to such fiction writers as Charles Dickens and Gabriel Garcia Marquez because of the latter's brightness and passionate storytelling by Hosseini. Kamila Shamsie, a Pakistani society of British literature novelists, is admired for her noteworthy scenic depiction and historical setting of her *Burnt Shadows*, which covers Nagasaki to fission, the partition of India, the Afghan-Soviet war and the America post-September 11 attacks. This study examines the following research question:

- 1) How does the selected South Asian English Fiction subvert the traditional narratives through Lyotard's idea of language games?

2. Literature Review

Shah (2018) analyses the complex interplay of belonging, guilt, or redemption in Khaled Hosseini's highly regarded work. Shah contends that Hosseini depicts the intricate interplay among the individuals, with a specific emphasis on the marginalised Hazara community, as

exemplified by the personality of Hassan. The author explores the social and cultural divides that are present throughout Afghan society, highlighting that these distinctions influence the experiences and fates of the characters. Shah asserts, "Hosseini's tale skillfully entwines both political and personal aspects, vividly portraying the profound ethnic conflicts that afflict Afghan culture and the way these conflicts appear in the daily lives of the protagonists, specifically in the link between Hassan and Amir" (p. 45). Shah's perspective, however extensive, fails to acknowledge the redemptive trajectory of Amir, which highlights the potential for individual development and the act of forgiving. Hosseini's portrayal of Amir's quest to seek forgiveness for his previous errors emphasizes the themes of remorse, salvation, and the lasting consequences of decisions made in infancy. This tale delves into the political and social context of Afghanistan and provides a deep analysis of the ability of humans to transform and reconcile. In her Ph. D. dissertation titled *Wounds of War and Identity: A Postcolonial Critique of The English Patient*, Sarah Ahmed argues that Ondaatje's novel has many layers of representation and collage that thoughtfully interconnect issues of identity, memory, and trauma. Ahmed says that Ondaatje presents a story of disjunction; this reflects the fractured personalities of the characters, especially the hallucinatory English patient. Here, the author offers a characterization of that colonialism and warfare impact personal transformations to which the characters in the novel work on restoration of relevant previous experiences with the present. Ahmed states:

The collapse of imperialist powers and the hybrid selves that follow are seen in the narrative structure; the historical suffering undergone by victims of historical events and arrogant individuals like the English patient is depicted by the forgetfulness of this patient (p. 58).

In addition to the physical scars he sustains despite this, the element of hope and healing missing in Ahmed's analysis is evident throughout the novel with instances such as Hana nursing the English patient, again implying that in the aftermath of war there is restoration. In revealing the connected and entangled lives of the characters, Ondaatje ties his novel together through themes of love, loss, and the quest for purpose amid the backdrop of war. In her Ph. D. dissertation titled *Transnational Identities and Hybrid Narratives in South Asian Fiction: Sharma (2021)* deals with issues of Identity, Displacement and cultural creolization by viewing Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows* and Amitav Ghosh's *Sea of Poppies*. Sharma argues that these works subvert unitary, static pasts and selves to multiple, connected individual and historical narratives across nations and generations. According to Sharma, "Shamsie and Ghosh's novels, they express the nature of postcolonial identities and their fractured subjectivities by displacing themselves across different countries and periods" (p.102). Both of the novels map the way colonialism and wars have shaped individual lives and global history. In her Ph. D. dissertation entitled *Transformation of Metanarratives in Burnt Shadows*, Ashraf (2019) critically explores the evolving narratives of history, identity and memory depicted intensely in Kamila Shamsie's novel. To this end, Ashraf suggests that Shamsie disrupts grand master narratives affecting history by focusing on singular stories and cultural encounters, showing that the personal lives interact with historical processes. She analyzes the way the novel challenges mainstream history and suggests different perspectives, looking at the presented problem through the different characters of the story. According to Ashraf, "when Shamsie presents the merging of histories and metanarratives, her narrative style underlines a complex of personal and global contexts. Hiroko Tanaka and Raza Konrad Ashraf navigate intricate conflict, colonialism, and migration legacies, demonstrating postcolonial identities' fluidity" (p. 77). The novel's protagonists' transforming journeys explore agency and resilience, but Ashraf's study ignores them. Shamsie's depiction of characters who recover their narratives and build new paths during historical upheavals emphasises survival and rebirth in a world of conflict and displacement.

3. Theoretical Framework

The current study is investigative and focuses on qualitative analysis. The qualitative approach is employed when a researcher desires to conduct an in-depth examination of a piece of writing. Neergaard (2007) assert, "The goal of qualitative research is to enhance understanding of social events in everyday contexts, with a focus on the consequences, experiences, and viewpoints of all participants" (p.4). Hence, this study examines the subversive use of language in the selected south Asian English fiction from the perspective of

Lyotard's concept of language games. The study uses Catherine Belsey's textual analysis to examine the connection between the author, reader, and the text. It stimulates the reader to engage in the process of interpreting and deciphering written information. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) says, "The postmodern style of critique questioned the inherent authority of writings themselves" (p.52). The chosen piece of literature is analyzed in many elements such as words, sentences and idioms to identify the language games that challenge contemporary overarching narratives, as suggested by Lyotard. Textual examination facilitates the identification of Lyotardian games of language by scrutinizing writings and styles, as articulated by Norman Fairclough: "Texts, when used as components of social events, have a causal impact. They can bring about changes in our understanding, beliefs, attitudes, values, and so on." (Fairclough, 2003)(p.8). Thus, this study also investigates the transformation and opposition to the dominant structures of society. The study is structured and categorized into sections, namely opening, literature review, analysis of the text, conclusion, or works referenced.

4. Data Analysis

The *Kite Runner*, *Sea of Poppies*, *The English Patient*, and *Burnt Shadows* all subvert traditional metanarratives by challenging established cultural, social, and moral norms through their dynamic and context-dependent storytelling. This is analyzed through Jean-François Lyotard's concept of "language games," which posits that the meaning of language is derived from its use within specific social contexts. Additionally, these novels utilize code-switching as a powerful tool to highlight the multicultural backgrounds and complex identities of characters. By blending languages, they showcase the characters' connections to their cultural roots, personal relationships, and the broader socio-political environments they navigate, enriching the narratives and reflecting the complex interplay between language, identity, and metanarrative subversion. In *The Kite Runner*, Baba's assertion, "There is only one sin, only one. And that is theft. Every other sin is a variation of theft. [...] When you kill a man, you steal a life" (Hosseini, 2004)(p. 18), redefines sin in a moral rather than religious framework. This redefinition shows faith as a personal moral code rather than a strict religious doctrine, indicating that meaning and morality are dependent on personal context, aligning with Lyotard's idea that meaning is shaped by its context. Similarly, *The English Patient* illustrates faith's fluid nature through the protagonist's reflections: "The desert could not be claimed or owned—it was a piece of cloth carried by winds, never held down by stones, and given a hundred shifting names" (Ondaatje, 1992) (p. 138). This metaphor highlights the elusive and ever-changing nature of faith, emphasizing that belief systems are shaped by personal and contextual factors, which resonates with Lyotard's notion that meaning is context-dependent. In *Sea of Poppies*, faith is depicted through Deeti's religious rituals and visions: "It was as if the river's voice was calling her, telling her that she would be safe, that nothing would happen to her"(Ghosh, 2008).

The text emphasizes faith as an instinctual and protective force, telling that beliefs are influenced by personal experiences and contexts. Finally, *Burnt Shadows* portrays faith through Hiroko's reflections on fate and destiny: For example, a woman from an orthodox culture tries to come to terms with the fact she has been raped and turns to her religious beliefs in an attempt to seek the answers: "How could a deity who created the soaring Himalayas, the verdin valleys, allow something like this to happen?" (p. 85). The text raises many questions and points and partly negates the concept of purpose and, at least, simple comprehensibility of the religious belief system while emphasizing individualism. Faith in these novels is understood as the determination and development of beliefs and values regarding the divine. It is not uniform and unchanging but depends on the characters and their experiences' actions, and choices. Overall, these instances demonstrate that each author examines faith from a perspective that goes beyond traditional religious viewpoints. They adopt a more inclusive approach to belief and explore the concept of right and wrong. In all of the novels, characters seek for personal justice who undermines traditional narratives about law and order. These novels bring out the contradiction between formal legal institutions on one hand and individual ethical standards on the other; thus giving us a multifaceted perspective towards justice that is mostly negative. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir narrates: "In the end, the world always wins...that is just the way of things" Hosseini (2004) suggests that formal legal systems often fail to deliver true justice. Amir's quest for personal redemption emphasizes the gap between legal justice and moral justice. Likewise, *The English Patient* addresses this conflict through the line "The trouble with all of us is we are where we shouldn't be" (Ondaatje, 1992). This statement could

be interpreted as a certain feeling of alienation, an appeal to the violation of familiar laws and norms, and a critical approach to formal legal frameworks marked by the absence of a suitable ethical guide. Sea of Poppies to illustrate that, "There are laws that permit a person to be enslaved and sold in the rung market like a beast, but there is no law that can grant him/her freedom" Ghosh (2008) highlights the difference between law and morality.

The way the characters deal with this contradiction also casts doubt on whether or not our legal systems work. Lastly, the text from *Burnt Shadows* also reflects this theme, "Justice was not an absolute; it was a decision, a compromise, a consensus" (Shamsie, 2009). This remark suggests that formal legal systems fail to resolve moral difficulties because justice is subjective. These works illustrate law through legal and moral codes that the protagonists must negotiate, frequently in conflict. These human quests for justice show that conventional legal systems sometimes fail to give justice. This supports the premise that language games—contexts and frameworks—produce diverse and occasionally competing truths. These works show that meaning and justice are context-dependent, questioning legal narratives. The depiction of war in all the novels diverges from traditional heroic and noble narratives, instead presenting war as a series of personal tragedies and moral ambiguities. The texts collectively explore the way war affects individuals on a deeply personal level, challenging the conventional view that war justifies moral compromises. Each narrative employs irony and introspection to highlight the ethical complexities and personal losses that arise from conflict. In *The Kite Runner*, the text, "War doesn't negate decency. It demands it, even more than in times of peace" Hosseini (2004), subverts the traditional notion that war excuses immoral behavior. Instead, it suggests that war requires a stronger adherence to moral principles, emphasizing the personal moral struggles that accompany conflict. *The English Patient* reflects a similar perspective through the statement, "In the end, we are just the same. We are cut off from the people who are dying for us, cut off from our own history" (Ondaatje, 1992). This highlights the disconnection and ethical uncertainty brought about by war, urging a deeper moral reflection rather than accepting standard wartime justifications. In *Sea of Poppies*, the text, "In the end, it was the poppy that destroyed them all, with its insidious flowering of death and addiction" (Ghosh, 2008)(p. 231), emphasizes the personal and moral consequences of war. The use of irony in this statement challenges the idea that war legitimizes moral compromises, instead presenting war as a catalyst for profound ethical dilemmas. "*Burnt Shadows*" encapsulates this theme with the line, "War was just a backdrop, the real story was the human heart" (Shamsie, 2009) (p. 198).

This perspective shifts the focus from the overarching narrative of war to the personal and moral struggles of individuals, highlighting that the true impact of war lies in its effect on human experiences and moral decisions. These works show that war is difficult and morally confusing, requiring greater moral inquiry. They question wartime narratives by highlighting personal tragedies and ethical issues. These novels describe battle in a way that supports the theory that "language games" can yield competing truths. Each story demonstrates that war's effects on people defy rationalization and require moral reevaluation. This perspective emphasizes that personal experience and moral introspection influence war's meaning and ethics. The notion of identity is smoked in all the novels as being dynamic and complex in the sense that it changes from time to time and from one place to the other depending on the individual's choices, the cultures and the socio-political systems that prevail in a given society. In *The Kite Runner*, the phrase "for you, a thousand times over" (Hosseini, 2004) (p. 2) defines the main character's morality, which corresponds to the Amir values of loyalty and self-sacrifice. The text undermines the invariably profound role of relationships in constructing identity – the very essence of what it means to be and feel a certain way. As a result, opposing conventional categorization since it embraces change in identity. Also, in the novel *The English Patient*, the theme of the conflict of identities is worked up with the help of the character of Kip – an Indian sapper in the English army: "He had grown up believing in the sacredness of his own body" Markt- & Kunstmesse: Zum Spannungsverhältnis von sakraler Gestaltung und profanem Content am Beispiel der Art Directors Cut London. The phrase "the light of reason proved stronger again." What could he offer her of himself but damage?" (Ondaatje, 1992)(p. 218), reflects Kip's struggle with his identity shaped by cultural heritage and personal choices. This illustrates the fluidity of identity, as Kip navigates between his cultural background and his experiences in the army. In *Sea of Poppies*, the character of Kalua, a low-caste ox-cart driver, embodies the fluidity of identity: "To people like Kalua, who had always been at the bottom,

the ship was the one place where they could hope to rise above their birth" (Ghosh, 2008)(p. 87), shows how socio-political contexts and personal ambitions can redefine one's identity, moving beyond rigid societal labels. *Burnt Shadows* also portrays identity as fluid and multifaceted through the character of Hiroko, a survivor of the Nagasaki bombing: "She was both the hibakusha and the woman who made a new life, a new identity, out of the ashes" (Shamsie, 2009) (p. 243), emphasizes Hiroko's ability to navigate multiple cultures and identities. This reflects that personal resilience and cultural values shape identity in complex and dynamic ways. These novels collectively emphasize that identity is not a singular, static entity but a complex and evolving construct influenced by various factors.

In portraying characters, the authors explore the contestation and fluidity of the Personal, Cultural and Socio-political Self, which recalculates the Essence of identity. Thus, the depiction of identity in these novels shares the thought that meaning and identity are a product of various language games or contexts. Because each character's path displays many processes and moments of built identity that contradict one other, exploring identity and the individual-environment relationship is equally important. This technique helps show that identity is a liability full of context and complexity. All of the works utilize linguistics playfulness, symbols, irony and idiomatic expressions to expose the elastic nature of meaning and ambiguity in conventional narratives. The texts use these techniques in literature to challenge common culture interpretation and morality understanding. In *The Kite Runner*, the metaphor:

Children aren't coloring books. You don't get to fill there with your favorite colors criticizes the sense of parental options for children's identity, implying that identity is not a product of the parent's decision. Similarly, "The English Patient" uses poetic language, such as in the line. The heart is an organ of fire (Ondaatje, 1992) (p. 97).

The text challenge conventional understandings of passion and emotion, suggesting that human experience is contextually constructed. In the case of *Sea of Poppies*, meta-intertextuality is seen in the playful adoption in the lascar dialect, "Is it true what they say—that the Ma-Zee is like a kind of zenana, where all the wives live?" (Ghosh, 2008)(140). In the same vein, *Burnt Shadows* also uses multilingualism and cross-cultural conversations, as said in the passage, "It was as if in Urdu, there was a word for everything. The language was both repository and shelter" (Shamsie, 2009)(p. 67), to stress on the lack of concrete meanings related to objects, experiences and the world. Thus, symbolism plays the most vital role in these novels to convey hidden themes and even the subversion of the dominating discourses. In *The Kite Runner*, the kite is a symbol of freedom, betrayal and redemption: "A boy who looks like Hassan might come running down the steel with his chapped hands holding a wooden spool, sweating profusely" (Hosseini, 2004) (p. 53). *The English Patient* uses the desert as a symbol of freedom and desolation: "The desert was the place of our story" (Ondaatje, 1992)(p. 23). In *Sea of Poppies*, the author has effectively used the ship *Ibis* to represent freedom in bondage, which is described as, 'The *Ibis* was a ship with a past, a history, almost a destiny' (Ghosh, 2008) (p. 56). In *Burnt Shadows*, the burnt shadows left by the atomic bomb symbolize both destruction and resilience. Shamsie's interpretation of the global within the text in this passage captures the perpetual presence of the shadows of the past even when people attempt to engage in a new history: "The shadows of the past are always with us, even when we think we have moved beyond them" (Shamsie, 2009)(p. 287). Irony is used widely to disrupt expectations and subvert conventional tropes, especially those concerning heroes and the moral high ground – a sentiment Intertextuality shares. Analyzing this quote from *The Kite Runner*, "There is a way to be good again" (Hosseini, 2004)(p. 2) one would get the impression that there is a possibility of redemption; however, the actions depicted in the novel do not support this belief.

Ironically, in *The English Patient*, the author Ondaatje expresses this freedom and the human appeal on the final page of the novel in a passage that says, "We die containing a richness of lovers and tribes, tastes we have swallowed, bodies we have plunged into and swam up as if rivers of wisdom, characters we have climbed into as if trees, fears we have hidden in as if caves" (Ondaatje, 1992) (261). In *Sea of Poppies*, the text, "This was not the work of humans, it was as if the earth itself had conspired to destroy them" (Ghosh, 2008)(p. 275), uses irony to challenge simplistic views of human agency. *Burnt Shadows* employs irony in, "The victors write history, but it's the survivors who live with it" (Shamsie, 2009)(p. 322), to emphasize the tension between ideals and reality. Idioms are used to convey cultural

nuances and add layers of meaning that challenge straightforward interpretations. As it has been revealed in *The Kite Runner*, the Afghan proverb that the author uses stating, "A man who has no conscience, no goodness, does not suffer" (Hosseini, 2004) (p 54), provides the background to the theme of guilt and redemption. The text employs the saying, "All parts of the body must be washed equally", where Hana's father – an English patient – in his conversation with the burned man, whose name is unknown, refers to Arabs, English, and Indians as equal (Ondaatje, 1992) (p. 115). Ghosh (2008) popularizes the idiom, "Drowned in the river of opium", in *Sea of Poppies*, where it depicts serves as symbols of addiction and exploitation. For instance, the idiomatic expressions employed in *Burnt Shadows* is "Between the devil and the deep blue sea" (Shamsie, 2009) (176). This expresses the idea of being trapped in a Pavlovian predicament of making unpleasant decisions. Taken together, these novels underscore the notion that subjectivity and purpose are performative and ever-shifting, not hidden within one's self.

The authors employ linguistics playfulness, symbolism, irony, idiomatic expressions, and proverbs to push the audience to reassess conventional perspectives on history and human existence. This perspective aligns with the idea of the universe being composed of 'linguistic games' in which distinct facts are constructed for each game, emphasizing the fluid nature of meaning and identity. The works of literature actually are often seen as emphasizing the idea that meaning is dependent on context, which is viewed as a deeper and more valuable comprehension of identity and life. The novels employ code-switching as a successful tactic to depict the ethnic settings and the interwoven nature of the characters' personalities. Therefore, the significance of the phrase lies in its social usage, and in this regard, researchers could find inspiration from Jean-François Lyotard's concept of 'language games'. In *The Kite Runner*, Amir constantly switches between Dari and English with tears in his eyes, telling his father, "Baba Jan, I am going to win" (2003: 62). Thus, Amir switches between Dari and English when trying to merge with his father, participating in a game of language that reflects family and cultural affiliations. Likewise, in *Sea of Poppies*, Ghosh (2008) also paints a picture of colonial contacts through cultural, linguistic formulae such as "Huzoor, yeh kya hai?" (p. 45), this exhibition presents a wide range of cultural perspectives and approaches to communications. This encounter demonstrates that the linguistic activities involved in colonialism are distinct from those occurring outside of colonial contexts. In the prologue of "The English Patient", Ondaatje (1992) employs code-switching to depict the feelings that define relationships between people, for instance, when a male character gently calls one of the females' "Habibi" (p.99) as a blend of Arabic and English. This code-switching should be viewed as a language game that reflects intimacy or affection using a pidgin language. I particularly stand on the part where "Burnt Shadows" by Shamsie (2009) reflects culture blending in daily conversation, such as 'Amma, where is my notebook?' [p. 34] shows the Urdu language integration into English as part of the character's hybrid but real life. This instance seems to be a language game which operates through two cultural frameworks. These switches go a long way toward enhancing the work because they depict the complexity associated with language and the characters today in a multicultural society, as defined by Lyotard's theory of language games.

5. Conclusion

By utilizing Lyotard's concept of language games, it's possible to critically analyze South Asian English fiction as it profoundly challenges conventional storytelling. The novels utilize dynamic narrative techniques to challenge and reaffirm prevailing cultural, societal, and ethical norms. These works portray identity as mutable, with morality shifting based on the circumstances, and personal experiences intertwined with broader socio-political contexts. In this narrative method, code-switching is used to depict the presence of multiple cultures, as individuals navigate their lives with integrated identities. This reflects the complexity of forming a distinct uniqueness in today's world. The utilization of symbolism, irony, and idiomatic language in these writings exemplifies diverse interpretations or notions of justice that are capable of being inferred from them, contingent upon different settings. This aligns effectively with Lyotard's contention that universal truths do not exist, but rather only localized ones. Collectively, these works do not demonstrate that our identities are not static constructs, nor are morality universally objective, as both are shaped by cultural and historical influences. This research emphasizes the active and expressive quality of identity, which questions inflexible and conventional ideas about justice. These novels provide for a more profound comprehension of human experience in postmodern times, specifically in relation to cultural diversity, by

recognizing the existence of various potential meanings within any given textual moment or event.

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