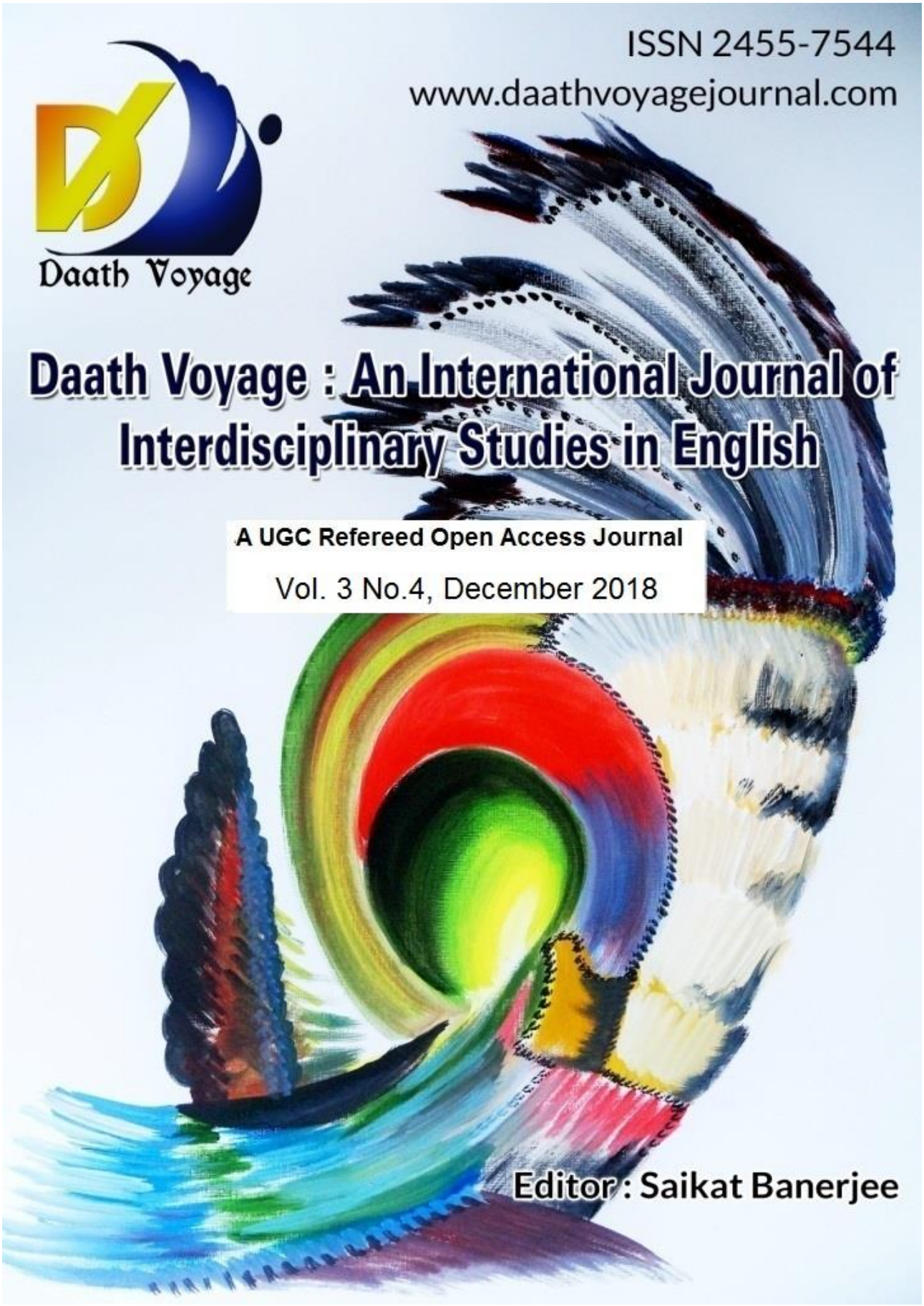

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Narratives of Migration and Trauma in *Burnt Shadows*

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Abstract: Kamila Shamsie's *Burnt Shadows*(2009)*starts* from World War II, ends post 9/11, and draws in characters from across the world like; Japan, Germany, India, and Pakistan. The long expansion of history gathers a violent interaction between people and nations of these countries. Privileged and unprivileged migration take contradict each other in the narration of the novel. Each of the character in the novel distinguishes each other on the basis of their ability or desire to claim the particular nation they live, if a character is able to belong, according to the novel, his migration is neutral or even positive migration. During the independence of India and Pakistan, the protagonist and her husband were not allowed entry to India when they complete their honeymoon trip to Turkey. Their forceful migration to Pakistan creates traumatic experiences in their mind. The paper explores national belonging of characters in the novel though their migration is privileged or not.

Keywords: Migration, Pakistani English literature, Postcolonial literature.

Migration works out as catalyst to reroute the decontextualization into historical specificity. Migration has been playing an important role in postcolonial discourse. In Kamila Shamsie's*Burnt Shadows*(2009)migration as a concept takes a different turn from its more conventionalized usage. Here migration has nothing to do with transnationalism or cosmopolitanism. Migration is neither hybridity nor transnationalism. Rather, migration is a brutal encounter without any predetermination and as an incredible historical necessity. Kamila Shamsie demands a longer

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historical perspective through the characters' emphasize of cross cultural and international relations.

*Burnt Shadows*discusses its characters' belonging to their own nations. The novel encounter with personal and collective losses, estrangement, reconnections, betrayal, atonement, relocation and decontextualisation. The movement of characters between locations denotes a shared national interest which is infringed upon in a specific historical context. At other moments, conflicts overdetermine strong attachments among national interests of each character. Such overdetermination comes from the coercion of state, state violence. The coercion is deeply related to nations own mythologies. As the narrative demonstrates, coercion denotes the characters' willingness or possibility to claim belonging to a nation or how far the characters can compromise their own ideals with nations own mythologies.

Elleke Boehmer in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors* (1995) emphasizes how migration writing "foregrounds and celebrates a national or historical rootlessness … sometimes accentuated by political cynicism (240). The schematization of the "postcolonial migrant" is influential to the understanding of migration in the literature of post 9/11.[1] This "national or historical rootlessnesss" emerges at a particular historical moment. According to Boehmer many postcolonial states have faced "historical rootlessness" after both decolonization and struggles for new national formations within the states. In her opinion, the "impurity" of the immigrant facilitates for the position or condition of hybridity' and literary migration has been considered as "transplantation and cross fertilization".

Another postcolonial critic, Carine M. Mardorossian, in his article, "From Literature of Exile to Migrant Literature" contents, "migrant art offers a transnational, cosmopolitan, multilingual and hybrid map of the world that redraws boundaries by building bridges between

[1]Boehmer defines, "Postcolonial theory… is associated with migrant spaces for which the colony as a situation of violent repression, and the nation as a horizon of expectation, have retreated, to be replaced with a concept of cultural exchange and contestation as primary and form giving".

Third and First Worlds"[2]. Ahmed Gamal in his article, "The Global and the Postcolonial in the Post-Migratory Literature" states:

> Post-migratory literature can be described as that type of postcolonial literature that fundamentally problematizes the condition of migrancy by deconstructing the binarism of home and the world and linking the global to the postcolonial. The "post" therefore, represents an oppositional rhetoric of emerging voices which are profoundly contestatory of the hierarchy of binaristic essentialism. (596)

In Bohmer's words, "Such "post-migratory" "post-postcolonial" writing, as "post-migratory" black British writer Caryl Phillips terms it, explores not only leave taking and departure, watchwords of the migrant condition, but also regeneration of communities and selves out of heterogeneous experiences in the new country (250).

Burnt Shadows engages with migration as historically related to the vicious reality in which the characters are forced to migrate resulting in loss or trauma. The narrators of the novel utilize their trauma and loss as the motivation for migration and more characters are introduced in their migration experience. Moreover, the traumatic experiences challenge the characters to uphold human cause over the collective pull of national belonging and force them to overthrow the concepts of the nation, its myths, and ideologies. Considering the characters' multinational belonging and migration, the implications of the novel can be applied to any national formation, i.e., India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh etc.

Kamila Shamsie's 2009 novel *Burnt Shadows* features expansive historical and geographical contexts. The novel starts from World War II, ends post 9/11, and draws in characters from across the world like; Japan, Germany, India, and Pakistan. The long expansion of history gathers a violent

[2]Carine M. Mardorossian further states, "as Hamid Naficy in his study of Iranian immigrant communities in Lose Angeles, this new migrancy is about "ambivalences, resistances, slippages, dissimulations, doublings, and even subversions of the cultural codes of both the home and the host societies".

interaction between people and nations of these countries. Because of this decentering of nations and provincials, Shamsie is able to question the dominant provincial representations. Commentators of the novel formulate this decenteralization as a vantage point in understanding the novel, *Burnt Shadows.* Migration and trauma create a centripetal pull in the relationship between Weiss-Burtons and Tanaka-Ashrafs. A new contribution is given by *Burnt Shadow* to the understanding of post 9/11 Pakistani English literature as the narrative differentiates between the privileged and unprivileged migrations. These two migrations disturb each other by absence in narration and brutal transactions between them, sliding from most privileged to least privileged.

Each of the character in the novel distinguishes each other on the basis of their ability or desire to claim the particular nation they live, if a character is able to belong, according to the novel, his migration is neutral or even positive migration. The novel suggests that if a character is not worried or troubled about his/her migration, it would be at the cost of other immigrants who struggled to belong and may have failed in their struggle for belonging. Even though the novel is evolving around these tangled national belonging, Shamsie does not distract from violence associated with national belonging. *Burnt Shadows* advocates a completely conventional migration possible in cosmopolitanism and reverts from hierarchies and brutalities on migration. In this humanist subjectivity, the migration is produced through historical formations of nations rather than out of them. Therefore, *Burnt Shadows* draws attention into the national formation of many nations including Pakistan.

Burnt Shadows is the story of a winner who belongs to the most privileged migrant category and follows her history from 1945 to 2002. The linear chronology of the novel moves in third person narrator who locates the winner without considering their privileges in migration. The novel begins in Nagasaki, Japan on 9 August 1945, where a transplanted German man, Konrad Weiss goes out of the town to meet with his love, Hiroko Tanaka. Konrad's eight years life in Japan shows his transformation from a privileged immigrant to an unprivileged one due to the political rivalries between Germany and Japan during the II World War. In his stay at Nagasaki, he used to visit

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Azala Manor, a gallery of architectural artifacts. Rather than the composition of Japanese and European architectural styles he was attracted to the photographs along the wall of the building, and he comments, "Europeans and Japanese mixing uncomplicatedly" (*Burnt* 6). This uncomplicated mixture of culture prompts Konrad to leave Germany and India, and settle in Nagasaki. The narrator does not state his relationship with his motherland, Germany except the comment, "a fugitive from a once-beloved country he long ago gave up on trying to fight for or against" (Shamsie 18).

India, the second nation, is painful to Konrad because of his half-sister Ilse's stifling life to the colonial New Delhi with her British husband James Burton. Germany's surrender in the Second World War earlier in 1945, affects Konrad and "shifted [his] status in Nagasaki from that of an ally into a more ambiguous state which requires the military police to watch him closely" (Shamsie 9). From his life in a migrated country, Konrad is aware about how this shift of status would affect those who are related to him, especially in the case of his love, Tanaka. He fears that she would be an object of scorn if he is arrested by the military.

All tensions and worries of a transplanted German in Japan ends when he dies in the US atomic bomb attack in Nagasaki. His short period of life in the beginning of the novel shows the transition of his migrant identity from his European background to a haunted German. The novel shows a horrible experience of American atomic bombing through the eyes of Tanaka. The heat brutalizes her, searing the design of the kimono she was wearing into the flesh of her back. In the bombing, Tanaka watches her father die, severely burnt and looking more reptilian than human (Shamsie 28). These traumatic experiences and losses in her lives at Nagasaki motivate her for her first migration to Delhi. She realizes that there is no one left at Nagasaki. Later while discussing the migration with her son, Raza, the narrator says:

> She never told him what an act of desperation that voyage was, had always wanted to seem fearless, above all. Fearless and transmutable, able to Slip from skin to skin city to city. Why tell him of the momentum of a bomb blast that threw her into a world in which

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> everything was unfamiliar, Nagasaki itself become more unknown than Delhi? . . . So the story of Hiroko Ashraf's youth was not the story of bomb, but the voyage after it. (Shamsie113)

Tanaka's question, "Nagasaki became more unknown than Delhi?" expresses her traumatic experiences at Nagasaki. But, the second migration as a wife of an Indian Muslim, from India to Pakistan, teaches her that the story of the atom bomb is not at all important, "but the voyage after it". Her statement defines herself. The beginning of Nagasaki episode of *Burnt Shadows* connects the first set of links between the Weiss-Burtons and Tanaka-Ashrafs. After the atomic attack, Hiroko Tanaka starts her migration as she understands her inability to live in Nagasaki. Henceforth, the novel introduces new characters along with Tanaka's migration in her life.

Migration is a choice for those who live on the upper strata of society, they are privileged to select one of many options of their life, rather than a condition predicated upon trauma and losses. Finally history belongs to them claiming the winning side of history. After the Nagasaki episode of the novel, Tanaka decides to migrate to New Delhi, the story also jumps two years forward. During this time, New Delhi was dealing with the most horrible migration of communities between the boarder of India and Pakistan. Here, the one and only winners of migration is the British, they are successfully going back to their home country. Tanaka's migration resonates her realization that she can no longer remain in Japan, and she plans to find Konrad's half-sister Ilse. Ilse has thoroughly anglicized herself by becoming the wife of British colonial barrister, James Burton. She changes her name into Elizabeth Burton to forgo her "German connection" which marks her migration to India as a privileged one (Shamsie 20).

When Tanaka arrives New Delhi and meets the Burtons, she sees the Burton family portrait hanging in their entry hall; Tanaka "saw immediately what the painter had captured so perfectly: the complacency of James Burton" (Shamsie 27). James shows off the British colonial India self-importantly. In an argument, while playing chess with Sajjad, a young educated Muslim from old

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Delhi who later marries Hiroko Tanaka, James shows his contempt towards Ahmed Ali's *Twilight in Delhi* (1967).Sajjad often quotes from the text "in the hope of revealing to James the beauty of its sentences". Finally, James shouts:

> "Virginia Woolf and E. M. Foster at their patronising best. You [Sajjad] could write a better book than this". [Sajjad asks] "Do you think an English man will ever write a masterpiece in Urdu?" "No." James shook his head. "If there ever was a time we were interested in entering your world in that way, it's long past, and you wouldn't know what to do with us if we tried." (Shamsie 40)

James' conditional statement dismisses even the possibility of such an involvement with the Indians after their centuries' involvement in India. And his comment "entering in your world" denotes his colonial supremacy over India. Moreover, he shows British cultural superiority over Indians by suggesting that the Indians would be incapable of dealing with any British incursion into their literary traditions.

Harry, son of James and Elizabeth was born in India, and he has an affective attachment towards India which his parents want to disabuse him (Shamsie 84). The Burtons named him as Henry Burton, he has changed his name into Harry when he settle in the US, and the narrator does not mention the reason behind the change of the name. Harry considers India as a home, but his parents sent him to an English boarding school at Ireland. When the Burtons go for a short visit to Mussoori in October 1947, their only concern surrounding partition is whether they'll find Sajjad still in Delhi or not (Shamsie 98). This shows the privilege of British migration to India and Hiroko seems shallow in such consideration, a sign of "the most extraordinary privilege – to have forewarning of a swerve in history, to prepare for how your life would curve around that bend" (Shamsie 59). This complacency of British migration illustrates in Sajjad's comment when he boldly queries just before Burtons' shared time in Delhi ends:

> "Why have the English remained so English? Throughout India's history conquerors have

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> come from elsewhere, and all of them…have become Indian. If – when – this Pakistan happens, those Muslims who leave Delhi and Lucknow and Hyderabad to there, they will be leaving their homes. But when the English leave, they will be going home". (Shamsie 83-4)

Even the history of all other invaders to India considers India as their home, the British looted the complete wealth of the land and they are protected from the historical brutalities they committed towards Indians. In the same manner Burtons' shared British identity protects them from what they did to the lives of other characters in the novel.

In the case of less privileged circumstance of migration, some characters claim to reattach themselves to a new national identity by settling themselves in the migrated nation. Sajjad Ashraf, for example claims a Pakistani identity against his conviction as he was not allowed entry to India when he completes his honeymoon trip to Turkey. The new Indian government denies his visa to come back home because he was in Turkey during the formation of two independent nations. He tells his wife, Hiroko, "They [the Indian government] said I'm one of the Muslims who chose to leave India. It can't be unchosen" (Shamsie 127). Here, his inability for "unchosen" denotes his migration as less privileged than the Burtons. Maya Angelou's poem, "On the Pulse of Morning," tells "History, despite its wrenching pain, / Cannot be unlived, and if faced / With courage, need not be lived again."

Sajjad's honeymoon to Turkey casts as a forced exile from India and at the same time he experiences forced migration to Pakistan because of his name identifies with the Muslim country of Pakistan. This forceful migration also creates traumatic experiences in his mind, and mourns for his own moholla in old Delhi. He reads the news about the riots and violence. His mother dies and he feels that Dilli-centered "world itself was departing" (Shamsie 107). Instead of his life in Delhi, Sajjad takes on a muhajir identity, thinking himself that "he would not ever have believed that he would come to think of Karachi as home" (Shamsie 136).

The muhajir identity in Pakistan resonates a particular relevance in the Pakistani nationalist

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mythologies. Muhajirs are themselves considered as the true inheritors of Pakistan because they had left their homeland. Thus, they do not belong to any provincial identity i.e. Punjabi or Sindhi or Bengali. This migration status is quite visible in the statement of Raza, son of Sajjad and Hiroko, when he was advised to concentrate his academics, he replies: "Every father in this neighborhood of migrants, each with stories of all they had lost and all they had started to rebuild after partition, made a similar speech to his son" (Shamsie 138). Sometimes, Sajjad rebounds that in addition to being barred from returning to Delhi, some of his relatives are killed in partition violence. Further, Sajjad'smuhajir identity secures him in one of Pakistan's most powerful foundational myths.

Burnt Shadows problematizes the national identities of characters, and their wish for a national belonging as the migrant experiences become less privileged. As I noted above, son of Burtons, Harry shows his affective attachment to the subcontinent even though he left India in his adulthood, and became an American national. When Harry heads a business for the CIA at Karachi and readily adopts an American identity, he still recognizes the subcontinent as home and he thinks, "[T]his is more like it" (Shamsie 150). Harry prefers Karachi to Islamabad where he conducts most of his CIA business; "Harry wanted chaos of his cities and nothing less than beauty of his hill towns" (Shamsie 150). Here the 'cities' and 'hill towns' have been preceded by the possessive pronoun 'his'. This appropriation of places can be denoted as imperialistic.

The transition of Harry from the son of a British colonial barrister in India to an American man working for the CIA in Pakistan in 1980s seems comfortable to him. In Harry's comment; "America allowed – no, insisted on – migrants as part of its national fabric in a way no other country had ever done. All you had to do was show yourself willing to be American – and in 1949, what else in the world you want to be?" (Shamsie 174). Here the statement shows that Harry's ability to belong to the US was effortless. His privileged identity helps him to migrate anywhere he likes. The narrator explains:

He felt himself only tenuously connected to the young man who in '64 had stepped away

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> from the of academia and applied for another line of work entirely, explaining to the men who interviewed him that he wanted to join them because he believed fervently that Communism had to be crushed so that the US could be the world's only superpower. It was not the notion of power itself that interested Harry, but the idea of it concentrated in a nation of migrants. (Shamsie175)

Harry follows the imperialistic attitudes of the US and he is proud of what the US had been helping the mujahideen against the Soviet, and the present invasion to Afghanistan. He realizes that his new job in Pakistan would help his country to become the superpower of the world. More than his enjoyment of *power,* he is interested in a nation of migrants, Pakistan. He identifies Pakistan as a nation of migrants who ran away from India. Being an immigrant since childhood, Harry's interest in a country of migrants is not wearisome. But the masses who crossed the borders of India and Pakistan were forced to migrate and they were not privileged to have a choice.

Konrad's death in the American atomic bombing upon Nagasaki questions Harry's easy appropriation of American migrant identity and disallows Konrad's own vision about Nagasaki. The novel is not giving any explicit explanation to Harry's involvement with CIA and why he confirms that his identification as an American has "become about excitement rather than idealism" (Shamsie 175). Harry takes his daughter, Kim to the construction site of Faisal Mosque at Islamabad, and they are allowed to enter inside by the contractor. The narrator explains the thoughts of Harry:

> The tale of generations, Harry thought. James Burton watched with dismay the collapse of Empire; Harry Burton was working for the collapse of Communism; and Kim Burton only wanted to know how to build, one edifice at a time, the construction process being all that mattered, not whether the outcome was mosque or art gallery or prison. (Shamsie 176)

Raza, son of Sajjad Ashraf and Hiroko Tanaka, is born in post partition Pakistan and he experiences the extreme unprivileged migration in the novel. The second half of the novel derives

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from the exploration of Raza's migration experiences as a cosmopolitan ideal. His parents come from two different national backgrounds; India and Japan, and they are living in a different national boundary. Raza is multilingual; he speaks Urdu, English, Parse, Japanese and Hindi, and his physical appearance defies easy categorization. Thus, Raza is hybrid in nature with translation embodied. It is ironic that in the beginning of the novel, Konrad had been disallowed to claim cosmopolitanism by his appearance at Nagasaki, while Raza's fluidity and adaptability enables him to claim that.

The geographical boundary of Pakistan may not help Raza for his hybridity in appearance, but it leads him to existential unsettledness, and later to his own wanderings in the subcontinent. In his childhood as a boy, Raza successfully claims a secure national identity in 1980s of Pakistan. Moreover, he boastfully insists that his Japanese mother dresses more like Pakistani mother than any other women in the locality, hence, he claims that she integrates better into Karachi neighborhood among muhajir community. But, when he turns into teenage, Raza faces difficulty to get friends who visit home and share secrets. When he was thirteen his mother asked about his friends' visit to the house:

> "I can't ask any of my friends home," he (Raza) had yelled, the sound so unexpected Sajjad had run into the room. "With you walking around, showing your legs. Why can't you be more Pakistani? Afterwards, she and Sajjad hadn't known whether to howl with laugher or with tears to think that their son's teenage rebellion was asserting itself through nationalism. (Shamsie 226)

The appearance of Raza and his mother prompt suspicion in the neighborhood and this rhetoric increased after the Islamization policy of Zia. Raza's migration is not his choice or his appearance does not guarantee his options. But his life in Pakistan is interrogated now and then because of his appearance and immigrant background. Tanaka realizes these problems only when he left for Afghanistan with his Pathani friend Abdullah. Tanaka laments, "[S]he had never truly understood

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her son's need for belonging, the anger with which he twisted away from comments about his foreign looks . . . but she knew intimately the stigma of being defined by the bomb" (Shamsie 178).

Raza yearns to belong to the state of Pakistan with all of his hybridity and cosmopolitan appearance. But his continuous failure in the compulsory paper of Islamic studies, which was introduced by Zia, in his final intermediate examination distorted him completely. He wandered in Karachi streets. He exploits his hybrid cosmopolitan looks to gain acceptance among the Afghan refugees in Karachi who keep relations with the supporters of Afghan mujahideen across the border. His physical resemblance with Hazara tribe of Afghanistan, attracts the refugees, and they consider him as one among them. Raza does not reveal his true identity or correct them. He embarks on a boy's adventure, plays with AK47s, and basks in the glow that comes from respectful acceptance (Shamsie 202). Harry also mistakenly thinks that Raza is Hazara in their first meeting (Shamsie 153). The novel tells two unprivileged migration of Raza with the help of Abdulla and Harry. The first migration is an unintended trip to a mujahideen camp in 1983 with his friend at the refugee camp of Karachi, Abdulla. The second migration as Harry's protégé at a military contracting outfit after 9/11.

Raza experiences the rationality between the privileged and the unprivileged migrations through his own migrations. Both situations open his eyes towards the comfort of privileged migration and the comfortless of unprivileged migration. The novel narrates his bitter experience and what he has learnt from the beginning of his trip to the camp of mujahideen. And at the end of his bitter experience in the camp, he realizes the hidden geographical inescapability of the camp, "his vision grew white at the edge and only the quickness of his breath kept him from throwing up. He had never known anything like this heat, the terror" (Shamsie 231). As Raza witnesses for the first time in his life, the militancy and the violence pertaining with the guard of national security, his recognition of 'heat' and 'terror' bears metaphorical implications.

Later, at the end of the novel, in his second migration as a protégé of Harry, Raza learns

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how his cosmopolitanism makes him vulnerable. When Harry is gunned down by an Afghan who infiltrates the military contractor's base camp at Afghanistan, Harry's American colleague questions his "allegiance" towards Raza (Shamsie 310). Harry departs from his earlier conviction that America considers every migrants equally and he has been invoked by his friend's comment of "allegiance". Harry realizes that America keeps a feudal system wherein he and other American military contractors are lords and Raza and others, are a vassal. Harry's death reduces Raza's dreams for a national belonging and the reality of submission and obedience to a national order. This is second time Raza has been lost with his calculations about his yearnings to achieve a national identity with the help of Harry. Earlier Harry vainly tries to arrange a scholarship to study in the US for Raza. Finally, Raza flees with a meager chance for life feeling that "the terror of unbecoming" (Shamsie 274). There is no document that makes him a Pakistani citizen. He realizes that he needs citizenship of any nation to claim an identity. Now, Raza became a complete hybrid cosmopolitan. But, his cosmopolitan qualities, like Konrad in post II World War Nagasaki, do not contribute for an example of cosmopolitan in a globalized world. Moreover, his qualities come under the categories of a trafficked migrant who flees from his home country without any identification documents.

Raza's desire to see his mother, Hiroko settled in Canada, compels him to proceed his journey with his disqualified cosmopolitan identifications. He sets out to Canada illegally with the help a cab driver of Afghanistan. Raza experiences several horrors in his journey, like being buried in a truck bed filled with cabbages (Shamsie 339), and squeezing into the hull of a boat already loaded with other migrants (Shamsie 342). After all he wonders "what kind of world made men have to endure this?" (Shamsie 343). Raza's adolescent national belonging and his 'illegal' migration to Canada show the tragically naïve understanding of national belonging and question the international norms of national identification especially in the case of migrants. The novel explores the migrant conditions in human trafficking through the experiences of Raza and his wanderings. K. Shamsie reveals the other side of immigrant existences which Burton claims easily in his national belonging to Britain, Sajjad recovers comfortably in his muhajir identity and Harry no longer

believes in, but still enjoys.

Above all, these kind of national belongings and identities, the novel stands against the sliding scale of privilege and presents an alternative type of belonging which seeks to rise above the nation. The central character of *Burnt Shadows*, Hiroko Tanaka imitates appropriately for the articulation of such alternative. James Burton, carrying all his colonial baggage feels Hiroko as "disrupting all hierarchies" (Shamsie 84). When Hiroko loses everything in Nagasaki, the only belonging she seeks is her foreignness characterized by her appearance (Shamsie 143). I noted Raza's acknowledgment of his mother's appearance and acceptance among Karachi women. Hiroko with due respect to the country of her husband, she builds a very conventional "home". But, her creation of home in Pakistan does not claim any national belonging to the country. Her migration and identity formation are formulated above national boundaries. EllekeBoehmer foregrounds this element of postcolonial writing in "Postcolonial Writing and Terror," she states:

> With its commitment to cross-border interaction and ethically inspired adjustments to the other, postcolonial writing can be said to expand and complicate, as well as to question, the shared languages and common frames of reference, legacies of a colonial history, which make globalization possible. By the same token such writing seeks to define, or redefine, home as against world, the particular and the local as distinct from, even though intricately bound up in, the global. (146)

Shamsie's novel questions the colonial legacy and national language discourse of Pakistan in her novel through the depiction of Hiroko Tanaka, a Japanese woman as the central character of the novel. Hiroko did not belong to any national boundaries and she holds her home against the world. The narrator reveals her disappointment in her belonging to Pakistan when she receives a letter from Nagasaki informing her that an international school has been running in her ancestral land:

> She (Hiroko) wondered how Raza would interact with a group of Japanese schoolchildren of near his own age. It didn't bother her in the least to know he would always be a foreigner in

> Pakistan – she had no interest in belonging to anything as contradictorily insubstantial and damaging as a nation – but this didn't stop her from recognizing how Raza flinched every time a Pakistani asked him where he was from. (Shamsie 207)

The substantial difference in Hiroko's idea of national belonging and cosmopolitan identity is explicitly cleared in the character of Hiroko Tanaka and Konrad. Konrad's character introduces a cosmopolitan identity in Nagasaki which is mixing Europeans and Japanese "uncomplicatedly" just as the city features "Euro-Japanese building" (Shamsie 6). On the other hand, Hiroko's perspective on finding alternative identity formations outside and above the nations differs from Konrad's cosmopolitan Nagasaki. Hiroko advocates her foreignness which is not easily recognizable in any of her national belongings. In the entire chronology of the novel and in her continuing migration from nation to nation, Hiroko faces many examples in which the characters are not able to identify with her perspective of alternative identity above national belongings.

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