

# Transforming Legal Narratives: Postmodernism in South Asian English Literature

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**ABSTRACT**

This study examines the relationship between law, literature, and postmodernism within the context of South Asian English literature. The objective of this study is to analyse the historical development of legal narratives and their subsequent influence on notions of human rights, cultural identity, and justice. Examining and challenging legal narratives, "Burnt Shadows" by Kamila Shamsie, "The Kite Runner" by Khaled Hosseini, "The English Patient" by Michael Ondaatje, and "The Sea of Poppies" by Amitav Ghosh use postmodern literary techniques. Using Katherine Belsey's postmodernism paradigm as a theoretical perspective, the purpose of this study is to analyse the deconstructed and reconstructed narratives found in the novels. The primary objective of these academic investigations is to provide a deeper comprehension of the dominant legal discourses in South Asia and their broader implications.

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**INTRODUCTION**

The area where law and writing meet has long interested academics. English-language writing from South Asia is known for its complex legal stories and looks at cultural, social, and political situations. These works of literature have grown along with the region's rough history and law ideas. The academic paper is mostly about looking at how precariousness is shown in South Asian writing written in English. According to Dwivedi, O. P. (2022):

As South Asian English literature has grown, it shows not only the region's troubled past but also how legal ideas have changed over time. Justice, law, violence, human rights, resistance, and reconciliation are just some of the topics that this body of writing has talked about. (p.2).

This research paper looks at how postmodernism has changed the way legal stories are told in South Asian English writing. The countries of India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka in South Asia have a lot of different languages, cultures, and laws.. The field of South Asian English literature frequently addresses the complexities of colonialism, providing a unique perspective on issues pertaining to law, authority, and individuality. As a postmodern analysis, this research acknowledges that literature influences legal discourses as opposed to merely reflecting them.

Postmodernism, as an influential cultural and intellectual movement, has presented a challenge to conventional narratives and linear modes of interpretation. The observations have brought attention to the fragmented nature of reality, the arbitrary nature of language, and the existence of several views.

According to Gale, S. (2019). "Postmodernism disrupted the conventional connections between author, text, and reader by accentuating fictitious techniques through metafiction, which intentionally emphasizes its own contrived nature; the sprawl, abundance, and disarray of

maximalism; and the bare-bones reductionism of minimalism." (p. 4). Legal narratives in South Asian English literature have changed dramatically due to postmodernism. This transition involves breaking with conventions and recognizing the complex relationship between society and law.

This inquiry will cover South Asian English literature from Salman Rushdie and Arundhati Roy to Jhumpa Lahiri and Mohsin Hamid. Exploring how these writers dismantle and reconstruct legal narratives using postmodern methods like intertextuality, metafiction, and deconstruction. "Postmodern literature is a literary genre distinguished by its utilization of metafiction, the presence of unreliable narrators, self-referentiality, intertextual connections, and a frequent exploration of historical and political themes." (Wikipedia.2021.p.1). Through their distinctive literary styles and thematic elements, these authors present a thought-provoking examination of legal power and the concept of justice, prompting readers to reconsider their perspectives on these issues.

Colonial justice, postcolonial legal identity, globalization, and migration are discussed in this paper. Postmodernism calls out unjust laws, power abuse, and cultural injustice. Legal narratives address various legal topics, concepts, and institutions. Non-fiction and fiction can inform, persuade, and criticize the law. Legal narratives can examine moral, ethical, and social issues from law and justice.

This study does not analyse every literary work or author in this broad historical framework of South Asian English literature. This paper provides a critical theoretical framework for legal narrative evolution and postmodernism's impact on South Asian literary law. The addition of legal tales by Kamila Shamsie, Khaled Hosseini, Michael Ondaatje, and Amitav Ghosh has changed South Asian English writing. This study investigates how authors criticise and recreate South Asian legal narratives using postmodern literary methods. The novels "Burnt Shadows," "The Kite Runner," "The English Patient," and "The Sea of Poppies" explore the intricate relationship between law, culture, justice, and human rights.

The primary objectives of this study encompass exploring novel perspectives on legal authority and justice through the distinctive writing styles and concepts of various authors. The focus is on South Asian English writing, employing postmodern techniques to scrutinize legal narratives. Additionally, the aim is to foster a comprehensive understanding of the postmodernist viewpoint on society, law, justice, and human rights. Furthermore, the study seeks to investigate the impact of such literary expressions on shaping discussions surrounding the law within the South Asian context, emphasizing the intricate interplay between literature and legal discourse in the region.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Academic study of law, literature, and postmodernism in South Asian English fiction has illuminated the complicated relationship between legal narratives and the region's socio-cultural fabric. A rich literary legacy, South Asian English literature navigates the intricacies of a diverse region. Novels by Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, Jhumpa Lahiri, and Mohsin Hamid examine cultural identity, postcolonialism, and regional legal discourse, earning international recognition. South Asian English fiction has been extensively studied for its legal narratives. For instance, Mala Pandurang (2017) analysed Arundhati Roy's "*The Ministry of Utmost Happiness*" in the context of legal discourse, particularly focusing on human rights and gender justice. Pandurang's work sheds light on how Roy's narrative disrupts conventional legal narratives, challenging societal norms and advocating for justice. (p.1).

Similarly, according to Radhakrishnan (2000), Salman Rushdie's novel "*The Satanic Verses*" is examined in the context of blasphemy laws, censorship, and the clash between cultural and legal frameworks. The author's analysis showcases how Rushdie's narrative subverts legal authority and critiques the stifling of freedom of expression. (p.45)

This literature review examines postmodernism, legal narratives, and their effects on justice, human rights, and cultural identity in South Asia in four seminal novels: "*Burnt Shadows*" by Kamila Shamsie, "*The Kite Runner*" by Khaled Hosseini, "*The English Patient*" by Michael Ondaatje, and "*The Sea of Poppies*" by Amitav Ghosh.

Postmodern scholars have emphasized "*Burnt Shadows*" non-linear narrative form and thematic interaction with historical events. Shamsie's novel uses postmodern techniques to

"disrupt conventional narrative structures" and examines how historical events like the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic explosions affect the characters, according to Ahmed (2015). This narrative disruption challenges legal norms and power systems, highlighting the worldwide intricacies of justice and human rights. Shamsie also investigates how the global war on terror has undermined South Asian sovereignty and dignity. She exposes the hypocrisy and double standards of Western powers that champion democracy and human rights while supporting tyrannical regimes and detaining people unlawfully. (p. 7)

Khan (2018) says Khaled Hosseini's "*The Kite Runner*" addresses Afghan law and ethics. The author uses a non-linear story to explore betrayal and redemption's moral and legal consequences. This method examines justice and human rights in Afghanistan from a nuanced perspective on cultural identity and personal responsibility. (p.45)

Das (2019) analyzes Amitav Ghosh's novel "*The Sea of Poppies*" in the context of 19th-century South Asian colonialism, the opium trade, and legal structures. The author illuminates the complexity of law, authority, and cultural identity in colonial contexts. The narrative examines opium trade, human rights issues and critiques justice and social justice. (pp.45-57)

Michael Ondaatje's work "*The English Patient*" has been evaluated considering postmodernism and legal narratives, according to Patel (2017). Her fractured story questions nationality and identity limits. The postmodern emphasis on multiplicity of perspectives encourages readers to question legal and cultural standards. The novel explores international law and ethics, adding to debates of justice and human rights in conflict. (p.34)

These novels advance South Asian English fiction, postmodernism, and legal narratives, cultural identity, justice, and human rights. Postmodernist practice is evident in numerous South Asian English books about legal narratives, which involve legal concepts, institutions, processes, or outcomes. These novels advance South Asian English fiction, postmodernism, and legal narratives, cultural identity, justice, and human rights. Postmodernist practice is evident in numerous South Asian English books about legal narratives, which involve legal concepts, institutions, processes, or outcomes. According to (Brooks & Gewirtz, 1996). "Legal narratives can serve various functions, such as legitimizing or challenging authority, articulating or contesting rights, exposing or concealing injustice, or creating or disrupting order". (p.10). Legal narratives can also reflect or resist the colonial and postcolonial histories of law and power in South Asia.

## METHOD

The present investigation is qualitative and exploratory. When a researcher wishes to conduct an in-depth analysis of a text, he or she employs the qualitative method. According to John Parm Ulhi and Helle Neergaard "The primary goal of qualitative research is to generate insights that enhance our understanding of social phenomena within real-life contexts, with a particular emphasis on exploring the meanings, experiences, and perspectives of all participants involved." (p.4). Katherine Belsey, a notable literary and cultural studies scholar, has helped us grasp postmodernism. Her book, "*Poststructuralism: A Very Short Introduction*," has illuminated postmodern theory and literary analysis for researchers. Belsey's theory emphasizes narrative deconstruction and language fragility. Deconstructing hierarchies, binaries, and metanarratives is central to Belsey's postmodern worldview. According to Jacques Derrida, deconstruction holds that language and interpretation create meaning. Belsey utilized this strategy to show how postmodernism threatens narratives.

In her deconstruction of language, Belsey (2002) emphasizes its ambiguity and impact on perception. The author claims, "language is a created system that may be controlled, subverted, and dispersed to reach truth. The author claims that language creates reality rather than reflecting it" (p.1). Belsey's postmodern worldview emphasizes language and reality, which fits literary analysis. Literature uses tales to express meaning and explore complex ideas. Belsey believes scholars must examine these tales to understand their importance and power relations. Metafiction is often used in postmodern writing to critique its own creation. Salman Rushdie's metafictional novel "*Midnight's Children*" acknowledges the narrator's influence. This self-awareness challenges narrative authority, making readers doubt the narrator and the story. Belsey's theory also invites scholars to study language and power in literature. Literary writings

are ideological battlegrounds where diverse voices and discourses compete. Arundhati Roy's "*The God of Small Things*" deconstructs colonial and caste-based structures through its narrative structure and vocabulary. Literary works' multiple meanings are analysed using Belsey's emphasis on language instability. Postmodern books have several interpretations. Jhumpa Lahiri's "*Interpreter of Maladies*" has multiple meanings and encourages readers to design their own story.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*, which takes place over four continents and six decades, follows the lives of two families who are linked by a horrific incident that occurred in Hiroshima. Hiroko Tanaka, a young Japanese woman who escapes the atomic explosion of Hiroshima but loses her fiancé and her family, is the protagonist of the book. Three bird-shaped burns remain on her back, serving as a reminder of both her resiliency and her trauma. She goes to Delhi, where she marries Muslim barrister Sajjad Ashraf, who works for the British colonial government. The partition of India and Pakistan puts their marriage to the test and causes them to leave for Karachi. They meet James Burton, a British intelligence agent who participated in the Hiroshima bombing, and his wife Elizabeth there; Elizabeth ends up becoming Hiroko's buddy. After then, the story moves to the 1980s, when the CIA enlists their son Raza to fight in the Soviet-Afghan War. He makes acquainted with Harry Burton, a CIA operative and the son of James and Elizabeth. After 9/11, Raza and Harry find themselves entangled in a web of betrayal and violence in both Afghanistan and New York, marking the novel's conclusion.

Throughout the book, Shamsie uses several postmodern strategies to undermine legal narratives. The way the aftermath of the atomic explosions is shown is among the most dramatic examples. The legal and moral issues that surround these occurrences are microcosm sized by Hiroko's survival and her future problems. Shamsie questions the official accounts of the bombings and shows how inadequate traditional legal procedures are to alleviate the anguish of the victims. Hiroko's attempt to obtain justice for the harm done to her family is illustrative of this, as she runs into obstacles that draw attention to the limitations of pursuing legal recourse:

"In the eyes of the world, Hiroko was neither victim nor survivor. She was the enemy." (Shamsie, 2009.p.144). This comment emphasizes the random character of justice in war and the disintegration of traditional legal categories in the bombing victims' experiences.

Shamsie's novel reconstructs legal narratives through Sajjad Ashraf. Sajjad promotes justice and human rights against Pakistani dictatorships as a lawyer. He challenges authoritarian law and defends marginalized populations like Bengalis during the Bangladesh Liberation War:

"Sajjad Ashraf, who for many had come to symbolize the possibility of justice and redress in a time of civil war, had become one more member of the oppressed Bengali population." (Shamsie, 2009.p.144). Sajjad's story exemplifies the postmodern drive to rewrite legal narratives to be fairer and just, despite significant obstacles. Shamsie creates empathy-based venues and justice systems to rewrite legal myths. She shows how her characters bond across nationality, ethnicity, religion, and gender. She shows how these relationships help them overcome trauma and loss and counter legal narratives that silence them. She also shows how globalized violence and hatred undermine these relationships. She believes that a new legal narrative that recognizes the diversity and dignity of all humans is the only way to overcome these influences. She writes: "We can't help being intertwined...There's no way out of it except through it" (Shamsie 2009: 373). She suggests that reconciliation and healing—acknowledging the past, listening to each other, and establishing a common future—are the only ways to break the cycle of violence.

Shamsie's novel illuminates South Asian justice, human rights, and culture. Her research examines how colonialism, Partition, conflict, migration, and terrorism shaped these concerns. She examines how capitalism, imperialism, media, and technology affect these concerns. She defies Western notions of South Asia. She depicts South Asia as a complex, diverse region with a rich history and culture but many problems and conflicts. She shows South Asians as active agents with their own voices and visions but also problems and conflicts. She urges readers to interact with South Asia critically and empathetically Justice: "When the war is over, and the wounds have healed, let us remember it as a time when we learned to be kind" (Shamsie, 2009, p. 17). This quote highlights the importance of justice and how it can help to bring about a better

future. Hiroko's optimistic view of the war's end and justice's potential is shown in the quote. Hiroko tries to overcome her trauma and be polite after the war after losing Konrad in the Nagasaki atomic blast. She honours her inspiring mother, who braved hardships.

War and its aftermath are hard, but Hiroko's words underline that healing and reconciliation require love and fairness "The United States detention facilities at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, have become emblematic of the gross violations of human rights committed by the United States government in the name of fighting terrorism" (Shamsie, 2009, p.323). This quotation illuminates the issue of human rights violations in the name of national security. Another example emphasises the significance of cultural identity and how it can influence a person's sense of belonging:

Why have the English retained their language? Throughout India's history, foreign conquerors such as the, Arab, Turk, Mongol, Persian, and Hun have all become Indian. Those Muslims who abandon Delhi, Hyderabad, and Lucknow to move to Pakistan will be leaving their homes if — when — this Pakistan is established. However, when the English depart, they will return home (Shamsie, 2009, p. 17).

Thus, Kamila Shamsie's work "*Burnt Shadows*" masterfully examines postmodernism's revolutionary power in the setting of World War II's atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Shamsie challenges and reconstructs legal narratives through sophisticated storytelling and a wide cast of people to illuminate South Asian justice, human rights, and cultural identity.

*The Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini is a postmodern legal story in South Asian literature. The tale follows Amir, a rich Kabul youngster, and his friendship with Hassan, his father's servant's son. Amir watches Assef, a local thug, rape Hassan but does nothing. Amir suffers with remorse, humiliation, and identity for the rest of his life after this betrayal. After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, he flees to America with his father to erase his history. Years later, his father's old friend Rahim Khan calls him to say that Hassan is his half-brother, and that the Taliban is threatening his kid. Amir returns to Afghanistan to save Sohrab, Hassan's kid, and atone for his sins. Hosseini's novel examines betrayal and forgiveness in Afghan culture and history from a legal and ethical perspective. The novel examines betrayal's legal and ethical consequences through Amir's actions. The story explores justice and morality via Amir's betrayal of Hassan, his failure to stop his assault, and his remorse. Honour and loyalty are revered in Afghan society; hence these behaviours have legal implications. To find redemption, Amir must navigate atonement and accountability:

"That was a long time ago, but I've learned that what they say about burying the past is incorrect. Because the past has a way of resurfacing." (Hosseini, 2003.p.372).

Textual analysis deconstructs the Legal and personal histories are interwoven, and the past influences the present, as Hosseini's story shows. For instance, Amir's betrayal of Hassan violates their friendship and shows his internalised racism and classism towards the Hazara minority, whom he thinks inferior to his Pashtun race. Assef's rape of Hassan is a horrific act of power and a representation of his Nazi-inspired ethnic cleansing and superiority. Abuse and despair led Sohrab to try suicide, symbolising the loss of innocence and hope for future Afghans.

"*The Kite Runner*" explores South Asian cultural identity and human rights. Political turmoil, including the Soviet invasion and Taliban ascent, affects Afghan society in the story. The protagonists, particularly Amir and his family, navigate the changing legal and cultural landscapes to investigate the legal and ethical aspects of these events:

"Because it is difficult to transcend the past. Nor is either religion. I was a Pashtun, he was a Hazara, I was a Sunni, and he was a Shi'a, and there was nothing that could ever alter that. Absolutely nothing." (Hosseini, 2003, p. 25). Deconstructing text the protagonist, Amir, analyses the social and religious barriers that separate him from his friend and half-brother Hassan. Amir knows his Pashtun nationality gives him authority over Hassan, a persecuted Hazara minority. Amir knows that Hassan is an oppressed and violent Shi'a, while Amir is Afghanistan's majority Sunni. Historical and theological differences make it hard for Amir to find his identity and belonging.

Hosseini challenges the characters' legal narratives with postmodern methods. Amir, his unreliable narrator, admits to being "a man who has lied all his life" (Hosseini. 226). Postmodern tactics are used by Hosseini to undermine legal narratives in the novel. A popular technique is

non-linear narrative structure. The story's scattered recollections and comments let readers understand Amir's betrayal and redemption's complex legal and ethical implications: "Now that I look back, I realize I have been peering into that deserted alley for the past 26 years." (Hosseini, 2003.p.1). This narrative method mimics memory and legal narratives' fragmentation, prompting readers to actively reconstruct the story's moral and legal aspects.

Intertextuality is also used to compare Amir and Hassan to Shahnameh's Rostam and Sohrab. He breaks the fourth wall and addresses the reader multiple times in the narrative with metafiction. He also employs irony, absurdity, and ambiguity to challenge legal discourse's assumptions about truth, justice, and identity. Amir finds that his good and honest father, Baba, had an affair with Hassan's mother and lied about it for years. He also discovers that Assef, who committed countless Afghan atrocities, is spared punishment by joining the Taliban. He also realises that Sohrab, whom he rescues from Assef, doesn't trust, or accept him as family. Hosseini uses postmodern strategies to make readers examine their views on justice, human rights, and South Asian cultural identity. He encourages readers to relate to the characters' struggles and recognise their richness and diversity. He also asks readers to consider their role in making the world more just and humane.

Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient* tackles nationality, identity, and memory after World War II. A nameless and burned patient who claims to be English, a Canadian nurse who cares for him, a Sikh sapper who defuses explosives, and a burglar who poses as an English aristocracy are brought together in an abandoned Italian villa in the story. The patient's past as a Hungarian count who spied for the Germans and had an affair with a married British woman is revealed in flashbacks in the novel. Ondaatje utilises metafiction to examine nationality and identity, especially in the context of World War II and international law. As the patient recalls his desert trek to establish a new map of North Africa, he shows the arbitrariness and violence of making maps and borders: "We were English, African, Hungarian, and German, and we were all insignificant to them. Gradually, we lost our nationhood." (Ondaatje, 1992, p. 138).

He also questions the legality and authority of passports, visas, and certificates, which define and govern identity and position. The patient says: "I have no documents anymore. I burned them all at different times" (Ondaatje, 1992, p. 96). After his lover dies, he burns her plane to erase their affair and existence. Ondaatje uses metafiction to challenge legal narratives that form national and personal identities, inviting readers to contemplate identity fluidity and multiplicity, especially amid war and displacement. Ondaatje challenges legal narratives and boundaries with postmodern tactics. The novel's non-linear narrative is notable. It blends past and present, shifting views and timelines to express memory and identity fragmentation:

"We die with a wealth of nations and lovers, tastes we've swallowed, bodies we've plunged into and swum up like rivers of knowledge, characters we've climbed into like trees, and fears we've concealed like caverns." (Ondaatje, 1992.p.261). Textual analysis deconstructs the novel's approach, in which identity is depicted as a fluid, ever-changing construct that transcends traditional boundaries. Nationality and identity are challenged in "The English Patient" through Kip, an Indian sapper. Kip's wartime status as a British ally and soldier highlights the ambiguities of colonial and postcolonial identity. His experiences distort allegiance, nationality, and culture:

"What nationality is he?' 'He's a sapper,' Hana said. 'That's not a nationality.'" (Ondaatje, 1992.p.139). Textual analysis deconstruct emphasizes the ambiguity and fluidity of identity within the novel, reflecting the postcolonial discourse on cultural and national identity. Wartime morality and international law are also explored in Ondaatje's story. Legal and ethical issues arise when the English patient is revealed to be a Hungarian count and cartographer. His wartime desert mapping causes deaths. This shows the moral difficulties of international law and the consequences of conflict actions:

"Wartime betrayals are infantile in comparison to human betrayals during times of peace. The recipient's behaviours are adopted by the other. Things are shattered and cast in a new light." (Ondaatje, 1992.p.20). Ondaatje's narrative undermines wartime accountability legal narratives by emphasizing international activities' profound personal and moral implications. The novel explores cultural identity and human rights through Hana's connection with Kip and the English patient. Their linkages demonstrate the universality of human experience across cultures and nation: "In your position, if there is suffering, tend to it, and if there is a flame, do not snuff

it out or be cruel to it. Withdrawal can be a dreadful thing if it keeps us up at night, and seeing others forget us sooner than we'd like is no better." (Ondaatje, 1992.p.261). This quote analysis reflects the novel's exploration of empathy, compassion, and cultural identity preservation amidst the chaos of conflict.

Amitav Ghosh's literary work titled "*The Sea of Poppies*" is a captivating examination of the phenomenon of colonialism, the opium trade, and the legal frameworks that had influence on the South Asian region throughout the 19th century. Ghosh employs complicated narrative techniques and postmodern elements to critically examine and reshape legal narratives, thereby illuminating the complexities of justice, human rights, and cultural identity within the historical framework of South Asia. "*The Sea of Poppies*" serves as the inaugural volume of Ghosh's Ibis Trilogy, which unfolds within the historic Wartime morality and international law are also explored in Ghosh's story. This shows the moral difficulties of international law and the consequences of conflict actions. All the context of British colonial dominance and the opium trade in India throughout the 1830s. The narrative takes place on the Ibis, a vessel that was once utilised for the transportation of enslaved individuals. It traces the trajectories of a varied ensemble of individuals, encompassing Deeti, a woman from a lower social class; Zachary Reid, a sailor hailing from the United States; and Neel Rattan Halder, a Raja who has fallen from grace. The convergence of their destiny occurs as they commence a journey characterised by elements of adventure, rebellion, and the intricate ramifications of colonialism.

Postmodern tactics are used by Ghosh to challenge and change legal narratives in the novel. Polyphonic narratives use numerous voices and perspectives to tell the story. The narrative's numerous and often opposing legal and cultural perspectives are reflected in this technique: "Each person is the master of their own life and can chose to do with it as they see fit." (Ghosh, 2008, p. 42). Textual Analysis deconstructs the plurality of perspectives within the novel, reflecting the postmodern emphasis on multiple interpretations of reality. "*The Sea of Poppies*" explores colonialism and laws that sustained British authority in India. The key motif is the opium trade, which shows how legal systems perpetuate exploitation and injustice.

The story shows how colonial laws and economic policies supported the opium trade, transforming society and culture: "A man does not belong to his own self. He is possessed by his house, and in its name, he becomes a monster. But the house is the property of the sahibs." (Ghosh, 2008. p.123). This quote deconstructs the entanglement of legal structures, economic interests, and cultural identity within the colonial context. Human rights issues in the opium trade are also covered by Ghosh. The morality of engaging in or rejecting a commerce that destroys persons and communities is shown in the characters' experiences. Novel asks readers to explore the ethics of legal frameworks that supported the opium trade: "He had never thought much about the means of his livelihood before, but now he could not but wonder how much suffering his trade had caused." (Ghosh, 2008. p.123). This quote deconstructs the moral awakening of characters as they confront the human rights implications of their actions and complicity in the opium trade.

"*The Sea of Poppies*" depicts colonial cultural identity and resistance. Deeti and Neel Rattan Halder question colonial legal and cultural standards. Their struggles to maintain their culture and reject repressive legal systems show their resilience and agency: "Neel was not sure what he was to make of this: he had never encountered a man who could switch so easily between languages and cultures. It was as if the man had no fixed identity, as if he were a shapeshifter, a rakshas" (Ghosh, 2008, p. 237). Zachary Reid, an American sailor who passes as a gentleman in Calcutta, impresses Neel, an Indian rajah who is arrested and condemned to transportation for debt, with his linguistic and cultural diversity. Neel's reaction represents his cultural identity, which is entrenched in his high rank and status and challenged by the colonial legal system that strips him of property and dignity. Neel's description of Zachary to a rakshas, a mythical demon that can change shape, illustrates his mistrust of Zachary's colonial power.

## CONCLUSION

Kamila Shamsie's novel *Burnt Shadows*, Michael Ondaatje's novel *The English Patient*, "*The Sea of Poppies*" by Amitav Ghosh's and Khaled Hosseini's "*The Kite Runner*" to explore the ways in which postmodern techniques are employed to challenge, deconstruct, and reconstruct legal

narratives. By doing so, these narratives prompt readers to critically examine the established notions of legal authority and delve into the intricate dynamics of justice, human rights, and cultural identity within the context of South Asia. This research highlights the importance of language's instability, the existence of many meanings, and the interaction between personal and legal narratives in forming the discourse of justice and human rights, using Katherine Belsey's postmodern framework as a theoretical basis. The literature of South Asian English, as an influential force, plays a significant role in reforming legal discourses. It urges readers to critically analyse these matters and actively contribute to the continuous evolution of legal narratives within the region.

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