

A Post-Modernist Critique of Elif Shafak’s Novel “The Bastard of Istanbul”

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Abstract:

Postmodernism is a movement in architecture, arts and criticism which widens its domain also in the discipline of literature. Postmodern works are primarily a response against modernist perspectives towards literature and are also in opposition to Enlightenment movement. Numerous researches have been done in various genres of literature which incorporate postmodernism. This study focuses on the representation of postmodern elements in the novel “The Bastard of Istanbul” written by Elif Shafak. Postmodern elements present in the novel are investigated through the postmodern elements expounded by Ihab Hassan, Fredric Jameson, Jean Baudrillard and Linda Hutcheon. The findings reveal that Elif Shafak has employed numerous postmodern elements such as depthlessness, silence, pastiche, play, chance, ambiguity, desire, alienation, irony, pataphysics and pop culture through the depiction of her major characters and events. Thus, these postmodern elements observe the criteria listed in the theoretical framework for classifying this novel a postmodern text.

Keywords: Postmodernism, Postmodern Literature, Pop culture, Chance, Pataphysics

I. Introduction

Postmodernism is fundamentally an exit from modernism as in the word ‘Postmodernism’ the prefix ‘Post’ marks departure of modernity and emergence of something advanced or new. Postmodernism is founded on Foucault’s view that human science should be handled as an autonomous network of discourse so it is also associated with Deconstruction. Modernism and Postmodernism both have dissimilar elements as postmodernism is a closure of modernism. Ihab Hassan (1982) by presenting a table differentiated modernism from postmodernism. The postmodern elements recognized by him involve Indeterminacy, Silence, Chance, Play, Pataphysics, Desire, Absence from center, Anarchy, Schizophrenia and others (Hassan: 1982). A postmodern theorist Jean Baudrillard (1929-2007) is related with the notion of simulations and hyper-reality.

According to him, postmodernity is an era of photography, mass media and cinema. Our planet is a planet of images which transports us away from actuality. He declares that the capital specifies our identities as our needs take place because of commercialized images (Baudrillard: 1981).

Another postmodern theorist Linda Hutcheon invented the term 'Historiographic metafiction' for the literary works which are self-reflexive in nature but in addition they keep a comprehension of past. In her opinion, the features like relying too much on various technologies, dominance of capitalism and a culture which is influenced by simulacra like commercial advertising and computer images shapes the postmodern condition (Hutcheon: 1988). Depthlessness, use of technology, suffering of the oppressed, pastiche, our loss of connection with history and simulacrum are the postmodern elements identified by Fredric Jameson (1991). Shafak born in Strasbourg, France in 1971, is a Turkish author, columnist and speaker. Her writings are about feminism, women, motherhood, mysticism, subcultures, immigrants and minorities. She employs Sufism, philosophy and history in her narratives. The setting of Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) is in United States and Turkey. The novel is about Asya who resides with her mother and three aunts. Asya's mother (Zeliha) runs a tattoo parlor. Cevriye (her aunt) is a widow and works as a teacher at a school. Her aunt Banu is a psychic and aunt Feride is a hypochondriac. Their male sibling Mustafa lives in Arizona accompanied by his wife (Rose) who has a female child (Armanoush). In order to figure out her identity Armanoush comes to Istanbul and inhabits with Asya's family. The distant brother comes to Istanbul with Rose to take Armanoush back to Arizona thus the whole family unites.

II. Literature Review

McKinney (1997) describes postmodernism as the recognition of the fundamental breakdown of the designs of former movements. In his viewpoint, our culture is postmodern in its attitude. He declares that the critics describe supremacy of postmodern attitude in almost every single sphere of cultural activity and as there are countless critics so there are countless ways to describe this cultural movement. According to Appignanesi (2003), the prefix 'post' in 'postmodernism' is the cause of ambivalence. In his viewpoint, postmodernism has developed from modernism but it cannot be considered modern. He further declares that postmodernism dismisses modernism but also encompasses the whole mastery of modernism that has been victimized by an advanced epoch.

Various theorists hold their opinion regarding the conception of postmodernism. Carroll (1997) expresses that postmodernism exists in contradiction to some other notions such as Enlightenment and Modernism. He declares that the concept of postmodernism is used universally because it is not controlled or blocked instead exercised in arts, economics, ethics, society and politics. In his opinion, the word 'Postmodernism' emerged in writings during initial 1930's and 40's but it got successful outcome in 1950's and 60's whereas Postmodern architecture became visible in 1950's which emerged in opposition to the Modern architecture. In 1960's Postmodern dance popped up and confronted Modern dance while Postmodern painting appeared in 1970's as a disapproval for Modern painting. Carroll further states that postmodern architects, painters and dancers differentiate their works from their modern forerunners.

Grenz (1996) asserts that postmodernism emerged in 1930's because of some progress in the area of arts but attained heed in 1970's. It was assumed as a mode of architecture in the beginning but later it got recognition in the areas of philosophy, arts and literature. Postmodern writers incorporate different postmodern elements in their fiction to make their text postmodern. Asimov's *I, Robot* (1950) consists of short stories regarding the history of robotics and robots. It is a Science Fiction. The novel's writing style is extremely ornamented. The novel deals with the depiction of robots who can speak and can interact with human beings. Gaps in literature or oblivion is also a postmodern element. This element is also present in the novel that whether Byerley was robot. This oblivion leaves the audience unaware about this information. The novel portrays hatred of various people regarding technology.

“You're the U. S. Robot's psychologist, aren't you?
“Robopsychologist, please.” (Asimov, 1950: 151).

Hamid's *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013) is a self-book. Protagonist, other characters and places in the novel are not given a name. The novel involves postmodern elements like emptiness, anarchy, pornography, anxiety, frustration, violence, anger, insecurity, satire and irony regarding the state of life in Pakistan. The sequence of good versus evil is lacking in this novel. It also reflects modern life with elements of capitalism, American dream, popular culture, high culture and low culture.

“Your costs are low because your master sources recently expired goods at scarp prices, erases the expiry date from the packaging, and reprints a later date instead” (Hamid, 2013: 91).

Elif Shafak in *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) confronts Turkey's brutal past in a striking and colorful story set in United States and Turkey. In the opinion of Dilek Tufekci Can (2011), Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* enlightens readers about the subject of Armenian Diaspora and the Problem of Identity. He further says that the plot of the novel revolves around an Armenian family and a Turkish family whose roots are connected with each other in past as well as in present time. Armenians are the ones who live in the past and remember the Armenian genocide in 1915 in the hands of Turks while on the other hand none of the Turkish characters remember anything regarding this massacre in the novel. He further talks about prejudice and espousal, identity and belonging, the resemblance between the two nations regarding individual memory and collective memory.

III. Research Methodology

This study is an investigation of Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007) from the postmodern aspect. This research is qualitative. The postmodern components listed by Ihab Hassan in *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* (1982), the postmodern elements described by Jameson in *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991), Hutcheon's notion of Historiographic metafiction described in *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1988) and *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) and some postmodern elements described by Baudrillard in *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (1981) have been taken as the base for the investigation of the novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*.

A. Research questions

This research will respond to the following questions:

Overarching question

Can *The Bastard of Istanbul* be considered a postmodern literary text?

Subsidiary question

Which postmodern elements are present in Elif Shafak's novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*?

IV. Analysis

The Bastard of Istanbul (2007) depicts Armenian Americans' hatred for the Turks. Shafak unfolds the subject of identity crisis and Armenian genocide happened in 1915 by employing numerous postmodern elements. She has used different postmodern elements in the novel which includes pastiche, play, silence, chance, intertextuality, pornography, desire, indeterminacy, temporal disorder, alienation, pop culture, irony, pataphysics and others.

A. Silence

'Silence' recognized by Ihab Hassan (1982) as a postmodern element can be identified in Zeliha's character. *The Bastard of Istanbul* reflects that Zeliha hates silence and could not resist it but the character abide silence and never revealed the identity of Asya's father. When she was raped, she chose to remain silent, instead of telling the truth she told that she got bruised while helping a woman to rescue from her husband who was beating her badly. Many times, silence leads to truth. In the novel, Zeliha's silence about Asya's father forced Banu to get the truth from Mr. Bitter (djinn). Zeliha chose silence because she wanted to hide the truth, though the truth was killing her and the only one to whom she could talk about it was Aram.

"Aram, when is it going to end? ... Say nothing, remember nothing, reveal nothing, not to them, not to yourself... Is it ever going to come to an end?" (281).

The departure of Mustafa from home and the silence he was maintaining, was not interrogated by Kazanci family because of his manhood. However, his silence awakes guilt of disgracing and raping Zeliha in him and eventually he isolates himself from the family. Silence of some characters leads them to freedom in the novel. Postmodern literature acknowledges the sense of freedom and independence. After getting divorce from her first husband, Rose felt free to cook and eat whatever she wants to have as she was uncomfortable with the manner of living of Armenians. The Cartoonist planned to release a new series of his cartoon as he realized that there is no point to fight for freedom of expression if he cannot fight for the freedom of humor.

B. Play and Chance

The postmodern component 'play' delineated by Ihab Hassan (1982) supports the viewpoint that 'do not conceal what you are'. Armanoush decided that she would not wear jewelry or put make up for date to work it nice and was ready to deal with the consequence. Shafak also includes word play in the novel, Asya informed Cartoonist "... My mom and I, we are so alike and yet so distant" (146). Wordplay is also evident in Asya's words when she disclosed to Armanoush: "... when I was born I found myself

surrounded by four auntie-moms or mommy-aunties, Either I had to call them all ‘mom’ or else I had to call my mother ‘Auntie Zeliha’...” (173). Ihab Hassan (1982) has identified ‘chance’ as another postmodern element. In the novel, Shafak also employed ‘chance’ at times. It deals with the concept that what is meant to happen, let it happen. Banu’s decision of self-imposed isolation for forty days to become dervish was taken indifferently by Kazanci family “Go ahead. See if we care” (67). Similarly, just as Asya spoke to her friends regarding her birthday, they behaved as usual. They do not even hug her; no cake was bought. Instead the poet read her a poem and for her the cartoonist finished three bottles of wine. Her other friends paid her coffee bill.

Coincidence and chance remain factors of life. By chance Zeliha said to Mustafa that as he is forty now so he must be nervous about his death and one or two days after this conversation, he died. Ages ago what happened still have an impact on the present. Things might be different if Levent would not be that bitter, Mustafa might be a better person and if in 1915 Shushan would not become an orphan, Asya might not be a bastard, so “Life is coincidence...” (356).

C. Loneliness, Emptiness, Alienation

Loneliness, emptiness or alienation of characters is a facet of postmodern literature. In the novel under discussion, Banu locked herself in a room to transform herself in a dervish but took Pasha- the third along her to escape from loneliness. Later when he scratched the door and meowed, she let him go and was eventually left alone. Her loneliness forced her to stop: talking, taking showers, combing hair, watching operas and eating delicious dishes that her sisters cooked. The only food she preferred was water and bread. She remained busy in reciting Quran and appeared alien to everyone around her. The character of Armanoush is a portrayal of emptiness. She suffered from identity crisis and always felt incomplete, this absurdity never let her start an independent life of her own.

D. Temporal disorder, Pastiche, Ambiguity

In the novel, Shafak has incorporated other postmodern elements such as temporal disorder, pastiche and ambiguity. Temporal disorder is prevalent as author seems to play with place and time throughout the novel. The novel depicts multiple settings like Istanbul, San Francisco and Arizona. The plot also involves past events that are presented through the story of Petite Ma and Hovhannes’ s past. Though the novel belongs to the genre of drama, however it also contains suspense, tragedy and history so the novel also employs the postmodern element ‘pastiche’.

There are a lot of aspects that add in the element of ambiguity. Difference in the languages cause ambiguity at Asya’s home when Armanoush spoke English and only Zeliha and Asya could get it. The novel’s plot also appears to be ambiguous for the readers as connection between two families remained vague for most part of the novel. The name ‘Armanoush’ itself is confusing enough as Armanoush is the real name of Amy and also the name of her grandmother’s mother/ great grandmother. Relations depicted in the novel also contains ambiguity as Asya calls her mother ‘aunt’, this ambiguity was ceased when the truth was revealed on the death of Mustafa.

“Her uncle... her father...”
“Her aunt... her mother...” (353).

E. Intertextuality, Indeterminacy, Pornography

Ihab Hassan (1982) has identified intertextuality as well as indeterminacy as postmodern components. Intertextuality is evident in the novel when Zeliha read for Petite-Ma the following verse from Quran "...When the call is sounded for prayer on Fridays, ... that you may be successful (62:9-10)" (127).

Banu recited a verse of Quran: "I am close to you than your jugular vein (50:16)" (193).

Shafak has included an Indo-European story that is narrated from *A Brother wants to Marry His Sister*.

"Once there was; underground kingdom" (319).

In *The Bastard of Istanbul*, indeterminacy is evident from the deaths of men in Kazanci family who were assumed cursed but this issue remains ambiguous in the novel. The husband of Petite-Ma expired at the age of sixty as he could not breathe, her step-son (Levent) died due to cardiac attack, a car hit another Kazanci, one drowned during swimming, another shot by bullet, another committed suicide. Cevriye's husband Celal died by placing his foot on a high voltage electricity wire accidentally during his imprisonment. Asya mentioned to Armanoush: "The men of this family are cursed, you know. They don't survive" (173). Pornography is another element of postmodern literature. The title of the novel "*The Bastard of Istanbul*" itself is suggestive of Zeliha's rape. The novel includes sex between The Cartoonist and Asya. The Cartoonist was also the crush of Closeted-Gay Columnist. "Even the thought of him naked was enough to send shivers down his spine. This wasn't about sex, ... but about kindered spirits" (80).

F. Mental disorders/Schizophrenia

Ihab Hassan (1982) considered Schizophrenia as an important postmodern component. Jameson (1991) relates this component to the postmodern culture. Feride is the character in the novel who was suffering from multiple mental disorders like dissociative amnesia, stress ulcer, psychotic depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder. She also suffered from Hebephrenic schizophrenia. At each new phase of her insanity, Feride used to change her hair style and colour and stays in her own fantasy world. Eventually she shifted to paranoia, and when Asya declared to her family that she does not need cake on her birthday, her aunt Feride asked: "Are you afraid that someone poisoned the cake?" (71). Rose was going through post-marital chronic resentment that has made her irrational. She started to talk with herself and became obstinate with people around her. She wanted reprisal from her ex-mother-in-law so she thought if she would have a relationship with a Turk (Mustafa) then her ex-mother-in-law would be enraged because of the clash between Turks and Armenians.

Armanoush unconsciously ate 'manti' which she was avoiding to eat before going on a date because of its smell. But after talking to her mother on call, her mind became occupied of certain thoughts that she ate something she was avoiding. Mustafa had difficulty while communicating with strangers, as a result of getting too pampered environment in home. He did not have friends. Zeliha named him 'a precious phallus' as he had suppressed desires. In Zeliha's opinion he had "...become both narcissistic and insecure" (45) because Mustafa was spoon fed by their parents as he was the only son in

the house. Petite-Ma was suffering from Alzheimer, at times her mind is crystal clear and at times she does not remember who is sitting and having dinner with her. Once while offering prayer she got confused what to do next after sajdah.

G. Androgynous and Desire

Androgynous and desire are delineated as postmodern elements of literature by Ihab Hassan (1982). These elements are used by the novelist in *The Bastard of Istanbul*. The element 'androgynous' is depicted through Closeted-Gay Columnist's character. He was secret admirer of Dipsomaniac Cartoonist despite knowing that The Cartoonist was heterosexual and had feelings for Asya and he would never have an affair with him. Asya also spoke about a singer who was transsexual. He began his career as a hero in movies but later undergone a surgery and become a woman who now wears flamboyant dresses, accessories and a lot of jewelry. Desire is longing for a person/outcome/object. In the novel many characters longed for certain aspiration. Armanoush longed to know about her ancestors' past. Linda Hutcheon (1989) discussed about the desire of having human body. She believes that the postmodernists not only imagine female body "but about its desires" too (Hutcheon, 1989:43). In the novel, Mustafa possessed a desire which become so dominant over him that he could not control it and raped his own sister Zeliha. Similarly, The Cartoonist desired Asya.

H. Depthlessness

Jameson (1991) delineated depthlessness as a distinctive feature of postmodernism. Depthlessness rejects reflection of deep insight and focuses on surface meaning. Shafak employed this facet through the emotional detachment of her characters from each other. In the novel, the members of Kazanci family were too detached from one another that nobody took it seriously when Banu restrain eating for almost forty days. Nobody was interested in Zeliha's parlor to know why some customer want to have a particular tattoo. In Asya's opinion all that matters; is present, no one bothers past.

J. Irony

In Ihab Hassan's viewpoint (1982), irony is a prevalent component of postmodern literature. Shafak has also incorporated it in the novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*. Despite disliking silence Zeliha herself remained silent and never revealed the identity of her child. Gulsum's address to Zeliha "... you should be grateful that there are no men around in this family. They'd have killed you" (29) also sounds ironical as Zeliha's brother Mustafa had ceased earlier her existence by having a forced sex with her. The wife of Cartoonist mentioned Tolstoy's wife's sacrifices that she worked just like a dog only because her husband can write better, otherwise she was more talented than Tolstoy. She said such things because she thought she has more talent than The Cartoonist and she always gets less appreciation.

K. Appearance vs Reality, Multiple truths, Deconstruction of ideologies

The Cartoonist was been through a life of melancholy and misery and it is hard to believe that his work involves humor. In Mustafa's view he was a completely different individual with Rose as she was ignorant of his past life but the reality was inverse. Levent Kazanci is a portrayal of different personalities. In his social life he symbolized togetherness and reliability but in his domestic life he was a dominant husband and an authoritative father who never hesitates to use his belt. Postmodernists believe that there is no such thing like absolute truth. In the beginning of the novel, the established truth

was that Zeliha is culprit because of giving birth to an illegitimate girl but afterwards it was disclosed that she is rather a victim of Mustafa's suppressed desires and sin. Hence, this novel deconstructs the truth, though Zeliha was not a righteous one but the call of prayer forced her to change the decision of her abortion. The novel also challenges the idea of perceiving women with modern attire as morally corrupt.

L. Pataphysics

Shafak has employed 'pataphysics' in the novel under discussion. Ihab Hassan (1982) identified 'pataphysics' as a component of postmodernism. Banu, in the novel used to read coffee mugs to tell the future to her customers. Banu also practiced new methods to read the future that includes reading ocean pebbles, dried beans, hazelnuts, pearls, door bells, silver coins, anything that "... would bring news from the paranormal world" (69). She had two djinns Mrs. Sweet and Mr. Bitter as her slaves. Mrs. Sweet is presented as a good djinn with a friendly face and a colorful corona around her neck. Where her neck ends instead of body, there is only wisp of smoke. She had the knowledge of Quran and before her conversion to Islam she was an atheist. However, Mr. Bitter was a gulyabani, very powerful and old djinn. Banu made him captive because of her talisman that she used to wear all the time. She facilitates her clients with unburied secrets, property disputes, unsolved mysteries or to find lost things like any important document and helped women who are suspected to be under some spell with the assistance of the djinns. Banu also found the truth about the father of Asya with Mr. Bitter's help. In a silver bowl, Mr. Bitter showed Banu, the visions of the tragedy occurred to Armanoush's forefathers.

M. Historiographic metafiction

Linda Hutcheon's (1988) idea of 'historiographic metafiction' is prominent in the novel. It reflects the rift between Turks and Armenians due to historical events. In the opinion of Armenians, they were massacred and deported by Turks. They believe that some Turks arrived from central Asia and resided there and uncountable Armenians were "Assimilated! Massacred! Orphaned! Deported! And then forgotten! ..." (55).

All seven members of Café Constantinopolis (a cybercafé) including Armenians and Greeks used to discuss their joint foe 'The Turks'. An Armenian youngster Baron Baghdassarian of Café Constantinopolis told other members about the pain and sufferings his ancestors faced.

"... we lost our loved ones, ... Even the pain inflicted on our grandparents is not as agonizing as the systematic denial that followed" (184).

This novel also delineates that Armenians can never leave behind their past whereas Turks never want to recall the past and most of them are ignorant of Armenian mass genocide and are reluctant to accept the responsibility. When Armanoush inquired Mustafa about it, he suggested her to ask it from historians. Cevriye was a history teacher in Turkey and she heard about the genocide from Armanoush – a person from distant land. According to Feride, Armenians and Greeks had brain washed the Americans as they arrived there (America) before Turks. Opinion of Nonnationalist Scenarist from Ultrnationalist movies about this massacre was that both sides suffered from same calamity, Turks were also killed by Armenian rebels and it was Ottoman Empire in 1915 not a Turkish state. In Constantinopolis Café, a Turk wrote that Armenians were the ones

who killed and rebelled Turks. One other young Turk stated that if Ottoman Empire was that brutal then there would be no alive Armenian left to discuss the incident.

Shafak has included few historical references in *The Bastard of Istanbul*. Gulsum discussed about Ataturk (a great commander-in-chief of Turkey) who granted the rights to females. The novel also depicts the time of creation of the modern Turkish Republic through Petite-Ma's narration of past. In 1923 she migrated along her mother to Istanbul from Thessaloniki. The novel also reflects battles of past as Gulyabani (Mr. Bitter) was a witness of the Battle of Yarmuk and the Battle of Tours in which Heraclius was overthrown by Muslims. He also witnessed Berber Tarik invading Visigothic Spain. The novel also includes Solomon's reference that he was the only one who only could defeat djinns. Madame My-Exiled-Soul was the name given to Armanoush by herself in cybercafe as a tribute to Zaber Yessaian who was the solo female novelist whose name was noted in 1915 by Turks on their death list. Shafak highlighted 1915 deportations and 1909 Adana massacre and in this novel.

N. Pop culture, Appreciation of drugs and alcohol, Technology

In the viewpoint of Hutcheon (1989), domination of capitalism, photography, dance, music and films are related to postmodernism. According to Jameson (1991), the culture of drugs is an aspect of postmodernism. Baudrillard (1981) also identified capitalism and media culture as aspects of postmodern society. Shafak has used these postmodern features in the novel under discussion. The novel depicts Asya with her friends smoking cigarettes and drinking beer in Café Kundera. Zeliha also smoke cigarettes. Cartoonist was a noted drinker and his apartment used to smell of raki, sex and marijuana. In Armanoush's opinion Asya "smokes like a chimney" (183). Lady Peacock in a cyber chat mentioned that people in Armenia smoke too much and this practice is killing their nation.

Various aspects as well as problems of pop culture like dieting, different type of clothes and food, traffic problems, music and restaurants are also evident in this novel. The novel under discussion begins with the portrayal of traffic problem and the protagonist (Zeliha) dashing to the hospital for an appointment. Feride's hair styles and colours, Zeliha's manicured finger nails, mini-skirts, high heels, tight fitting blouses, nylon stockings, her tattoo parlor depicts pop culture. Dieting and obsession about figure are aspects of pop life. In the novel, Zeliha taunted Asya that later is conscious regarding her weight. Rose was also concerned about reducing her weight. Magazine depicted in the novel also describes information about different body shapes.

Asya used to go to ballet classes. The novel also mentions Johnny Cash and Madonna's songs. Ethnic music, classical music, pop music, darkwave, punk, post punk, death metal, psychedelic, industrial metal, various TV channels, cartoons, old comedies, surfing on internet, shopping, novels and magazines are also mentioned in this novel. The technology represented in the novel involves computer, TV, internet, laptop, VCR, CD player, cars, video games, phones, photographs, cybercafé and KODAK camera. Café Kundera and Skewed Window are the restaurants depicted in the novel. Starbucks and Coca cola are also mentioned in the novel. The novel also depicts various dishes including khdayif, churek, tursu, manti, burma, kaburga, fassoulye pilaki and bastirma. Pop culture includes parties and events. The novel depicts Kevork attending a benefit concert, Christmas party, annual party, Sunday brunch, Friday Night Light party, a

rafting race and an annual Winter Gala. The houses depicted in *The Bastard of Istanbul* are well decorated with rugs, paintings, antique silver and velvet armchairs.

O. Identity crisis/ Fragmented identity

Postmodern literature encounters the problem of identity crisis of people. In the novel, many characters suffer from identity crisis. Rose remained an outsider in Barsam's family. Many family members of Barsam used to call Rose, a thorn. Though their marriage lasted only for a year and eight months, Rose felt emotional attachment towards her husband. Barsam told his family that she is having a hard time to cope with the family. He also mentioned that the very first word Rose learnt of Barsam's mother language (Armenian) was 'odar' and his uncle Dikran questioned him: "If she is an odar, why not call her an odar?" (58). Shushan Stamboulian was named Shermin 626 when she came to Istanbul and start living in an orphanage. After marrying Riza Selim Kazanci, she was known as Shermin Kazanci but she renamed herself as Shushan Stamboulian when she along her brother settled in America.

Jameson (1991) viewed 'loss of connection with past' as an element of postmodernism. It is evident in the character of Mustafa as he wanted to forget his past. For Mustafa, Istanbul was a ghost city when he settled in the United States with his wife Rose. Rose used to think herself an 'odar' so after divorce from Barsam she wedded another 'odar' (Mustafa). Shafak also mentions the Turks denial of considering themselves eastern through the conversation between Armanoush and Asya. Asya explained Armanoush that being western she does not listen Middle Eastern music; and Armanoush replied: "No you are not Western. Turks are Middle Eastern but somehow in constant denial ..." (178).

Asya's character is also a depiction of losing the connection with past as she was mindful of the fact that she could never get her real identity. She told Armanoush that the only thing she knows regarding her past is that there is something inappropriate with that and she would not get to know that. For Asya, past is not significant as she remained ignored of her past "All my life I wanted to be pastless" (262). Asya used to think that anyone can be her father. She might have seen her father. She might have seen him face to face or on TV. Contrary to Asya, Armanoush was in search of her past and ancestors, she spent a fragmented childhood and wanted to know her identity. Barsam Tchahkmakhchian was Armanoush's real father, whose parents were among the survivors of 1915 Armenian genocide. But her step father was a Turk (Mustafa). Armanoush was also connected to Asya because of Mustafa as he was father of Asya.

V. Conclusion

Throughout the novel *The Bastard of Istanbul* (2007), Shafak has incorporated different postmodern elements such as emptiness, temporal disorder, pastiche, silence, ambiguity, play, intertextuality, chance, indeterminacy, schizophrenia, pornography, desire and androgynous. Thus, numerous postmodern elements employed by Shafak through the illustration of significant characters and events in *The Bastard of Istanbul* make it a postmodern novel.

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