

## **THE MUSLIM DIASPORA'S NATIONALISM AND IDENTITY IN KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *HOME FIRE***

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### **Abstract**

The paper deals with Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* to explore the profound social and psychological aspects and identity conflicts Muslim immigrants face in the West, especially in Britain. The importance of this paper is to express the conflict that the Muslim expatriate experiences in his relationship with the West and explore the reasons that affect their tolerance and coexistence. The paper's problem manifests in exploring significant facets of human interactions, including tolerance, the increasing migrations from Islamic nations to non-Muslim countries, and the challenges arising from identity, religion, and race, which expose migrants to significant perils. The Method uses a social theoretical framework that intersects with the psychological approach. It investigates how both the original and new environments affect character development and individuals' psychological, developmental, and cognitive dimensions in the Muslim Diaspora. It aims to understand the reasons behind involvement in terrorist organizations and also examines the citizenship rights of Muslim Diaspora members. Finally, the paper concludes by presenting the most prominent

results, which collectively illustrate that the aggressive style of fiction has influenced the presence of paranoia in literary criticism, leading to an exaggeration of the crimes of others and justification of the self. This is not conducive to objective and neutral analysis, so adopting a more moderate and neutral approach is recommended to allow for open discussion and acceptance of differing viewpoints. This approach should address questions of identity and national belonging.

**Keywords:** *fiction, Islamic studies, nationalism, terrorism, tolerance.*

### **Introduction**

It is imperative to differentiate between pivotal concepts in this scholarly article: country, nation, nationalism, and identity. A country is a political and administrative entity that possesses ultimate jurisdiction over its populace and encompasses a geographical region acknowledged globally<sup>1</sup>. Conversely, a nation can be defined as a collective of individuals bound together by shared cultural, religious, customary, traditional, ancestral, and ethnic characteristics. These elements function as foundations of affiliation and allegiance among the nation's members, irrespective of their national origins or country. The governance of a nation's affairs is not exclusively reliant on a central authority but rather on a social entity separate from the state's jurisdiction. Consequently, a single country has the potential to encompass multiple nations. It is also accurate to state that a single nation might extend across various countries, as observed in the Arab world. In such cases, these countries are not subject to identical legal systems, unlike the residents of a single country who are bound by the same laws.

Nevertheless, it is pertinent to consider the following question: Must a collective of individuals satisfy all these characteristics to be classified as a 'nation'? Regarding the Islamic 'nation' (or ummah), the response would be negative, as a significant number of Muslims speak languages distinct from Arabic, and they may vary in culture, background, and history; their faith serves as the unifying factor.

Furthermore, this work addresses how the novel explores issues of identity and belonging—two complex issues characterized by significant complexity and disparity from the perspectives of the self and the other, especially in the context of migration and life in disparate societies.

In addition, the paper explores complicated forms of Western tolerance, particularly Britain's acceptance of Muslim immigrants. It discusses how these societies view these immigrants with apprehension and suspicion, treating them as potential terrorists<sup>2</sup> and

often making generalized judgments filled with accusations against Britain's Muslims who immigrate there in search of the alleged freedoms and democratic practices that are applied selectively. This selective application denies citizenship to members of the Muslim diaspora who wish to maintain their Islamic identity. So, the primary purpose of this paper is to descriptively discuss the transformation of nationalism and identity among the Muslim diaspora in Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire*, and to explore the role of fiction in depicting the complicated relationship between Muslim immigrants in Western societies and their governments.

### **Literature Review**

The significance of thoroughly examining the existing literature about the topic of the present study is readily apparent. It is imperative to acknowledge the efforts of past researchers and uphold objectivity while offering a comprehensive and robust foundation for the reader. This approach is crucial for advancing study and continuing previous efforts without duplicating them, particularly considering that most studies on Shamsie's *Home Fire* have overlooked the preceding studies that examined the identical novel.

In her scholarly publication titled *Global Epistemic Injustice: An Ethical Confrontation with Jihadism*, Ben Driss explores the various forms of injustice perpetrated against individuals residing in societies that are not their country of origin, irrespective of their nationality. The study depicts the portrayal of the alienated Muslim who experiences a sense of insecurity and alienation due to the imminent risk of having their citizenship revoked and being forced into exile at the slightest sign of involvement in activities that pose a threat to national security. Consequently, they are deprived of the freedom to express themselves or protect themselves<sup>3</sup>.

The state perceives Muslim immigrants as a possible menace. Individuals are experiencing a state of silencing, oppression, and deprivation of their freedom to articulate their opinions and beliefs. They experience a sense of coercion to select between two alternatives: repress or conceal their past identities, as any allegiance, sentimentality, or affiliation with old identities could potentially result in harm<sup>4</sup>.

The study above resembles Chambers' research titled *Sound and Fury*, whereby she advocates for the imperative of attentively considering the perspective of the other, even if they are affiliated with terrorism<sup>5</sup>. In their study titled *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Rind et al., drawing inspiration from the renowned thinker Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work, explore the concept of Muslim individuals feeling a sense of inferiority. These individuals are often considered as second-class citizens despite being born in a particular

country. Furthermore, even if an individual holds a nationality, they are not acknowledged as a fully-fledged citizen<sup>6</sup>.

A scholarly investigation titled *Locating Cultural Hegemony: A Marxist Analysis of Home Fire* is presented similarly. The text advocates for the persistent endeavour of Pakistani expatriates in Britain to demonstrate their eligibility for citizenship, impeded by the aristocracy, which feigned dedication to the collective welfare. In reality, their objective was self-serving while simultaneously enforcing their cultural norms. Conversely, the proletariat class faces challenges regarding survival, self-validation, and the freedom to express themselves<sup>7</sup>.

The research conducted by Rivaldy, titled *Muslim Diasporic Identities in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire*, examines the categorization of Pakistani expatriates into two distinct categories due to the enduring negative stereotypes associated with Muslims in Western societies. The first category comprises individuals who endeavour to eliminate or conceal their previous associations to gain acceptance into the new culture, particularly if they have political ambitions. The second category includes those who identify as Muslims and exhibit a steadfast devotion to their religious, national, or cultural associations. Simultaneously, they experience dissatisfaction in a society that fails to embrace their uniqueness - a manifestation of the radicalism of the 21st century that detrimentally impacts the perception of contemporary Britain<sup>8</sup>.

In their research titled *Necropolitics and National Identity in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire*, Brigida and Pinho delve into extremism among Pakistani Muslims. The study examines how the host's conservative attitude compels the protagonist to conform to the culture of the new society and actively seek its approval by disengaging from external influences. The manifestation of discriminatory views against minority groups frequently gives rise to rebellious dispositions. Regardless, this outcome poses a direct threat to the entirety of society<sup>9</sup>.

In Shamsie's novel, Baglama examines the concept of 'new racism', which refers to the imposition by the host society on minority groups to exhibit their religious and cultural identities in a manner determined and deemed appropriate by the host rather than based on the actual realities associated with those identities<sup>10</sup>.

*Political Imbrolios in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire and Mohammad Hanif's A Case of Exploding Mangoes* highlights the correlation between religion and politics and the challenges associated with disentangling these two domains, particularly in the context of Western Muslims. The authors also engage in a conversation regarding the role of politics, which may be likened to a double-edged sword. On the one hand, politics can provide excellent

outcomes such as wealth and peace. On the other hand, politics can also have dire consequences, potentially resulting in destruction and collapse<sup>11</sup>.

European society warmly embraces any Muslim who embraces an acceptable Islamic identity. Muslims who strive to uphold their conventional way of thinking experience marginalization and questioning of belonging<sup>12</sup>. His acceptance is contingent upon a circumstance that necessitates alteration. Nevertheless, the prospect of change and reform is unattainable within religion because faith manifests a steadfast system of convictions universally applicable across all locations and eras.<sup>13</sup>

Ünal's study is grounded in the philosophy of literary trauma. The author employs this methodology to examine the psychological impact of the diaspora, characterizing it as a societal endeavour that inflicts harm upon the Muslim community. The community endures a perpetual state of hardship and experiences emotions of apprehension, impotence, and insecurity. Simultaneously, Ünal holds onto nostalgic recollections of his place of origin, leading to socio-cultural distress.

Numerous scholarly investigations have examined the convergence between the novel *Home Fire* and Sophocles's renowned ancient Greek tragedy *Antigone*. These studies have aimed to identify the areas where the two approaches align by highlighting the current importance of the play about the Muslim diaspora. When secular rules clash with religious laws, there is a tendency for someone to rebel against them, which stands in contrast to the submissiveness of the majority. An example of such a character is Antigone (Aneeka). She is against the British Home Secretary Karamat Lone's decision to deny a burial for her brother Parvaiz in Britain, despite his legal violations and the withdrawal of his nationality, based on the principle that 'whoever is not with us is our enemy.' Simultaneously, her sister Isma is attempting to dissuade her from protesting. The narrative resembles the legendary tale of Antigone, whereby King Creon declines to permit the burial of his brother Polyneices as a retribution for his defiance against the king's decrees. Consequently, she becomes resolute in her resistance to his decision while her sister attempts to dissuade her from continuing her opposition.<sup>14</sup>

The work is often analyzed in the play *Antigone*. Nevertheless, none of them explicitly acknowledge the preceding one as if asserting their originality in highlighting the resemblance between the play and the novel and the juxtaposition of the past and present to address a current concern.

Nevertheless, specific scholarly investigations have examined the intersection between the play *Antigone* and Shamsie's

novel through the lens of intertextuality theory. These studies aim to identify the shared elements between the two works, highlighting their objectives and allusions while also acknowledging the existing body of intertextual research on various literary works.<sup>15</sup>

An alternative approach uses the Austin speech theory to analyze the two sisters' personalities from a linguistic standpoint. The linguistic expressions employed in verbal communication delineate individuals' character qualities and natures.<sup>16</sup>

Koshy analyzes the work through Bill Brown's Thing Theory. He endeavours to trace the process of the Muslim immigrant's transition from a singular identity to a collective identity (Transforming the Ich-Du to the Ich-Es) and the intense suffering endured by the immigrant to disassociate themselves from the perception of being a suspected terrorist.<sup>17</sup>

The novel can be interpreted within the context of current events, such as Britain's withdrawal from the European Union, the rise of right-wing ideologies advocating for the marginalization of minority groups, and the efforts to undermine the existence of Muslims by presenting various challenges in the name of national stability.<sup>18</sup>

This extensive examination of the scholarly research focused on Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* provides valuable insights into the complex dynamics between European civilization and the diasporic Muslim minority. It sheds light on the influence of this community's identity perception, calling for reevaluating and elucidating its attributes and the transformations it has experienced.

Sure, Europeans hold a favourable and empathetic perspective towards the Muslim diaspora, as they consider these individuals as seeking refuge from countries they perceive as violent and regressive. In contrast, their civilized nations are more inclined to accept the Muslim diaspora due to their shared humanity.<sup>19</sup>

The analysis of Shamsie's novel reveals the utilization of exclusionary politics by specific individuals within European societies who employ oppressive measures against Muslims in the name of safeguarding national and social security while also contributing to the proliferation of Islamophobia. Europe tends to pre-criminalize those who identify as Muslims. In the most favourable circumstances, diasporic Muslims are only granted acceptance provided they align with secular principles that are consistent with the European mindset. Nevertheless, this acceptance form lacks compassion as it is contingent upon certain conditions.

It is essential to differentiate between valid criticism, arbitrary condemnation, and criticism of individuals. The prevailing narrative, characterized by a vocabulary of critique, engendered

significant animosity and inflicted extensive harm. The Western culture and state were frequently criticized for their inhumane treatment of the victim, the Muslim immigrant, without acknowledging the presence of two opposing factions - the right and the left - and their distinct approaches to addressing the immigration issue. This conversation arose due to the increasing disparity between Europeans and Muslim immigrants, as well as Muslims in general. It also encompasses the broader divide between the East and the West and the dichotomy between 'me' and the 'other' rather than facilitating the reduction of this divide.

According to Dalbert and Donat's 'Just World theory,' the Muslim communities, who are considered the victims, are blamed for two primary reasons. Firstly, their pride hinders them from acknowledging the errors committed by select extremists, damaging their reputation. The second issue pertains to their inability to advocate for the universal perspective of their tradition and its virtuous principles. Consequently, the contact between both parties predates a restricted and frequently stereotypical understanding of one another, whether within the Muslim world or Europe.<sup>20</sup>

*Identification and Identity of Muslims* examines how American society views Muslims before and after 9/11 and how Muslims navigate their identity in the US both before and after the attacks.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, *Muslim lives in the post-9/11 fiction* focuses on the portrayal of Muslim characters in post-9/11 fiction, specifically in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and H.M. Naqvi's *Home Boy*, who are depicted in a gray area in the aftermath of 9/11.<sup>22</sup>

Rivaldy, Budiman, and Tambunan explore how Pakistani Muslim diasporic communities create their identities and define the concept of home in the novels "*Home Fire*" and "*Exit West*" using the theories of Hall's theory of identity, Brah's "*Homing Desire*," and Bhabha's "*Unhomely*."<sup>23</sup>

*Towards an Ethics of Reading Muslims* discusses the ethical implications of reading books that depict Muslim characters in a secular literary world. It specifically looks at Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* and how it addresses the challenges of reading about different cultures, particularly in its portrayal of veiled Muslim women.<sup>24</sup>

The issue stems from the methodology and the identification of the underlying cause of the disagreement. Instead, it is necessary to guide Westerners in acknowledging Islamic community members' peaceful and virtuous disposition. This can be achieved by embracing a mindset of tranquility, rationality, and impartiality. This enhances the understanding of the 'other' and benefits them, prompting them to reassess the hostility they harbour towards immigrant Muslims, which is rooted in unfavourable stereotypes.

Critical discourse aims to attain equilibrium that upholds justice towards others while unaffected by external influences. Acknowledging the unique characteristics that differentiate industrialized nations in terms of advancements across all domains of human existence is imperative. Simultaneously, it is essential to consider the need for these nations to comprehend and embrace the other party's identity, enabling them to interpret the other's conduct accurately rather than attempting to eradicate their identity and cultural, national, and religious affiliation. This method will have detrimental effects on the countries themselves as it compels immigrants to adhere only to the country's political policies, feigning loyalty in a manner that satisfies the host nation. Another potential response is the resistance to such a methodology, resulting in a confrontation and endeavours for retribution against a self-centered society that requires all individuals to embrace identical concepts and customs, thereby undergoing a metamorphosis into a novel individual devoid of any shared recollection or origins.

### **Methodology**

This study uses a social theoretical framework and explores how both the original and new environments affect the development of individuals in the Muslim Diaspora, specifically looking at psychological, developmental, and cognitive dimensions. Furthermore, it employs a psychological approach to analyze the characters of the Diaspora Muslims in the novel *Home Fire* by applying theories and concepts in psychology to understand their motivations, behaviours, and development as the novel progresses. This includes the influence of the subconscious, repressed motivations, and psychological conflicts among expatriate Muslims on their subsequent behaviour. It also reveals some of the characters' mechanisms in the face of challenges and difficulties, considering the cultural, historical, and societal influences on their behaviour. This psychoanalytic approach helps better understand the novel's characters, motivations, and actions within the narrative context. This approach can be applied to any fictional character, providing insights into their psychological complexities and narrative role.

### **Discussion**

#### **Polyphony as a mirror of identity transformations**

Polyphony highlights the distinctions among the fictitious characters, showcasing their variety and diversity in terms of their commitment and conviction.<sup>25</sup> Parvaiz, a nineteen-year-old teenager accused of terrorism and extremism, is a compassionate individual who is unable to tolerate the scenes of torture and abuse endured by the Guantanamo detainees.

Certain immigrants endeavour to establish trust with the host community and the government, even if it necessitates the sacrifice

of a family member. This pertains to Isma, who informs the UK authorities of her brother's journey to engage in combat in Syria.<sup>26</sup>

*Home Fire* portrays the marginalization and oppression experienced by South Asian immigrants in European countries, particularly in Britain. It also explores the challenges of attempting to travel between countries, such as America, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11th events. Isma was detained at the airport for an extended interrogation of around two hours. She was queried about delicate subjects, encompassing her perspective on the Shiite community. In her response, she states that the animosity between Shias and Sunnis typically revolves around a political power disparity, as seen in Iraq or Syria. As a British individual, she does not differentiate between different types of Muslims.<sup>27</sup>

By carefully studying the characters in the novel, we notice a remarkable ability to draw the paradox between the real homeland and the dream homeland, between preserving identity and breaking away from it, and between deceptive slogans and bitter realities facing Muslim immigrants in the West. Adel's family, comprising Ismat, Aneeqa, and Pervez from Muslim Pakistan, reflects its deep connection with its country of origin. Karamat's character attempts to assimilate into the new society by naming his son Raymond, a name of Old French and Old German origin. However, his efforts are thwarted when Raymond falls in love with Aneeqa.

Thus, the characters in *Home Fire* show the negative impact of the complex relationship between religion, politics, and citizenship on the image of the Muslim diaspora in Western communities, which undermines the potential for religious coexistence and tolerance.

### **The War and the Consequences of Migration**

*Home Fire* also challenges the rationale behind war, especially when initiated by one nation against another, due to the resultant loss of innocent lives. According to Isma, occupying another's territory often leads to more problems than solutions, a notion applicable to both Iraq and Israel. The killing of civilians is morally reprehensible, whether through suicide bombings, aerial bombardments, or drone strikes.<sup>28</sup>

The story conveys a compassionate apprehension by questioning why some nations rationalize their military conflicts against other countries, resulting in significant loss of innocent lives and debilitating civilian populations, while simultaneously criminalizing similar actions when perpetrated by individuals. Wouldn't it be more prudent to prioritize preventing extensive terrorist activities, sometimes referred to as 'state terrorism,' due to their significantly larger and more dangerous impact?

Conversely, the novel portrays an Asian immigrant who seeks political advantage to secure a seat in Parliament. This character is depicted as a self-centered opportunist who sacrifices his national identity, particularly his Islamic faith, by changing his son's name from Ayman (which sounds Islamic) to the Irish Eamonn. This demonstrates his inclination to assimilate into the novel societal framework and marry an Irish-American citizen.

Moreover, these Muslim immigrants are eager to establish a strong sense of belonging and unwavering allegiance to the new country<sup>29</sup>. They also strive to communicate in the new language to dispel any perception of fundamentalism and extremism, gaining the trust of the new population. To achieve this objective, they are prepared, if necessary, to criticize their faith, scrutinize it, or allege its regressiveness while praising the Church and its customs<sup>30</sup>. Due to the presence of hostile sentiments against Islam and Muslims, the Muslims of the diaspora refrain from voting during elections, as religion and politics are inherently intertwined.<sup>31</sup>

The character of Karamat exemplifies the archetype of the traditional British patriot, as evidenced by his political expressions that convey a profound sense of affiliation and admiration for British identity. He urges his fellow citizens to assimilate into modern society by relinquishing their customary clothing, mindset and perceived antiquated conduct. Failure to do so results in treatment commensurate with their disparity.<sup>32</sup>

He expresses disapproval and assigns blame to his fellow citizens without urging British individuals to understand the variations among immigrant Muslims in terms of their attire, beliefs, and principles. The criticism he levies resembles the 'Just World' theory. The abusive behaviour they encounter results from their unwavering determination to showcase their distinctiveness; thus, they should solely hold themselves accountable. Indeed, every instance of racial prejudice they encounter is a direct result of this. Simultaneously, the indigenous population is not obligated to embrace this disparity, as it is an inherent aspect of existence.<sup>33</sup>

Without question, the immigrant bears the consequences of undergoing such a comprehensive transition. The individual incurs the most significant cost in his endeavour to eradicate any characteristic that might establish a connection between him and a specific social collective. This is why, Karamat Lone, a member of Parliament of Pakistani descent, endeavours to obscure his Islamic heritage. Appointed as the Home Secretary primarily due to his strong commitment to security, which aligns with the new country's political agenda, he goes so far as to deny ever having entered a mosque. In an attempt to dispel any suspicions aimed towards him, he asserts his refusal to enter a place where gender segregation is enforced, opting instead to accompany his spouse to religious services. Consequently,

he is bestowed with the moniker 'the lone wolf,' enabling him to surpass the limitations of British Muslim society. He is tasked with demonstrating his inclusion among them rather than among us, is he not? Presumably, he still needs to do so. I hold a strong aversion towards this nation.<sup>34</sup>

Conversely, individuals such as Isma and her siblings exhibit an unwavering commitment to their cultural background, linguistic practices, and religious beliefs within the recently established nation. They hold contempt for those from the immigrant community who do not align with their preferences, such as Karamat Lone, who rejects the mosques' practice of gender segregation, negatively portraying Islam.

There are justifications for each of these two tendencies. One aspect pertains to relinquishing the previous national identity and heritage due to its failure to provide its populace with a fair and honourable existence. Consequently, their sole aspiration is to acquire a fresh identity and reside in a forward-thinking nation that affords all its citizens a satisfactory life and fairness. This holds significant value from his perspective, prompting him to openly and privately express his unwavering commitment and allegiance, reflecting his genuine convictions.

Aneeka's character starkly contrasts with Karamat Lone's sincere devotion to his new identity, as she remains steadfast in her adherence to her history, traditions, and faith. She is among the individuals who bear the consequences of Karamat's racially biased remarks directed towards those who possess a common nationality. Aneeka has been subjected to verbal abuse solely due to her choice of wearing modest Islamic attire. Karamat Lone's racial utterances have resulted in the worsening of the suffering of Muslim immigrants and the widening of the divide between the native people and the newcomers. Consequently, this enables the government to subject Muslims to abuse.<sup>35</sup>

Every immigrant must experience this transformative stage, which is more profound for those born into this new environment. This metamorphosis encompasses garments that may indicate an individual's religious or cultural background. Upon fortuitously encountering Isma, Eamonn inquires, astonished, about the rationale behind her choice to don a *hijāb*, whether it is due to religious duty, fashion, or visual appeal. In response, she provides the following answer:

'You know, the only two people in Massachusetts who have ever asked me about it both wanted to know if it is a style or a chemo thing.' Laughing, he said, 'Cancer or Islam—which is the greater affliction'? There were still moments when a statement like that could catch a person

off-guard. He held his hands up quickly in apology. 'Jesus. I mean, sorry. That came out badly. I meant; it must be difficult to be Muslim in the world these days.' 'I'd find it more difficult to not be Muslim' she said.<sup>36</sup>

This inquiry elucidates the reasons behind the tendency of certain women in predominantly Christian nations to modify the *hijāb*'s design to present it as stylish or visually pleasing attire rather than as a means of satisfying an Islamic religious duty. Occasionally, it is substituted with a cap or headgear that completely conceals the spiritual significance of the individuals who don it. The prevalence of this phenomenon has increased in the United States, particularly in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks, to mitigate the negative perception, disapproval, or even contempt.<sup>37</sup>

The erosion of religious identity between religious fundamentalism and political extremism, along with the ongoing battle against terrorism, is a valid and urgent concern that has prompted the British government to allocate significant resources towards addressing it. The severe mistreatment endured by incarcerated individuals at Guantanamo has exacerbated the issue significantly rather than mitigating or resolving it. It is evident that Parvaiz, influenced by his exposure to and firsthand encounters with the cruel treatment he endured, develops a strong aversion towards the British government despite his nationality. Consequently, he contemplates relinquishing any allegiance to this European nation and seeks a new sense of belonging that aligns with his romantic aspirations and fantasies. This 18-year-old individual seeks retribution for his father and the realization of perceived justice.

Shamsie examines the thoughts of the terrorist Parvaiz to illustrate the gradual evolution of his thoughts and actions. He observes his transition from a moderate and ordinary life, albeit with challenges, to a state of idealism. During this stage, he envisions all the images and stories he encounters about the caliphate state in a positive light. Nevertheless, the scenes he cherished in his imagination swiftly vanished, giving way to the distressing reality of the world he perceived as perfect. Eventually, the emotion of affection transforms into hatred, transitioning from one extreme to another.<sup>38</sup>

Shamsie demonstrates the tactics employed by extremists to enlist fresh volunteers and their ability to convince them to join by enticing them with the prospect of a prosperous future filled with worldly allure. Subsequently, the novel depicts the profound predicament and internal conflict that this group experiences upon recognizing the deceitfulness of the concepts, narratives, and promised existence. It delineates the infeasibility of reverting to one's place of origin due to the peril of incarceration without the chance to

safeguard oneself, express remorse, or rectify one's errors. There is a lack of conversation or empathy for this particular group of recruits, who are denied the opportunity to express themselves, especially if their father is involved in terrorism.<sup>39</sup>

Parvaiz has been characterized as an individual who became a member of an extremist terrorist group. The reader experiences a sense of empathy towards the protagonist, particularly when recognizing the seriousness of his decision to visit his two sisters. The pinnacle of his predicament arises when he contemplates whether to approach the consulate and relinquish his identity or to unwillingly return to his gang due to apprehension about the repercussions of assuming control of his life.

The dilemma of favouring one identity over another becomes a matter of practicality for him, even if this identity contradicts his beliefs and desires. Exposing his radicalism to Parvaiz would result in the authorities imposing punishment and devastation without considering any justifications. The primary aim of this endeavour would be to acquire a substantial amount of information without any consideration for the individual's needs, except for a few fundamental ones that facilitate the acquisition of additional information.

His unwavering determination compels him to persistently assert his allegiance to his newfound persona and persist in combatting and undermining his new faction, even when this contradicts his deeply held beliefs. The individual cannot return to their country of origin and resume their customary lifestyle, which previously elicited a sense of boredom but has become their sole aspiration, with each aspect now serving as a beacon of optimism.

Conversely, the individual experiences a sense of dissatisfaction due to their apprehensions, as they recognize a significant error in pursuing a goal that ultimately proved to be illusory. Consequently, he yearns to resume his life as a typical individual. At the same time, society rejects his return, treating him as if he were a carrier of an infectious illness that must be either evaded or eliminated. The novel employs vibrant depiction to scrutinize how Western governments handle deceived constituents who seek absolution and express their readiness to condemn extremism and terrorism.

The novel *Home Fire* unveils concealed facets of the terrorist's familial connections, fostering a deeper connection between the reader and the human dimension of the narrative. The family is the institution that grants forgiveness to its members for their errors and is prepared to protect them at any cost, thereby affording them an opportunity for a fresh start under the family's safeguard. Undoubtedly, this principle of the family, through its

empathy, possesses the ability to safeguard and guide its members and exert influence over them.

The burial of Parvaiz in Britain is declined by the British Foreign Minister, who is of Pakistani ethnicity. By rescinding his British citizenship, he effectively strips Parvaiz of any sense of identity. Parvaiz's anti-state actions are cited as the reason for this decision. Nevertheless, his twin sister Aneeka rejects and denounces this decision. The narrative depicts instances of dissent towards the decision, exemplified by the sister occupying a garden in Pakistan adjacent to the coffin, symbolizing her protest against it. The work effectively portrays the profound grief experienced by the sister towards her brother, which remains unabated despite the brother's regret before his demise.

Political actions that fail to consider human ramifications can have highly detrimental effects. This decision leads to the demise of Karamat Lone's son, who is the Minister of Foreign Affairs, due to his unwavering determination to refuse the burial of Parvaiz in Britain, where his family resides. Eamonn must approach the deceased's sister to converse and articulate his dissent towards his father's political choice. The protagonist reaches the garden, where the sister is seated near the coffin in a state of protest. However, he is taken aback to find himself restrained by an individual donning explosives as a means of retribution for his father's actions, which are perceived as antagonistic towards his nationality and religious beliefs. The tale concludes shortly before the explosion when Aneeka embraces him.

The most repulsive displays of terrorism are seen in the scene that depicts the meticulousness with which the terrorists execute the act of beheading a prisoner. The removal of the head is being documented through filming. The intended angle of the sword's impact on the head is designed to enhance the overall effect of the scene while strategically positioning cameras and microphones around the kneeling victim who is awaiting execution. The preparations occur gradually, devoid of sorrow, regret, or empathy towards the victim. Conversely, the victim is subjected to treatment akin to that of a sentimentless sheep as individuals congregate with great enthusiasm to join in the gratification derived from its decapitation. Before the execution, the individual recites 'the verse of the throne' from the Holy Qur'ān, indicating their religious allegiance. Currently, Parvaiz is experiencing an inability to control his hand, causing it to tremble upon seeing the sight, and his stomach is reacting violently. Nevertheless, if we perceive these signs as indicative of his humanity, they are regarded as signs of vulnerability and betrayal by the executioners.

Another instance of extremism occurs when Parvaiz, along with the other males, is prohibited from assisting a woman who is

pleading for rescue beneath a collapsed wall caused by bombing only because her face is exposed. The novel portrays Parvaiz's internal conflict as he disregards the woman's pleas due to his reverence for the harsh and repressive legislation.<sup>40</sup>

### **Conclusion**

An analysis of Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* uncovers evolving and impactful relationships of Muslims in the diaspora, encompassing their identity, nationality, country of residence, and community affiliation. Various factors influence this transformation, the most significant being the shift in location and time, the alteration of ideas and personal beliefs, and the treatment received from the new society.

This paper explores how the novel depicts some Islamic countries that deprive citizens of their rights. In these countries, individuals live as strangers, unable to find work, housing, or care, which forces many to immigrate, especially to Europe and America, in hopes that their problems will be solved and their rights granted in these promised lands. They believe that Western slogans about freedom, democracy, etc., will apply to them regardless of religion, race, and color. However, these governments and societies often reject them, considering them unsuitable for the land unless they deny their origins, as happened with the character Karamat.

This research demonstrates the multifaceted nature of the Muslim Diaspora. There are characters devoted to UK society who lead respectable lives, yet their countries of origin fail to ensure their safety. Others exhibit unwavering allegiance due to fear of danger if they continue adhering to their native culture, language, and religion. Some seek new affiliations due to exposure to deviant and extremist ideologies. Although they are a minority, these individuals pose a significant threat. *Home Fire* is a comprehensive exploration of the intricate personal aspects of the protagonist's life, encompassing both psychological and intellectual factors that contribute to his transformation from an ordinary individual to an extremist terrorist. By examining the variables that contribute to the radicalization of the Muslim diaspora, it highlights how racial prejudice can treat individuals as subordinates.

The research closely examines the terrorist persona, characterized by their role as saboteurs and their susceptibility to brainwashing and deception. The protagonist experiences a psychological conflict when he belatedly realizes that he is on the wrong path. He loses the ability to persist in his actions and cannot retreat due to fear of the terrorist organizations he has joined.

Depending on *Home Fire*, this paper delves into the psyche of the immigrant who expatriates in search of reassurance and promised dreams, only to find himself faced with two choices: either

strip himself of his identity and disavow his Islamic religion to gain acceptance from others,<sup>41</sup> or preserve his identity while carefully adapting to the new nationality. He then struggles with an identity conflict, experiencing rejection, being viewed as a second-class citizen, and even facing revocation of his citizenship, to the extent of being rejected both alive and dead, as happened with a private character.

The paper also sheds light on the family of Adel Pasha, who was taken to Guantanamo prison, where news of him ended with this event, leaving behind in Britain "Ismat" - the eldest daughter, and the twins "Parvaiz" and "Aneeqa." Meanwhile, Karamat's family abandoned his identity and religion and became involved in liberalism until he became Minister of the Interior.

The paradox that Shamsie draws for both families clarifies what is acceptable and unacceptable in the criteria of citizenship for Muslim immigrants in the West. Although the two immigrant families are of Pakistani origin, they serve as a model for every Islamic identity migrating to the West. Shamsie, a novelist of Pakistani origins, thus draws characters for her novel from Pakistani society, especially in naming and describing attire.

### **Limitations and future directions**

The study shows that the critical discourse in its literary review was influenced by the novelist's outrageous and offensive tone, closing the door to any dialogue with the other. Suppose the novelist is allowed to place human issues under a magnifying glass to exaggerate their actual size and make a case for their importance artistically and ethically. In that case, this method does not allow for critical engagement and critical discourse, whose tasks are to discern calmly, objectively, and dispassionately without any prior ideological bias.

This paper recommends that upcoming literary studies address on address the relationship of the ego with the 'other' through the dream of migration, the subsequent nightmarish reality, the inability to adapt to the new environment, and how feelings of oppression and inferiority contribute to involvement in terrorist organizations.

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