

NARRATIVES OF TRAUMA IN KAMILA SHAMSHIE'S WRITINGS

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Abstract

A true scholar-artist works with the realities of the human heart and the realities of man in society, thus they show life exactly and with some insight alongside historical facts and statistical figures. Scholarly representations play a key role in the social process that develops and appropriates sexual differentiation, and they are crucial in determining the practical and philosophical dimensions of orientation. The social practise of fiction is a tool with typical expressions in the "genuine" in its delineations, referents, and consequences. Any evaluation of the orientation question in the context of the present must start with a comprehension of the social environment and pertinent historical elements. With its female heroine Hiroko and other female characters, Consumed Shadows by Kamila Shamsie is a feminist novel that delves into the female mind. This book is psychoanalysis of a woman's journey from youth to old age. The goal of this essay is to look at how Shamsie depicted her ladies in Consumed Shadows, who are aware of their predicaments and chose to fight against accepted conventions and currents. a nation infamous for its norms and culture that are dominated by men and its male-chauvinistic society. It has been noted that when an essayist writes on themes like ethnic or racial strife, it typically sparks debates. This article examines how Pakistani-born transnational author Kamila Shamsie addresses delicate topics like as nationalism, the divisions, ethnic conflicts, and more without causing any significant political or religious tremors.

Keywords: Narratives, Trauma, Kamila Shamshie's, Shamsie

1. Introduction

A novelist from Pakistan named Kamila Shamsie epitomises the current generation of English-language authors. Her aunt Attia Hosain and grandmother Begum Jahanara Habibullah are the two writers, and her mother Muneeza Shamsie is a pundit and short story essayist. She was one of the few women born in Pakistan in the 1970s who would have anticipated a career as a professional writer and who might have had the support of their loved ones. The original *Consumed Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie is a feminist work that examines the ladylike psychology of its lead heroine Hiroko and other female characters. It is a psychoanalysis of a woman's experiences along her journey from childhood to old age. Shamsie presents her female characters as powerful and forward-thinking members of society. She portrays occurrences with an uncommon level of candour and directness. She is gifted in her ability to delve deep into the quieter aspects of women's psyche. She is an independent Pakistani essayist who challenges social mores and taboos in her works.

The female heroine, Hiroko Tanaka, has a personal tragedy in Shamsie's *Scorched Shadows* that is related to larger, more general tragedies and the political similarities that may be drawn between key historical events. In the first reference point of the book, the heroine Hiroko Tanaka is introduced. She is a young Japanese woman who has always lived in and loved Nagasaki, the city where she first saw the outside world and spent her formative years. Hiroko, who is perched on the precipice of a precarious cliff, shares the fear of losing her house with the hundreds of other Japanese families that live in this city under the horrifying devastation of the Second Universal War. Nagasaki, however, is only a "precious stone breaking up the ground, plummeting down to hell" at that point, on the morning of August 9, 1942. ¹ This signifies the end of her relationship with Konrad, her first love, as well as her house. This incident acts as a long-lasting reminder to avoid attaching too many feelings to the relationships and the irritation of their continued loss. Feminist theory argues that it is necessary to address this scenario of destruction. She is depicted as being close to the age at which she pleasantly senses the sensuality of admiration prior to the bomb being dropped. She senses glimmers of her physical intimacy with her beloved Konrad. She dresses herself in her mother's beloved silk kimono, which has two big and magnificent birds

woven into the fabric. She finds everything around her to be even more beautiful, but all of a sudden everything becomes white, leaving her body and life with a very enduring numbness.

The sixth book of Kamila Shamsie is *Home Fire* (2017), which received the 2018 Ladies' Award for Fiction and was for a while on the list for the 2018 Man Booker Prize. Through the portrayal of the confusing experiences and vulnerabilities of two British families of Pakistani descent, the novel explores the conflict between family, society, politics, and religion. It also addresses a variety of contemporary issues, including migration, religious influence, systematic minimization and embarrassment, social assimilation, Islam fear, and radicalism. The book is divided into five chapters, each of which is connected to the previous one and described from the viewpoint of one important person through free roundabout discourse. By doing this, anecdotes are used to provide insight into the security issues and character crises that Muslims in modern England face. The work also depicts in literal terms the struggle of Muslims in England to maintain their traditional relationships and social character inside the established society while simultaneously trying to be necessary for it, which actually breeds irrationality and contributes to their socio-social deadlock.

According to the theory that scholarly texts aesthetically fictionalise individual experiences within the social relations of creation corresponding to the entirety and aesthetically manifest one aspect of material social processes shaping the lives of individuals in a specific time span, *Home Fire* could help in articulating the activity of neo-racism in postmodern capitalism through the social, political, and scholarly interactions of its Muslim characters with t In the book, Muslims who meet the stereotype of a "acceptable" Muslim are seen and respected by mainstream "white" culture, while Muslims who don't fit the stereotype are undervalued and demonised. Such a constrained kind of inclusion indirectly elevates people in the centre in terms of culture and intellectual aptitude. Since the "genuine" Muslim personality is discursively framed by the neo-frontier focus, England, and the Muslim provincial subject are supposed to incorporate and play out that character as a trade-off for recognition and visibility, it appears to be a manifestation of the discursive authority of orientalist epistemological formations. This contingent inclusion exposes the shifting dynamics of racist discourses and behaviours under postmodern capitalism and effectively refutes the core premises of conventional racism, which is founded on the superiority of one race over

another. Through a close reading of the novel, this study will attempt to investigate the discursive growth of acceptable otherness in relation to the practise of neo-racism in the twenty-first century. It will also advance Hamid Dabashi's concept of "the House Muslim" to represent the desire of the Muslim pioneer subject to reconstitute and reshape their character in accordance with the "legitimate" personality ascribed by the neo-provincial focus.

2. Politics of Identity in Kamila Shamsie's Novels

The 36th-largest nation on earth is Pakistan. The country is a unique cultural amalgamation that has five strong ethnic groups to uphold national pride at the time of partition. Out of the fundamental five ethnic groups—Bengalis, Punjabis, Pukhtuns, Sindhis, and Baloch—four have successfully disputed the legitimacy of the state's administrative system, with one—the Bengalis—succeeding in creating their own state, Bangladesh. Pakistan's political and religious situation is well-known to be addressed on a global scale. It was born out of religious intolerance and a diametrically opposed nationalist belief system, and it was further upended by the arrival of a second package that sparked the creation of Bangladesh in 1971. How might a woman writer have her stories published without running the danger of upsetting local residents and society in a country where racial tensions, nationalist difficulties, and political upheaval are commonplace? This essay examines the books of Kamila Shamsie, a well-known female author of the twenty-first century, to show how she effectively employed character politics as a solid foundation for her stories' narratives while avoiding many political shocks. Regardless, has not gone beyond posing and going unanswered a number of issues regarding Pakistan's social structure.

The likelihood of engaging in controversy while handling sensitive topics like nationalism and parcels is often higher. An outstanding example of such a scenario is Taslima Nasrin's examination of the physical, psychological, and social assaults as a general assault on Islamic thought through *Lajja*. After facing several death threats, Nasrin was forced to spend a very long time in exile. Similar debates erupted following the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* in 1988. When she was a young girl in Karachi with aspirations of one day being an essayist, Kamila

Shamsie writes of the problems associated with The Satanic Verses, "A book called The Satanic Verses evolved became the greatest news item of the day.

Kamila Shamsie writes cautiously in her works because she knows that there is always a potential of stirring up controversy. She makes an effort to handle inquiries on politics, history, nationhood, and other related topics with the highest thoughtfulness and in an attempt to get opposing points of view. An other explanation for this strategy might be the general apathy Pakistan's public has developed over time toward such tragedies.

2.1. Transnational Identities

"Both America and Britain get alluded to in my second and third novels, but only because they are the countries from which people return to Karachi or to which people continue to be shut off from home or fear being cut off from home." In her essay "Unsettling Cosmopolitanisms: Representations of London in Kamila Shamsie's *Salt and Saffron*," Rehana Ahmed argued that Britain's role in that mindset is not passive. Possessing a transnational identity does more than just suggest "philosophical suppression of the social structures that shape the space of London." It plays a key role in keeping the story's plot moving forward. The tradition of the Dard-e-Dil family, the concept of "not-exactly" twins and the myths surrounding it, as well as numerous stories they tell and secrets they conceal, are all discussed in *Salt and Saffron*'s story. The heroine Aliya, a transnational character who is perceived as her aunt Mariam's "not-exact" twin in a way that may not make much sense to most readers, serves as the novel's point of convergence.

The plot revolves around Mariam's decision to leave with their family chef, Masood, and the fear that Aliya, who is Mariam's "not quite" twin, could repeat Mariam's error of entering into a relationship with a lower-class guy, which she eventually does. She develops feelings for Khaleel, who lives in Liaquatabad, an area that is popular with only the impoverished. He is an intelligent man with a global outlook, and they end up together at the book's conclusion with little protest from the family. Shamsie misses a chance to openly illustrate Pakistani society's class politics and the injustice done to the poor in this example of storytelling.

Instead, she subtly discusses how class stereotypes still persist but are combated by international character using Aliya's personality. Aliya, when she heard Mariam's reaction to Masood leaving the family, she gave a remark that reflected the feelings of her loved ones:

‘In her room. When Masood was leaving he told her to keep eating,

Otherwise she’ll fall ill and cause him much pain. And she smiled and ...

Hugged him. Briefly. She hugged him goodbye.’

I stared. A hug-across class and gender. (Salt and Saffron 79)

The same Aliya is seen embracing a complete stranger that she met on the flight from America to London near the beginning of the book. We believe that after saying, "We embraced farewell (his drive, although I saw not a glaringly clear explanation to oppose)," she is considering what her grandmother may say if she learned that she had been hugging random guys at airports. Aliya is undoubtedly ready to overcome her biases regarding class because she still lets Khaleel kiss her hands after learning that he is from Liaquatabad. This gives Aliya a unique perspective on her education and life abroad.

2.2. Objectified Identities

In his Akeel Bilgrami says "A distinction between subjective and objective identities is made in "Notes toward the Meaning of Personality," where it is stated that your "subjective character is what you consider yourself to be, whereas your objective character is the manner by which you may be seen freely of how you see yourself. All in all, your objective character is what your identity is considering clear natural or social facts about you." Externalization occurs when a person is regarded like an object or product without consideration for the subjective aspects of his personality.

In Salt and Saffron and Kartography, Kamila Shamsie effectively keeps the problems of class and ethnic politics at the surface by using typification of way of life. Mariam in Salt and Saffron and Maheen in Kartography, the two main protagonists of both works, are both denied the opportunity

to speak up and share their perspectives on their own lives. It should be noted that the biographies of these two women serve as the basis for the stories in both novels.

Mariam has been portrayed as a woman who only ever spoke to Masood and even then, just to ask him questions about food. She enters the Dard-e-Dil household on the day Aliya was born. No one knows about her whereabouts with the exception of a letter that arrives to Aliya's dad mentioning that Mariam is Taimur's (Aliya's grandfather, Akbar's sister) girl. Her silence towards the inquiries flung at her concerning her history and her parents eventually permits other characters to grow their own ideas against her, "However she was unable to talk since speaking would entail answering questions which would mean unveiling reality. So she kept calm. But with regard to food, she was aware that if she cultivated a peculiar trait, it would protect her."

2.3. Identity crisis

The organisation of various identities, which is typically expressed by disparity, is one feature of communities that emphasise the presence of displaced people. In such a society, the freshly formed identities may be both disconcerting and disquieting. A personality crisis may result from a circumstance when an individual discovers that they are different from the social expectations that are already in place.

One such individual who can keep up in a dead zone is Raza, the son of Hiroko and Sajjad in *Consumed Shadows*. When he was younger and hesitant to talk in his native tongue of Japanese in the open, we tracked him down:

‘Sayonara,’ they all called out to Hiroko as the bus picked up speed again. Or at least, all of them except Raza called it out. He only spoke Japanese within the privacy of the home, not even breaking the true when his friends delighted in showing off his mother the one or two Japanese words they’d found in some book, some movie.

After that, we discover him repeatedly failing his required Islamic studies paper, perhaps as a result of his inability to adjust to the extremely devout ideas. This may be the case for the very basic reason that his parents were not at one point in their lives Muslim nationalists. Raza could have

been choked by the conflict between the opportunities he had at home and the rigorous religious laws he had to follow in public. The remainder of the narrative, however, concentrates on Raza's daily struggles and how he manages to get through them in order to carry on with his life.

As a result of the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and his subsequent involvement with the Mujahideen, the death of his father, and other factors, Shamsie is prepared to avoid open talks on Muslim nationalism.

3. Diasporic Trauma in Home Fire

Due to their Pakistani ancestry and diasporic open arenas in England, the Pasha family members and the UK Home Secretary are clearly traumatised by their diasporic experiences in Home Fire. At the book's first point of reference, one of the earlier occurrences might be discovered. Isma is constantly terrified of being cross-examined late at night in a room with no windows in the Heathrow Air terminal "Isma stood up, unsteady due to the pins and needles in her feet, which she had been reluctant to shake off in case she unintentionally kicked the man across the desk from her. The Incomparable British Prepare Off, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombs, and dating websites" tension of which communicates symptoms of diasporic trauma: Without allowing even a hint of cynicism to enter her voice, she thanked the woman whose thumbprints were on her attire as she rolled out her luggage ". She may struggle to avoid any distractions as she continues to go through her things and documents, which heightens a sensation of danger, one of the worst side effects of traumatic events. Additionally, the officers' attitude makes us think of the caricatures of everyday British officials found in Abdulrazak Gurnah's fiction, such as the specialised character in *The Last Gift* (2011) who both literally and figuratively mocks Africans for lacking hearts. Isma's hesitation at the airport is explained by Fatim Boutros' claim that "the diaspora's painful history is the route in to a more substantial comprehension of the process of self-verbalization" (viii). It is sometimes stated that her unease and retreat are primarily motivated by diasporic concerns rather than merely by political demands in this context.

4. Broken Verses

The setting of *Broken Verses* is Karachi after 9/11. Its background is the Conflict on Fear, which mirrored the aftermath of the Cold War in the 1980s. General Zia ul-dictatorship Haq's was solidified through an appeal to Islamic principles through connections with the conservative religious party Jamaat-e Islami, and at the same time, strategic ties with the US were being strengthened in order to fight the Soviets in Afghanistan. The novel juxtaposes a stark generational contrast between the 1990s' neoliberalization of the neighbourhood and the world, which was distinguished by media unrest and corporatization, and the social formations of the 1980s, which saw an increase in social activism and resistance to the state's draconian measures. Through the narrative of her protagonist, Aasmani Inquilab, whose mother Samina was a political feminist activist who vanished fourteen years earlier, Shamsie gives a condensed history of Pakistan in *Broken Verses*. Samina's feminist activism propelled her into a conflict with the government as a result of her participation in marches against the Hudood Ordinances in the 1980s. She is described as a troublemaker and the darling of Omi, a resistance writer who was repeatedly taken into custody by the government before being executed. The Marxist writer Faiz Ahmad Faiz, whose left-leaning ideas from the 1950s to the 1960s led him in prison and caused him to spend the years under Zia abroad from Pakistan, is used as an example of Omi. In a sorrowful love story a la *Laila Majnun*, death separates Omi and Samina. Aasmani is drawn to Ed, a coworker at the television studio and the son of her mother's closest friend Shehnaz Saeed, as she looks for her mother. Ed sets her on a code trail without her knowledge, resuming Omi and Samina's covert conversations and convincing her they are still alive. When Aasmani discovers Ed's deceit, she is furious and depressed. She comes to grips with her mother's suicide as well as the writer's brutal death, which the government has covered up. She chooses to participate as a researcher on a story on the 20th anniversary of the Hudood Ordinances as part of her great recovery from trauma. Because of the conflict between a Marxist-driven resistance, symbolised by the writer, and the subjugation of the mobilised state, highlighted by the references to the Hudood Ordinances and her mother's suicide as a form of resistance to being caught by the state, the clever emphasises the protagonist's inability to access her own family history.

5. **Burnt Shadows**

Through the experiences of Hiroko Tanaka, an East Asian female survivor who travels from Nagasaki to Delhi, then, at that point, to Karachi and Afghanistan, before finally settling in New York City after 9/11, Shamsie uses the genre of the historical novel to contrast the effects of The Second Great War and Segment. The novel's opening epigraphs are quotes from poetry by the Urdu author Sahir Ludhianvi and the Kashmiri American Agha Shahid Ali, who both express the devastation of loss and the bittersweet lessons of history. Shamsie loves Agha Shahid Ali in the highest regard since he taught him while she was a student in the US. His influence is somewhat attested to by the linguistic commitment and between traditional aspects of her writing.

Due to the relationship between Harry, the son of Ilse and James, and Raza, the son of Sajjad and Hiroko, it is revealed in the book that the power of linguistic links is stronger than the power of nationality. Harry is a CIA employable who, after leaving the agency, now operates his own private security company from the US. Raza is a gifted linguist who travels between homes and nations. In exchange for his future employment with his security company in America, Harry pledges to assist him with his academic work and college applications. After 9/11, the American military commissions them to travel to Afghanistan. The CIA blame Raza when Harry is fatally shot. Abdullah, who is currently working illegally in America, has contacted Raza in the interim. Abdullah wants to return to his family in Afghanistan while evading the FBI. As a result of how things turn out, Raza is able to go illegally to Canada with the help of Abdullah's contacts in Afghanistan and escape the CIA. Kim, Harry's daughter, volunteers to travel to Canada in order to return Raza to Hiroko in New York safely. She also consents to transport Abdullah illegally from the US to Canada in her car's storage area as payment for assistance. When Kim finally reaches Canada, she becomes tense at the last minute and contacts the police. Kim accidentally kills Raza after mistaking him for the illegal Afghan cab driver Abdullah. She thinks that because she has shown her compassion for the nation, the law will favour the honest and she will be exonerated for her dad's death.

6. Home Fire

Nowhere in Shamsie's work is the importance of families and borders more apparent than in *Home Fire*. Necropolitics underpins the plot as the author describes how young British Muslims are denied entry and treated differently in England. Muslims have seen increasing securitization and discrimination in their communities as a result of terrorism and prejudicial attitudes. In our argument in *Outlining Muslims*, Peter Morey and I state that "a revitalization of the desire among 'host' nations to characterise and contain the parameters of public having a place has been a flipside of this disturbing other presence: a move regularly having to do with the delimiting of Muslim personality around questions of citizenship and practise." The plot of *Home Fire* consists with a comparison of changes to English citizenship law adopted in 2002 and 2014 that provide the government greater authority to combat Isis, "jihadi brides," and Muslim couples with "issue" children. Shamsie argues in a 2018 essay that she was alarmed by the Secretary of State's post-9/11 dictatorial powers, which allowed the state to decide who may be declared unBritish.

By utilising its crisis powers to "throw out" Muslims, the state suspends the rule of law in order to protect its own interests. In order for the western state to order the Muslim other as in reverse, non-secular, and irrational, Sherene Razack has argued that this casting out is necessary for a structural racial envisioning. Razack's research supports Mbembe's assessment of how contemporary reactions to sovereignty and subordination obfuscate the distinctions between reclamation and sacrifice, suicide and resistance, and "affliction and opportunity." *Home Fire* does a fantastic job of committing to the discussion of the racialization and intolerance that young Muslims suffer, which pushes them outside of the structures and expectations of British values.

In reaction to current events in England, Shamsie's novel, which is based on Sophocles' *Antigone* and is divided into five sections relating to the characters Isma, Eamonn, Parvaiz, Aneeka, and Karamat, modifies the classic work. The plot illustrates what can occur if a young woman with ties to revolutionary Islamism marries a Muslim government official's son in good faith. Isma and the twins Parvaiz and Aneeka of the stranded Pasha family are introduced to us in *Home Fire*. They currently live in a financially limited lifestyle in a London area adjacent to Wembley since their father, Adil Pasha, left the house some years ago to become a jihadi fighter. To follow his father's lead, Parvaiz immediately vanished as the clever began. He travels to Raqqa in Syria after

being convinced to join the Islamic State by enrollment specialist Farooq. In any event, soon after joining the military, he realises his mistake and wants to return to the UK. When Aneeka finds out about Parvaiz's choice, she targets Eamonn Solitary, the Home Secretary's son, and strikes up a relationship with him, first to gain his trust and encourage him to put pressure on his father to arrange safe passage home for her brother. The two fall in love as this is happening. Karamat Solitary, the Home Secretary, is a career legislator who disavowed his Muslim roots in order to advance within the ruling party. He prevents further interaction once he discovers that his kid is fascinated with Parvaiz's sister. While trying to find his own way home, Parvaiz is shot outside the British High Commission in Turkey. Solitary prevents the body of Parvaiz from being brought to England. Aneeka flies to Karachi to get the body there instead. She sits near to her sibling's ice-encased improvised final resting place and performs a grief ritual in one of the city parks outside the Karachi British High Commission as a protest against the manner that her brother, and currently she as well, have been denied the choice to return to England. As a sister struggles for her sibling's right to be buried, the recreation area is transformed into a liminal zone of public spectacle where the issues of sovereignty and social justice are resolved in front of reporters and cameras live-streaming this terrible staged execution throughout the world.

7. Conclusion

Kamila Shamsie used a limited canvas in order to avoid making references to delicate subjects, which kept discussions of personality politics to a superficial level. Even if she didn't take a progressive stance on the issues, she gave them enough thought to cite certain important occurrences that were connected to Muslim nationalism and other ethnic movements. According to Bruce Ruler, "Both the difficulty of leaving a community where one feels at home and the necessity to address current issues via knowledge of the past are depicted in her works. A romance story is hampered by class, cultural, or national divisions, in addition to politics compromising or costing the lives of family members or friends." She doesn't provide an outright condemnation of the events, but they do educate readers about Pakistan's sociopolitical past and the inserted personality politics.

Because the mainstream 'white' crowd reading the book would probably assume that there are only two options for Muslims: to be a "humanised" Muslim and become significant for the middle or to be a fundamentalist or a terrorist and perish in a remote area of the world, the dichotomous representation of Muslims in *Home Fire* could seem to consolidate the narratives of the monologic discourse of orientalism. Finally, it may be argued that Shamsie's writing exhibits postcolonial literary themes as well as characteristics of diasporic trauma. *Home Fire* addresses the anguish that Muslim people have experienced through "torture, version, incarceration without provocation, air terminal interrogations" and depictions of "a nineteen-year-old, rotting in the sun as his sister watches, absolutely wild with misery." The author really fabricates the characters' past experiences and present circumstances using strong evidence. The work does not just tell the experience of present diasporic populations; rather, it explores topics related to unintentional exile, exodus, separation, and segmentation. As a result, it exhibits its psychotic damaging consequences on the diaspora members and individuals, such as suffering, danger, outrage, protest, and quiet. Shamsie's novel emphasises and conceptualises the double piling of tragic happenings as she describes history and society via the family and traditional folks.

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