

Conflicting Identities: A Cultural Trauma Study in Kamila Shamsi's *Home Fire*

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ABSTRACT

The postmodern dilemma of conflicting identities has dominated recent humanitarian, literary, and cultural studies. Unequivocally, there is an uncontrollable increase in the number of migrants, expatriates, refugees, and displaced human groups and individuals. Relatively, diverse organizations and academic institutions have noted that a significant number of individuals with multicultural identities manifest a kind of social and psychological disorder that falls under the umbrella term of trauma. The objective of the present study is twofold: the first is to bring to light the ordeal of conflicting identities, figure out its roots, and describe its effects through analyzing Kamila Shamsi's *Home Fire* novel (2016). The second is to examine this issue by applying cultural trauma theory and offering a concise understanding of it as a human phenomenon and theory. Finally, by examining Shamsi's depiction of the characters', the study shows the overlap between cultural trauma and the issue of conflicting identities. Further, it highlights the destructive role of concepts like ethnicity, conservatism, and ideologies in impeding the immigrants' integration into host societies and trigger issues such as cultural conflicts and identity crises.

Key Words: Identity trauma culture multiculturalism diasporic identities collectivity traumatic process.

الهويات المتصارعة: دراسة و تحليل رواية "تار البيت" لكاميل شامسي

في ضوء نظرية الصدمة الحضارية

المديرية العامة لتربية بغداد الرصافة الثانية

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المستخلص

تهيمن الهويات المتصارعة على معظم الدراسات الإنسانية ، الثقافية والأدبية على حد سواء ، حيث تعتبر واحدة قضية من أهم التحديات التي يواجهها العالم المعاصر الذي يعرف بعصر ما بعد الحداثة و الذي يشهد بشكل لا لبس فيه زيادة مطردة في اعداد المهاجرين ، المغتربين ، إضافة الى اللاجئين والنازحين

عن اوطانهم الأصلية. وفي هذا الصدد رصدت العديد من المنظمات والمؤسسات الاكاديمية حالات من الاضطرابات النفسية والاجتماعية و التي تندرج تحت مصطلح " اضطراب ما بعد الصدمة" لدى بعض لدى بعض المجموعات البشرية المتعددة الثقافات والجنسيات. تهدف ورقة البحث الى دراسة هذه المشكلة من خلال جانبين: الأول يركز على تحدي الهويات المتصارعة ، واكتشاف جذورها ووصف التأثيرات التي تنتج عنها من خلال تحليل رواية "نار البيت" للكاتبة كاملة شمسي. والثاني يستخدم نظرية الصدمة الثقافية أو الحضارية ويقدم تفسيراً موجزاً لها كظاهرة إنسانية ونظرية أدبية تتناسب طبيعة مشكلة البحث. وأخيراً، تكشف الدراسة من خلال التحليل السردى لمعاناة شخصيات الرواية عن التداخل بين مفهوم الهويات المتصارعة ونظرية الصدمة الثقافية، وتؤكد في ختام البحث على الدور المدمر لمفاهيم مثل الانتماء العرقي، التمييز العنصري والأيدولوجيا التي تحول دون التعايش المشترك والاندماج الإنساني للمهاجرين في المجتمعات المضيفة وتتسبب في مشاكل الصراع الحضاري وأزمة الهوية..

كلمات مفتاحية: (الهوية، الصدمة، الثقافة، التعددية الثقافية هويات الشتات المجتمع ، عملية الصدمة)

1.1 Introduction

The number of migrants, expatriates, and displaced human groups and individuals is currently skyrocketing. Diverse organizations and academic institutions have noted that a significant number of individuals, immigrants in particular with multicultural identities experience a kind of psychological or social disorder that falls under the umbrella term of trauma (Sangalang et.al,2018, p.1). Strictly speaking, those individuals and groups find themselves in a position that compels them to get along with two contradictory identities: the original and the newly acquired one from the host societies. In fact, this issue has increased since the aftermath of 9/11 attack. These crucial events cast dark shadows over the Muslim minorities in western countries. In the USA, Muslim citizens confronted violent intimidation, such as destroying mosques, in addition to verbal threats. Further, they received the highest level of racial discrimination in education, employment, and religious freedom rights. This is coupled with more restrictive migration policies targeting Muslim immigrants (Dep. of Justice, 2011, p. 4). In their study, the co-authors Jonathan Githens-Mazer and Robert Lambert (2012) shed light on the adversity of "disadvantaged and alienated Muslim citizens in London" (p. 3). Their research investigates the widespread discourse of Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hate crimes that is represented in "violence", and "the constant assault on Muslims", carried by "certain politicians", and above all, "the mainstream media" (p.6).

Actually, such discriminatory treatment and measurements existed prior to the 9/11 attacks, yet they were practiced on a narrow basis. Despite the significant

contribution of "Muslim communities in the UK and Europe", rising voices of extremists and far-right politicians backed by streaming society advocate fervently to stop and restrict migration policies, particularly "tsunamis of Muslim immigration" in Europe. Muslim Londoners had and still receive their share of that discriminating policy, as they are identified as "a threat [to] state security and social cohesion". All these unjust policies contribute to "Muslim disempowerment", denying their civil rights, including religious freedom, and hindering their inclusion and equal citizenship (Mazer & Lambert, 201, p. 7). It makes sense that the literary production of this period reflects this human crisis via remarkable fictional narratives exposing the horrible experience of Muslim immigrants who become the object of xenophobia and Islamophobia. As a result, Muslim immigrants are beginning to revise their identities as double national citizens or citizens experiencing multiculturalism. Some of them are the novelists themselves, who felt the responsibility to unfold this ongoing existential dilemma of immigrants. Among them is Kamila Shamsi, a British-Pakistani female novelist. Her birthplace, Karachi, her residence in London, and her academic pursuits at Hamilton College and the University of Massachusetts Amherst all contribute to the construction of her multicultural identity (Yaqin, 2021, p. 234). Shamsi's "dual position as a British Pakistani" rules her narrative; thus, the six novels she authored generally "convey psychological conflicts over citizenship, identity, and religion" (p. 237). Shamsi is aware of the fact that division and controversy following 9/11 pose a threat to the countries that contain migrating groups. Shamsi thinks that Muslims in London are experiencing a slow but intense process of racialization, discrimination, and dehumanization justified legally by the claim of combating terrorism and radicalism (p. 243-6). Therefore, through the tragic story of *Home Fire*, Shamsi aspires to raise awareness about the plight of the Muslim minority in Britain and the Western states.

1.2. The Theoretical Framework: Cultural Trauma Theory

Cultural trauma theory is one of the latest theories in traumatic studies, conceived by a punch of sociologists and scholars who feel the need to address the contemporary enigmatic issues of identity crisis, displacement, and cultural conflicts that are usually linked with severe traumatic stress. The core contribution of the cultural trauma theorists is identifying and describing the prolonged social and mental suffering of specific group members as a cultural trauma phenomenon. The present study consults essentially the publication *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity* (2004), authored by the leading sociologists in trauma fields, laying out the theoretical assumptions and principles of cultural trauma theory. The sociologist Jeffery C. Alexander commences the opening pages of his chapter *Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma* (2004) by highlighting the conception of 'collective trauma' in relation to cultural trauma. Alexander, in fact, wants the reader to distinguish between two basic

categories of trauma: individual trauma and collective trauma. Individual trauma, as the title suggests, occurs to a single individual or person and impacts his psyche tremendously in a brutal and sudden manner, so it is often addressed in the psychological traditions. While collective trauma, which Alexander drew from the sociologist Erikson, would be more accurately apt to tackle some human social and cultural crises that inflict definitive social groups known as "collectivity" (p. 1). Collective trauma of this nature "damages the bonds" that link people of a particular cultural distinction to "the larger communal body" they reside in or are attached to. Therefore, it might be stated that social factors contribute to creating collective trauma when the traumatized social group realizes gradually "that the community [they live in or host them] no longer exists as an effective source of support" for the group. Furthermore, unlike the sudden nature of psychological trauma, this collective type "works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it" (p. 4). Based on this assumption, Alexander presents his definition of cultural trauma, which reads:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. (p.1)

So, it could be inferred that the idea of cultural trauma gives the most definitive concept, language, and literature to this kind of collective trauma and social human phenomena. One of Alexander's key thoughts in the cultural trauma theory is 'the traumatic status' and the 'traumatic process'. He explains that while the psychoanalytic trauma analysis is conditioned on the presence of a shocking actual event inflicting an individual's mechanisms of defense, the cultural trauma, on the other hand, might be based on real or occasionally "imagined events" or claims. These events and claims do not necessarily occur abruptly; rather, they can entail a prolonged, harmful, social, and cultural process. As an example, the long history of slavery, subordination, and marginalization of African American people in American society embodies this truth.

These prolonged social harmful processes develop into a "traumatic status", ruling the culturally traumatic victims in a chronic manner. The traumatic status disturbs and shatters "the collectivity's sense of its own identity", so they continuously raise questions like "who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go" (Alexander, 2004, p. 9-10). In other words, cultural trauma status is attained when disturbance, shock, anxiety, helplessness, alienation, and other harmful feelings become part of the traumatized collectivity routine. The traumatized group members, referred to as the "carrier group" or "collective actors", regularly

retraumatize the recollection of the injured collective past and "demand for emotional, institutional, and symbolic reparation and reconstitution" that is potentially passed down to the future generations (p. 11).

In keeping with this line of reasoning, Meretoja (2020) affirms that such traumatic events and experiences should not be addressed as "singular exceptional experiences" that are easily forgotten, but rather:

Instead, they are recurring, formative experiences that fundamentally shape one's self-narrative and sense of self—to the extent that it may be difficult for such traumatized persons to imagine other kinds of self-narratives or forms of agency that would allow them to better fulfill their potential. (p.27)

To make his theory more precise, Alexander outlines four elements for accomplishing "the master narrative of trauma". The first is "the nature of pain", or the origin of the traumatic stress, which might stem from severe experiences of colonization, immigration, and displacement coupled with feelings of alienation, humiliation and the like (Alexander, 2004, p. 12–3). The second element is about "the nature of victims", sometimes known as "traumatic actors" or victims (p. 24-5). The third element is the relation of "the trauma victim to the wider audience". It means the capacity and willingness of the members of a collectivity to apprehend the traumatic nature of their social suffering and, most importantly, to communicate it to a "wider audience" so as to draw sympathetic public discourse. Gypsies, for example, are viewed as social human groups that are spread over the world, but in reality, they are socially inferior and economically disadvantaged. Despite this, they are unaware of or unconcerned about their inferred "tragic history" of deprivation. Thus, they can not be considered cultural trauma victims (p.14) The fourth and last element is identifying the "attribution" of "the responsibility" agents, pinpointing clearly the persons, groups, and institutions that inflict the cultural trauma. For instance, the German Nazis are acknowledged as the antagonists and the ones responsible for the war brutalities against other nationalities during the Second World War (p. 24-5).

The sociological theorist Neil J. Smelser (2004) presents his theory of cultural trauma theory through relating psychological trauma with cultural trauma. He highlights the term "affect" to refer to the long-standing consequences of the traumatic event (p. 40). He emphasizes that what feeds and endures the traumatic neuroses is not only the horrible experience of the event but also its effects (p. 31). Thus, he specifies the conditions under which an event or historical incident could develop into a culturally traumatic event. The prime condition is "the sociocultural context" out of which the traumatic event is made. Actually, cultural trauma can be thought of as "event plus context". He acclaims that "no discrete historical event or situation automatically or necessarily qualifies in itself as a cultural trauma" unless it is fueled

and sustained by social and cultural context. The 'social cultural context', according to Smelser, implies an enormous "range of events or situations" (p. 35). It could be "social change" produced by variables such as economic crisis, political uprisings, "unemployment", further "rapid dislocation," war, and "internal conflicts" that possibly strike the integration and social solidarity of" the affected society". This traumatic event must be recalled, experienced, and represented or expressed in association with vivid "negative affects" or feelings such as "disgust," "shame," "guilt", and all forms of vulnerability. The next important condition concerns the fact that this traumatic event or situation must have cultural references that linger in the traumatized "collectivity members" memory. (p.34-6).

For Smelser (2004), culture and identity formation play a crucial role in developing cultural trauma. Culture is "a meaning-system " adopted by a specific social group, encompassing "values, norms, beliefs, ideologies, knowledge, and empirical assertions" (p. 37). Members of a society need to adopt and adhere to that culture to attain meaningful cultural membership and identification, which constitute essential parts of their "personal identities" (p. 40-43). According to this relation, any "invasive event" or "overwhelming situation that is believed to undermine one or several essential ingredients of a culture or the culture as a whole" with which individuals "presumably have an identification" is likely to cause cultural trauma (p. 38-40). There are some historical examples supporting this argument when cultures are encountered and threatened as such, affecting the collectivity whose members experience the collapse of their long-held ideologies, which constitute a large part of their cultural identities. The emergence of the Protestant Reformation in the century before is considered a heavy blow and a cultural shock to Catholic ideology and its adherent members. Also, from another perspective, "the exposure of the migrating groups to the cultures of the host societies into which they immigrate" is fertile ground for arousing "a claim of cultural traumatic damage" for both sides (p. 38).

The other guiding sociologist studying cultural trauma is Ron Eyerman. He enhances the understanding of the cultural trauma process by introducing the idea of "accumulated trauma". Cultural trauma, in Eyerman's opinion, results from a "series of events" that impact "one's identity", leaving behind incurable scars of "accumulative effect", maintaining through a narrative (Eyerman, 2008, p. 166-169), and deepening "a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric," of the larger community (Eyerman, 2004, p. 61-2). He also underscores the crucial role of "collective memory" in recollecting the 'horrendous event' and 'fundamental injury' of the collectivity in this traumatic process. The inflicted group members that experienced trauma share collective memory through which their traumatic wound and acclaim endure and pass down to the subsequent generations, vividly imprinting and orienting the collectivity's present and future identities. So, in this connection,

cultural trauma implies a struggle for meaning and cultural identification and furthers the struggle to represent this traumatic stress outwardly (p. 62–65). Relatively, Eyerman reasons that the conceptualization of the term 'cultural trauma', other than other terms, is due to the fact that the adjective 'cultural', is linked to issues of identification and existential meaning, whereas trauma is associated with "the powerful emotions" and neurotic responses resulting from such enigmatic issues (Eyerman, 2015, p. 131).

This point further raises another essential aspect of addressing the cultural trauma: the representation of the cultural trauma, that is, how the horrible and traumatic event, acclaim, or collective wound is remembered, represented, and narrated within the scope of the group of individuals and, more importantly, to a larger community and audience (Eyerman, 2004, p. 69). However, Eyerman believes that representation of the collective trauma is a complex and controversial issue since it raises the following questions: who would represent the traumatized group, and how should it be represented? so it can be viewed as a matter of moral burden and not only a "personal" will or choice (p. 72–74). Principally, representing the traumatized group is largely contingent upon "the power of telling", which is achieved by numerous factors. To elaborate, various actors or agents may carry out the process of representation in different arenas (p. 69). It can be socially represented and conveyed from within the collectivity to its individuals and also to future generations. From another perspective, collective suffering and traumatic past and present experiences could be effectively represented in literature and in aesthetic realms such as the visual arts, including museums, theaters, and the like. More specifically, the critical role of the mass media, or more specifically, its depiction of the traumatic collectivity that in turn directs the public discourse in favor of or against the traumatic group. In short the "representations" of "news paper", "radio and television" ... "play a decisive role" (p.61-2). Most significantly, representation can be highly achieved in political domains when the traumatized group has the willingness and capacity to create an effective political body, such as by occupying a seat in the parliament (p. 71–2). Under this, Eyerman (2004) puts forth a significant proposition within addressing cultural trauma phenomenon, asserting that "resolving cultural trauma" requires "collective representation" articulated by social actors sharing collective identity and memory (p. 74), seeking "alternative strategies and alternative voices", that "reinterpret the past". By doing this, they can "reconstitute or reconfigure" their collective identities "as a means toward reconciling present and future needs" (p. 63).

In light of the aforementioned theoretical perspectives, the study will follow specific guidelines to apply cultural trauma theory to its analysis. Firstly, identifying certain traumatized group members, emphasizing their shared social suffering or stress along with the related acclams or traumatic events. Next, highlighting the

cumulative and collective nature of their pain, Thirdly, acknowledging the perpetrators or offenders and assigning responsibility for the traumatic wounds they cause. Then, examining the role of the group's collective memory in the pursuit of justice and reparation. Finally, evaluating the ability and willingness of the traumatized group to effectively represent their traumatized experiences in diverse contexts.

1.3. The Future of National and Cultural Identity

Identity formation, especially with respect to cultural identity, is an intricate process that necessitates ongoing negotiation and continual reconstruction over the course of an individual's lifetime. Broadly speaking, identity is a modifiable concept that undergoes fluctuations and changes. As our sense of how we are and how we fit into the world is shaped by the interplay of life dynamics, power structures, and also environment (Chan, 2013, p. 13-4). In these circumstances, some people are likely prone to an identity crisis and a self-image problem. Actually, the identity crisis has become much more intense in today's world, which is overflowing with unstoppable human mobility. Without a doubt, the contemporary world witnesses rising waves of human mobility and migration that have changed the significance of "national borders" and national identities, respectively. As a result, people are beginning to view migration and mobility outside their original home countries in a more progressive and pragmatic mode, as the researcher Kibreab (1999) insightfully notes that:

[R]egardless of their territorial origin, people have become or are in the process of becoming citizens of a deterritorialized global world where concepts such as homeland, locality, and territorially anchored national or collective identities have either become a thing of the past or lost much of their significance. (p.385)

Nevertheless, ethnicity and racism still play a significant role in problematizing the exilic situation of "an increasingly large number of diasporic peoples throughout the world" (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 86). In fact, ethnic identity persists so strongly among the "migratory groups" locating in the globalized and hybridized world. Further, it functions as an "identifying feature" and a point of solidarity for the ethnic group members who insist on identifying themselves along "ethnic and ' racial lines". This reality can be tested in the cases of "black Americans", and "black British" (p. 79), as well as the Muslim migrants in Britain, which is the focus of this study. The study will demonstrate in the following lines that culture and identity are not everlasting concepts since they are subject to change and modification. So sticking to both (as in the case of some immigrants and anti-immigrants or extreme nationalists and conservatives) will end in unavoidable cultural trauma and an identity crisis. To enrich the discussion, the study references the theoretical assumptions of the world's

renowned intellectuals, who reflect their long experience with cultural conflict, migration, and ethnic identities. Edward Said, Salman Rushdi, and Homi Bhabha effectively utilize their academic careers to address the concerns faced by subordinated groups, more specifically those who migrated and struggle to express or present themselves linguistically and physically through their multicultural and mixed national identities.

Edward Said, a globally Palestinian-American scholar, offers a profound cultural criticism in his works *Out of Place* (1999) and *Between Worlds* (1998). Obviously, the two titles perfectly epitomize the ordeal of navigating diverse cultural worlds and identities. Said assumes that the colonial notion of 'otherness' and its rhetoric of 'we' and 'other' still pervade the post-colonial and post-diasporic communities. Thus, he elaborates that despite his upholding the Christian creed and fine English education and upbringing, he is looked at too negatively by them as 'other' because of his hybrid condition, or let's say his Middle Eastern origin: "But although taught to believe and think like an English school boy, I was also trained to understand that I was an alien, a Non European Other, educated by my betters to know my station and not to aspire to being British. The line separating Us from them was linguistic, cultural, racial, and ethnic" (Said, 1998,p. 4). Given that it implies the harmful social processes of otherness, alienation, and marginalization, this quote alludes to the existential conflict that immigrants and expatriates experience. According to this, Said's endeavor as an immigrant with double identities to shift 'between worlds', characterized by diverse cultural values and demands, leads him to belong to none. Additionally, he fails to build and uphold a stable origin and to convey a sense of belonging to the host society (p. 3).

In a more intensive narrative, Said (1999) explicates in the memoir *Out of Place* the complexity of representing intersected identities, besides his struggle with the process of recognition and identification; that is of being recognized imputatively by others as the Arab, the American, the Palestinian, or the Orthodox Christian. In consequence, he involuntarily "retained unsettled sense of many identities" which are "mostly in conflict with each other—all of [his] life" (p.2-3). The essence of Edward Said's critique on cultures and identity formation is that surviving in the contemporary world that features with multiculturalism and globalization necessitates to leave the comfort zone and live and expect beyond the confinement of our past and cultural identification:

I frantically worked to keep myself from falling back into an already established pattern, or from falling forward into certain perdition. Being myself meant not only never being quite right, but also never feeling at ease, always expecting to be

interrupted or corrected, to have my privacy invaded and my unsure person set upon.
(p.13)

Likewise to Edward Said's diasporic experiences, the British Indian novelist and essayist Salman Rushdi openly discusses the enigmatic topics of cultural differences and multicultural identities in the publication *Imaginary Homelands* (1992). Rushdi contends that "the writer in position, exiles or immigrants or expatriates are haunted by some sense of loss". He confesses that as an Indian immigrant in Britain, he is in a constant pressure "to face a problem of definition " (p.17). In regard to the complex issue of the immigrants' representation, Rushdi reveals that: "[t]o speak for Indianin England- we are not willing to be excluded from any part of our heritage; which heritage includes both a Bradford born Indian kid's right to be treated as a full member of British society and also the right of any post - diaspora community to draw on its roots" (p.15).

Further, the challenging process of representing two cultural identities is portrayed by Rushdi(1992) as "straddle[ing] two cultures; at other times ; that we fall between two stools" (p.15). Nevertheless, it might be argued that this suffering incites Rushdi to advocate for escaping the bond of chauvinism and nationality and promoting cultural diversity, so he cites the successful example of the immigrants in the United States, saying: "America, a nation of immigrants, has created great literature out of the phenomenon of cultural transplantation, out of examining the ways in which people cope with a new world" (p.20).

The Indian theorist Homi K. Bhabha goes further to defies the dominance of superior cultures on any class of culture in the contemporary world. In the seminal book *The Location of Culture* (1994) he speculates that "hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable" in the contemporary world, thus, the idea of "pure culture" or in other words, original permanent culture will no longer hold up or endure in transcultural or hybrid societies (p.37). The same thing is applied to the notions of national identity and identity in general which are mostly culturally determined. Cultural and national identity is in a continuous reconstruction and revision as it is not a fixed or, a "pre-given identity" or "self-fulfilling prophecy" that is to be taken for granted and for good. Rather sometimes the inevitable shifting of time and place questions the individual's familiar image of subjectivity and identity (p.45). Based on this, he articulates the theory of cultural hybridity, in the simplest term, it is about establishing an equal "in-between" space between 'us' and 'other', instead of the one sided relation and fixed identities of colonized/ colonizer, West/East, Superior / Inferior as an example. Though this 'in between' space, or "Third Place of Enunciation" as Bhabha calls it, renders "ambiguity", and "anxiety", but it also implies productivity and innovation. As it moves forward the notions of

multiculturalism that allows for the emergence of new dynamic/hybrid selves and "innovative" and "complex" cultural identities (p. 1-4). Yet, it is important to take conscious advantage of this cross-cultural encounters, moreover, expect the accompanied psychological and social transformations to the concerned individuals and communities so as to avoid any potential cultural clashes, trauma, besides intersected identities (Tyson,2006, p.432).

2.1. *Home Fire*: Over view

The story follows the lives of two Pakistani Muslim immigrants in Britain, Adil Pasha's family and Karamt Lone's family. Adil Pasha's death in Guantanamo leaves his siblings, Isma, and the twin Aneeka, and Parvais, in an unbearable racial situation. While Karamt Lone achieves a successful political career by heading the Home Secretary. Parvais joins ISIS in Syria, but is shot dead by ISIS comrades. Aneeka protests, urging the British authority to allow them to burry her brother's body in Britain. Eamoon, Karmat's only son, unable to use his father's power to help his beloved Aneeka, travels to Pakistan to support her. While he is heading to embrace the bereaved Aneeka, he is intrigued by two strangers who put a bombing belt around him, causing their tragic death.

2.2. Textual analysis and Discussion.

The intense portrayal of Adil Pasha's siblings, Isma, Aneeka, and Parvais, demonstrates their profound struggle with the dilemma of conflicting identities. Following the postcolonial era, Adil Pasha represents the second generation of Muslim immigrants from Pakistan to Britain. And along their long journey of settling, they constantly attempt to reconcile their Pakistani and British identities. However, the narrative exposes plainly the persistent exclusion and maltreatment of British Muslims by the British government and public, leading to their diasporic status, which is arguably largely connected to their cultural trauma (ÜNAL,2022,p.141). The three siblings are burdened with their father's radical legacy; as a result, they "stay at the margin of all groups so that no would start to ask questions about their lives" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 27). The most overt symptoms of their cultural trauma can be detected in their prolonged suffering with issues like "sense of rootlessness, double consciousness", and a lack of " traditional culture" (Ling, 2014, p. 141). In addition to repression, helplessness, fear, anger, shame, guilt, and insecurity. Kamila Shamsi commences *Home Fire* with the introductory scene of the airport interrogation, where Isma has to accustom herself regularly to the racial-based interrogation that any

member of a former Jihadi, even any Muslim citizen, has to be subject to in Britain. In fact, such harmful measures have become part of their day-to-day routine and further work as impediments in their lives; thus, the reader may observe how Isma concerns herself over her PH.D. visa scholarship to the USA, namely, Boston, where again she has to be worried over "the interrogation waiting for her there" (p. 13).

However, among her siblings and even the whole family, Isma is the one who desperately desires to act in the image of the "good citizen" immigrant in Britain while maintaining her original Muslim identity. She assumes that wearing hijab in the turban style can mediate between western and Islamic cultures, yet she is always questioned if "The turban, is that a style thing or a Muslim thing?" (Shamsi, 2017, p.25). Between the demands of the two cultures and identities, she finds it challenging to show up as a Muslim and, at the same time, more difficult to hide the Muslim part of her double identity (p. 26). She is fully aware that her identity as a Muslim girl with brown skin and turban is problematic; therefore, she avoids having cultural references like 'Quran', or 'family picture' in her belongings at the airport, in addition to assuring her "Britishness" through her responses to the airport inspector's controversial topics like "Isreale", "homosexuality", and "the queen", to name a few (p. 10-11). Moreover, Isma's settling the two identities puts her at odds with her sister, who accuses her of betraying their family and Parvais in particular due to her complying with British authority. Yet, the scandal of their brother's recruitment by ISIS and his shocking murder takes over Isma's future life as she is left "shattered and horrified" (p. 183). Nevertheless, she endeavors to represent their traumatic experiences "despite the wreckage of her family", and because of her sensibility, she does this in her own way, for example, by arguing with Eamoon over his father's anti-Muslim attitudes. And most significantly, using the academic field through lectures and essays to address the British's unjust laws under the pretense of encountering Muslim terrorism. She reflects her "suppressed anger" and harmful experiences with the British security measurements in writing essays and papers about "the sociological impact of the war on terror" and the British's "instrumentalization of fear" against the Muslim immigrants (p. 42).

Aneeka, 19 years old, exhibits a more immature and rebellious character than her realistic and sensible sister Isma, dreaming of social acceptance for Muslim citizens in Britain. She fervently believes in her right as a British with all the privilege of the title; for this reason, Isma reflects that she "knew nothing about the fragility of her place in the world" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 11). The catastrophic fate of her brother brings to the surface her vulnerable psyche and the neurotic effects of their traumatic status. Parvais's irresponsible act made her act in twisted ways, for instance, manipulating Eamoon in an ungraceful sexual relationship so as to help her get Parvais back. And her martyrdom-like act in front of the British embassy and media

in Islamabad. Truly, she expects Britain to be her true country, the homebirth "that made almost no demands on [them] and allowed [them] simply to be" (p. 48). Yet she comes to the conclusion that Britain is the country that gives its Muslim citizens "torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport interrogation, spies in mosques, and teachers reporting children to authorities for wanting a world without British injustice" (p. 86).

The representation of trauma or giving voice to a traumatized victim is not easily accomplished; it is frequently associated with struggle, depending on the severity of the infliction done to the victims and also the nature of the victims themselves. Critically speaking, the complexity of dual national identities concludes when Aneeka expresses her adamant will to stay true to herself and support her twin brother, even if it means losing British citizenship and returning to Pakistan. Thus, in contrast with Isma, Aneeka performs an extremist level of trauma representation via the "apocalyptic mess" she made in the park, where she was protesting against the injustice they experienced as Muslim migrants in Britain. In a howling voice, Aneeka identified straightforwardly the perpetrator in the persona of the Home Secretary, 'Karamat Lone', describing him as "wicked tyrants" who, in the name of law, split families apart (Shamsi, 2017, p. 206).

Regrading their (Aneeka and Isam's) position with the Pakistani origin, they actually fail to develop affinity and familiarity there as the narrative shows that they are always:

Hating the idea of missing a summer in London, to spend it in a country teeming with relatives who thought blood ties gave them the right to interrogate and lecture on point to the sister's 'hijabs' as proof that British Pakistanis were 'caught in the past' then point to their jeans to prove they were mixed up. (p.186)

In a nutshell, the Pasha siblings belong to either society, and most significantly, they acknowledge the bitter fact that there is always "something interposed between their Britishness and terrorism". Further, they are denied a fulfilled and equal British citizenship since their British identity is mostly accompanied by cultural identifiers such as British, of "Pakistani decent", or "British Muslim". As a result, they realize that the title "British passport holders" best describes their current cultural status (Shamsi, 2017, p. 41-2).

Parvais's case demonstrates Alexander's (2004) assumption on the relation between national identity and cultural trauma, which states:

In the course of defining national identity, national histories are constructed around injuries that cry out for revenge. The twentieth century was replete with examples of

angry nationalist groups and their intellectual and media representatives asserting that they were injured or traumatized by agents of some putatively antagonistic ethnic and political group, which must then be battled against in turn. (p. 8)

As discussed earlier, culturally traumatic victims seek reparation and justice throughout their lives. It might be said that Parvais Pasha's story of cultural trauma is heavily influenced by two elements: seeking reparation and memory, namely collective memory. Actually, Parvais's complex identity is constructed "out of vengeance and justice" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 145). He was raised parentless and supervised vulnerably by his elder sister Isma, who is haunted by "the thought of every horror that could befall a young boy in the world of racists and pedophiles" (p. 29). He does not find social acceptance in British society, which seems to give him the forever stigma of "the son" of "a terrorist father". In consequence, "he didn't know to break from their currents of history" (p. 157). The harmful social process of suppression, exclusion, and dehumanization leaves him no choice but "to set off" his father's Jihadi path (p. 124) and abandon Britain, the "home" that he views now as "a place from the past he'd turned his back on and to which MI15 would make sure he never returned" (p.156). Speaking about the role of collective memory in evoking cultural trauma victims, Eyerman (2004) mentions that "collective memory provides the individual with a cognitive map within which to orient present behavior" (p. 65). It means that the formulation of Parvais's distorted teenager identity and his cultural trauma is drawn from the memory of the family injury and also the collective memory of the long-established cultural conflict between the Western colonial world, including Britain, and the Muslim world.

Parvais grew up in a racial-charged atmosphere when the mainstream British media referred to the British ISIS members as Muslim terrorists rather than "British terrorist" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 77). The injury to the Pasha family begins when they are forbidden from having access to information about their father's mysterious death and, moreover, from burying his dead body. All these circumstances push the young Parvais to get involved in ISIS activities and give away his British identity because, for him, the British are the true enemy, "the same people who said Iraq has weapons of mass destruction, the ones who tortured [his] father in the name of freedom" (p. 134). In brief, the overwhelming sense of rootlessness and unfulfillment in Britain leads him to seek imaginary land in Raqqa, the land where:

a place where immigrants coming in to join and treated like kings , even more in benefits than the locals. A place where skin color doesn't matter ; where schools and hospitals are free , and rich and poor have the same facilities where men are men. (p.133)

His enthusiasm for Isis Jihadi members soon brings him another cultural shock; in reality, Parvais, a "Wembley-born" citizen, could not acclimatized to the rugged atmosphere of Raqqa, further witnessing the horrible scenes of beheading and crucifixion. He is misled by ISIS propaganda and the belief that joining an identical cultural group sharing the same claims would empower him to represent his struggle and take his revenge. His situation gets complicated as he does not know "how to shake free of the demons he had attached to his own heels" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 157). His plea for forgiveness, mercy, and coming back home went unanswered. It turns out that the only identity that endures after his tragic death is that of a dual citizen of Britain and Pakistan "who turned against the soil of Britain". (p. 171-2) by "working with the media wing of ISIS", which is responsible for the recruitment of fighters and the so-called "Jihadi Brides" (p. 181). The conclusion of the novel shows that Parvais pays dearly for experiencing conflicting identities. The British government and public do not accept his repentance; further, they derogatorily treat his dead boy as "trash" (p. 193) that needed to be sent back to his origins in Pakistan, the country that looks at him as one of the "psycho killers" defaming Pakistan (p. 212).

Away from the unprivileged Pasha family, the family of Karamat Lone and his son Eamoon highlights other causes and effects of cultural trauma. For so long, Eamoon has enjoyed the image of the handsome son of a successful Pakistani immigrant who has recently been appointed "the new Home Secretary" of Britain (Shamsi, 2017, p. 38). While appearing to be immune to conflicting identities and cultural trauma, he concludes to be "a man carrying all the wounds of his father" (p. 40). Actually, because of his long struggle with cultural discrimination and identity crisis, his father determined to spare his only son the "fight" that he once went through all on his "way" in London (p. 104). Truly, Eamoon was raised as a "posh English boy" (98), whose "Englishness" is "greater than" what "should be expected" from Pakistani immigrant. To further their cultural assimilation in British society, he was even given the name ' Eamoon', which is a similar Irish word to the Arabic word Ayman (p. 20).

Given "that he has never been in Pakistan", he is being inconsiderate to the Pakistani part of his dual identity (Shamsi, 2017, p. 93). Nevertheless, after meeting the Pasha sisters Isma and Aneeka, he has "more familial feelings" toward his Pakistani origins (p.59). However, his involvement in a love affair with Aneeka and sympathy for Parvais complicate his situation, as it causes him for the first time to confront and settle the conflicting identities inside him. He becomes overwhelmed by the moral obligation to support his group members, prioritizing the Pakistani Muslim part of his identity over the British one. Thus, Eamoon exposes traumatic responses when he risks both his position and his father's political career while making a public appearance, revealing the truth behind Aneeka and Pervais's motives and further

denouncing Britain's inhuman restrictions towards Muslim immigrants. Consequently, the British public and media look at him as an opponent and traitor to the interests of Britain.

Karamat Lone, the Pakistani immigrant whose long struggle with cultural discrimination in Britain prompts him to establish a well-grounded identity and life, he aspires not only to "be like them", but "to be better than them" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 38). It might be said that he starts from scratch, as he was "a boy from Bradford who would make his millions and buy his way into the party" (p. 131). However the story shows that despite his association with a British wife, his leading the conservative party, occupying the post of the Home Secretary, and his wholehearted devotion to "British public services" and values, he realizes that "his background" demands him "to be more careful" (p. 53), so he is oversensitive to the fact that the racial barrier and the "dark skin" still hinder him from attaining equal human citizenship and social acceptance inside British society (p. 214). Nevertheless, he willingly chooses to enact his British identity and "give up" anything related to Pakistan, such as "family, context, language, and familiarity", believing that "the nation to which they first belong had proven itself inadequate to the task of allowing them to live with dignity" (p. 197).

Karmat also fails to communicate well with the Muslim community in Britain, though the "Muslim majority constituency voted him in the latest election" (Shamsi, 2017, p. 83). Actually, he fearlessly criticizes "the backwardness" and "the isolationist culture of the [Muslim] community" (p. 84, 131). Thus, through all his press statements and interviews, he speaks out his critical opinions, which unfold his preference for British values and lifestyle, emphasizing "the need of the British Muslims to lift themselves out of the dark ages if they want the rest of the nation to treat them with respect" (p. 59). According to this, he comes to be known among the Muslim community as "Mr. British values, Mr. strong on security, Mr. striding away from Muslim-ness" (p. 53). In supporting the cultural integration of the immigrant Muslim community, Karmat rejects clinging to some specific cultural norms and lifestyles that incite differences and division rather than integration and similarity within the British community; thus, in one of his public speeches addressing the Muslim students, he says:

[T]here's nothing this country won't allow you to achieve: Olympic medals, captaincy of the cricket team, pop stardom, etc. We are British. Britain accepts this. But for those of you who are in some doubt about it: don't set yourself apart from the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behavior you cling to, or the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you will be treated differently—not because of racism, though that does exist, but because you insist on

your differences from everyone in the multiethnic, multireligious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours. And look at all you miss out on because of it. (p.83)

Yet, "the irreversible damage" of his son's affair with the sister of Jihadi ISIS and "attending his funeral" in Islamabad give rich material for his rivals and oppositionists, including politicians and tabloids, to get him down (Shamsi, 2017, p. 226). Moreover, he receives criticism from both the Muslim community and human rights groups because of his unforgiving attitudes towards Parvais's case and his insistence on stripping the British passports from Aneeka and Parvais. As an instance, one of the powerful backlash articles edited by one of the British oppositionists analyzes him as:

san ambitious man of migrants who married money, class, and social contact to transform himself into an influential party donor, which allowed him to be selected as the head of a more deserving candidate to run in his first election. He used his identity as a Muslim to win, then jettisoned it when it started to damage him. (p.226)

It could be argued that Karamt Lone also experienced cultural trauma because the competing demands of his two identities drove him to act against his morals and those of his family in an effort to preserve his political career and the British part of his identity, even if it meant remaining socially isolated (p. 225).

CONCLUSION

Coping with two contradictory cultural identities overwhelms specific groups of immigrants worldwide. The study has explored the impact of identity politics on the sense of the true self and the representation of post-September 11 Muslim identities in the Western world. Kamila Shamsi's *Home Fire* portrays the struggle of two British immigrant families of Pakistani origin, the Adil Pasha family and Karmat Lone family. The study employs the basic thoughts of cultural trauma theorists to explain this problematic issue as a cultural trauma phenomenon. The analysis has highlighted the social and cultural causes behind the key characters' traumatic stress.

They are depicted as plighted members of a Muslim collectivity or "carrier group" who undergo the accumulative effects of the 9/11 terrorist attack, specifically Adil Pasha's detention and death in Guantanamo, which are both considered collective and family injuries accompanied by claims of the British's routinizing process of oppression, marginalization, alienation, and dehumanization.

In this sense, the study has demonstrated the crucial role of collective memory and past injuries in orienting the lives of the group members in terms of seeking retribution against the British government, further arguing for revision of their current identities. While the traumatic responses of Parvais, which can be noticed in his

recruitment by ISIS followed by the tragic end of his twin sister Aneeka indicate their intense need to represent and reflect their existential plight and traumatic status to the world as British Muslims who have to compromise two conflicting identities. The study comes to the conclusion that advocating for equal humanism, brotherhood, tolerance, and multiculturalism is crucial to addressing concepts like ethnicity, racism, and rigid ideologies that continue to have a destructive impact on immigrants' integration into host societies and cause issues such as cultural conflicts and identity crises.

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