

## The Question of Diasporic Trauma in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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**Abstract:** The exploration of second-generation diasporic trauma in Kamila Shamsie's seventh novel, *Home Fire* (2017), depicts a struggle to reconcile with the past of the characters with both Pakistani and British nationality. Shamsie consolidates her fiction about the dilemma and struggle of the diasporic society members, Isma, Aneeka and Parvaiz, throughout the novel. The recurring motif of the novel is the diasporic identity which signals the dilemma of the characters in terms of adopting British or Pakistani moral norms and identities. Shamsie justifies the diasporic trauma as a revelation of the present and past diasporic belongings of Knickers Pasha and Pervy Pasha in the novel as a characteristic of vile and modern migrant tragedies. In this study, the notion of diasporic trauma will be studied in the novel, *Home Fire*, with the fragmented narrative voices of the Pasha family members as one of the means of representation of trauma in literature.

### Keywords:

Diasporic Trauma,  
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### Kamila Shamsie'nin *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* Romanında Diasporik Travma Sorunsalı

**Öz:** Kamila Shamsie'nin yedinci romanı *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş*'te (2017) ikinci nesil diasporik travmanın incelenmesi hem Pakistan hem de İngiliz vatandaşlığına sahip karakterlerin geçmişiyle yüzleşme mücadelesini tasvir ediyor. Roman boyunca diasporik topluluk üyeleri Isma, Aneeka ve Parvaiz'in ikilemi ve mücadelesi romanın kurgusunu pekiştiriyor. Romanın tekrar eden motifi, karakterlerin İngiliz veya Pakistan ahlaki normlarını ve kimliklerini benimseme konusundaki ikilemine işaret eden diasporik kimliktir. Shamsie, romanda diasporik travmayı, Knickers Pasha ve Pervy Pasha'nın şimdiki ve geçmişteki diasporik aitliklerini sefil ve modern göçmen trajedilerinin bir özelliği olarak açığa çıkması olarak meşrulaştırır. Bu çalışmada diasporik travma kavramı, travmanın edebiyatta temsil araçlarından biri olarak Pasha ailesi fertlerinin parçalanmış anlatı sesleriyle *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* romanında incelenecektir.

### Anahtar Sözcükler:

Diasporik travma,  
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## Introduction

Literary trauma theory, which first appeared in the late twentieth century with the pioneering works of Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, and Kai Erikson, is comparable to the traditional trauma theory of Sigmund Freud. The overall mission of literary trauma theory is to explore literary devices and narrative strategies such as fragmented narrative voice, the motifs of haunting and ghosts, repetition, and allusions to convey the trauma itself or its repercussions to the reader. It is currently accepted that written texts are extremely valuable in restoring the voices of marginalised or silenced nations, particularly in the non-western world, even though there are ongoing discussions about the definition, and effects of trauma across various disciplines, and whether they can be accurately conveyed to the reader or not. An umbrella term under which diasporic trauma can be considered, 'national trauma' is "shared collectively and frequently has a cohesive effect as individuals gather in small and intimate groups to reflect on the tragedy and its consequences. Personal feelings of sadness, fear, and anger are confirmed when others express similar emotions" (Neal 4). It differs from 'personal trauma' in terms of sharing traumatic experiences, and wounds with other community members. Trauma becomes a social experience that results in permanent changes which are verified with personal responses like sadness, fear, anger, and grief. From this perspective, personal and national traumas are intertwined as much as other types of traumas. Responses to national trauma in collective consciousness include elements of fear, like a sense of danger, feelings of personal insecurity, and a sense of vulnerability. It is a fact that an event could be considered a cultural, collective trauma when it is experienced by many people that keep the memory of it and transmit it to the next generations as a stereotypical characteristic feature of trauma, which is also known as transgenerational trauma. Arthur G. Neal adds that "under conditions of national trauma, the boundaries between order and chaos, between the sacred and the profane, between good and evil, between life and death become fragile" (4). People either individually or collectively consider themselves in unusual conditions. Bearing similar qualities in terms of neurotic effects, it can be claimed that national, collective, or cultural traumas and individual, and psychological traumas are interrelated. Furthermore, Neal puts forth that "it becomes a national trauma only when it shakes the basic structure of society and the orderly progression of social life as it is generally known and understood" (10).

Like the notion of trauma itself, the term 'diaspora' proves to be particularly difficult to define in a precise manner. Even the etymological origins of the word seem to be difficult to establish. The notion of diaspora is a crucial idea in recent neo-colonial academic studies and is usually identified as "the voluntary or forcible movement of peoples from their homelands into new regions, is a central historical fact of colonization" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 81–82). This sort of movement could be two-sided, one from colonised land to new lands; the other is the settlement of the imperialists in the colonised lands. What is usually meant by 'diaspora' is the former one. These sorts of oppressive movements have vile tragic influences on people. In her discussion of Jhumpa Lahiri's

*Unaccustomed Earth*, Yung Ling writes, “the characters suffer from the loss of a traditional culture, death of a family member, the sense of rootlessness, double consciousness and generation conflicts” (141) to indicate the underlying causes of the trauma of diaspora, which are also relevant to the postcolonial collective, cultural or national trauma.

In order to make an association between diasporic trauma and cultural trauma, Bülent Cercis Tanrıtanır notes that “life in the diaspora is considered to be one of the main reasons for cultural trauma or vice versa. Cultural trauma is a kind of diasporic result and a natural resource of diaspora, so it is believed that there is a mutual cause-and-effect between the two” (103). It can be asserted that these two notions cannot be evaluated discretely in literary criticism. Besides, founded within life in the diaspora, predisposition, elimination, bigotry, and estrangement have been considered the current and incessantly prolonged communal sufferings in our contemporary, postcolonial societies.

Immigrations develop out of movements of social gatherings, in which people participate individually, as a family, or in various other amalgamations. It is a fact that migrations culminate in extended-term residences, if not perpetual, communal establishments, even if some families or migrants proceed elsewhere. It can be claimed that the term diaspora often appeals to the symbols of traumas of parting and displacement, and this is unquestionably a very significant characteristic of migrant involvement. However, diasporas are locations of optimism and fresh commencements as well. They are challenged by “cultural and political terrains where individual and collective memories collide, reassemble, and reconfigure” (Brah 193). Brah’s vision indicates what the readers notice initially in Shamsie’s novel, though the inevitable destination is unfortunately again one’s motherland in a remote and dark corner of the world. Brah and other modern diasporic theoreticians such as James Clifford, Paul Gilroy, and Stuart Hall associate a diasporic identity with “the idea of roots and notions of ethnic and national belonging” (Toninato 3) which indicates the relation between diaspora and nation.

Kamila Shamsie, a British novelist of Pakistani origin (born in 1973), focuses on issues of family, home, identity, and diasporic mobility in her 2017 novel *Home Fire*. An immigrant story, it follows the characters as they move from Wembley to İstanbul and Karachi as well as Raqqa in Syria and Massachusetts in the US. The novel advances concepts of household, family, and affinity to offer an account of round characters and personalities by using family history as the primary way of narrativising diaspora. It tells the story of the Pasha family and their shifting lives in this manner. The novel narrates the stories of the Pasha siblings as well as the once-famous jihadi father figure constructing images of their modern children badgered by the actions of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria and especially in Raqqa. It similarly builds post-colonial histories of race, policies, and fluctuating margins of identity, and depicts their influence on the lives of Pasha family members, Parvaiz, Aneeka, and their elder sister Isma who returns to

Amherst, Massachusetts after bringing up her brother and sister upon their father Adil's mysterious death as well as their mother's.

The story of the Pasha family's members seems to be an important illustration of a specific type of modern migration, one that involves family members being dispersed, studying abroad and going through traumatic experiences in different diasporas that at the very least reveal the values of identity, if not challenge them. Although the novel initially seems to be a straightforward account of a jihadi father, Adil Pasha, and his descendant son, it actually reworks post-colonial and diasporic identity by using a variety of narrative strategies, including memory, story-telling, and broken verses, to discuss the prevalent sense of trauma by inserting questions of history and trauma into the narrative. All the members of the Pasha family are traumatised due to the jihadist deeds of their father and their brother Parvaiz who is haunted by the memories of his father. Thus, this study discusses Shamsie's representation of suffering with reference to concepts such as household and diaspora, double consciousness, and identity through textual analysis of the novel while offering an interpretation of the overall plot and characters as well as the literary devices to explore the notion of trauma. It aims to draw attention to the autochthonous reality that diasporas could cause an acute, chronic, or complex trauma of belonging to nowhere or elsewhere in the western world, in England in this study, in one of the modern versions of post-colonial English novels. This study hopes to make a contribution to creating an awareness of the vile immigrant tragedies of the people in the modern world who are obliged to migrate to other territories across the world that mostly stem from political instability and artificial wars by the Asian subcontinent as well as the Middle East. It further aspires to raise sensitivity to the catastrophic experiences of immigrants and their depiction in literature.

### **Diasporic Trauma in *Home Fire***

*Home Fire* depicts clearly the diasporic trauma among the members of the *Pasha* family and The Home Secretary of the UK in terms of their Pakistani origins and diasporic public spheres in Britain. One of the earlier instances could be found at the very beginning of the novel. Isma irrevocably feels intimidated after hours of cross-examination in a room with no windows in Heathrow Airport, during which she is asked about "The Great British Bake Off, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombs, dating websites" (Shamsie 7), tension of which communicates symptoms of diasporic trauma: "Isma stood up, unsteady because of the pins and needles in her feet, which she'd been afraid to shake off in case she accidentally kicked the man across the desk from her. As she wheeled out her luggage she thanked the woman whose thumbprints were on her underwear, not allowing even a shade of sarcasm to enter her voice" (Shamsie 7). It can be inferred that she struggles to avoid any nuisance to proceeding with the investigation of her documents and belongings which raises a sense of threat, one of the neurotic effects of traumatic incidents. Besides, the reaction of the officers reminds us of the typical British officer stereotypes in Abdulrazak Gurnah's fiction like the doctor figure in the *Last Gift* (2011), who mocks

Africans for having no hearts in both literal and figural meanings. Fatim Boutros' argument that "the diaspora's traumatic past is the key to a more profound understanding of [the] process of self-articulation" (viii) justifies Isma's reticence at the airport. It can be asserted here that the underlying and triggering motive of her anxiety and withdrawal is diasporic concerns rather than simply political impositions.

These statements make it evident that Shamsie's story is infused with a variety of personal and political traumas that make even simple readings challenging, despite its light tone, humour, and verbal fireworks. Her portrayal of England through a narrative reveals a number of painful events that have disrupted the family and its history. Isma experiences an embarrassing circumstance while she was being kept at London Heathrow airport for interrogation. She is questioned for several hours due to her personal possessions from the Pakistani culture. Isma, being a citizen of the United Kingdom, is in a relentless struggle to be a part of the culture that belongs to people who are from the same common ancestry, called "imaginary reunification with the past" by Stuart Hall (111–112). The second-generation diasporic trauma is depicted in Shamsie's story to be integrated so seamlessly into British society that even the siblings speak English to one another both within and outside of their home. Isma, however, made a concerted effort to conceal her Muslim Pakistani heritage as she departed for Heathrow. She did not pack the Holy Book, the Quran, any academic literature relevant to her field of study, or even the family photos. She tries to give short answers in her traumatising interrogation though the officer keeps pauses longer than usual:

"This isn't yours," she said, and Isma was sure she didn't mean because it's at least a size too large but rather it's too nice for someone like you. . . . She stopped herself. The official was doing that thing that she'd encountered before in security personnel—staying quiet when you answered their question in a straightforward manner, which made you think you had to say more. And the more you said, the more guilty you sounded. (Shamsie 7)

From this perspective, silence, in the form of broken narrativisation, is a functional literary device when it is considered in terms of literary trauma theory as well as post-colonial literature as Kalpana R. Seshadri claims: "colonial trauma, like literature, concerns the structure of a certain hole in signification, a secret silence that is constitutive to language in its representational ambition" (69). It has to be read as a reaction or protest, a silent revolt, against the oppressor which is one of the healers of trauma. Boutros supports this claim: "the fictional texts demonstrate that self-representation is an important means of transcending the silencing that occurred in the colonial past" (xiv). From this perspective, *Home Fire* could be considered as being rather functional in the promulgation of diasporic trauma for the immigrants in England.

Isma's covert yearning to reunite with her roots is symbolised by her wearing British attire and a turban to conceal her head. 'Turban' serves as a subliminal nod to her Pakistani heritage and identifies her as a Muslim. She still recalls the songs her Pakistani ancestors used to sing. She says that such songs have been ingrained in her memory for a

long time and that she makes an effort to keep them in mind at all times. Once Eamon plays the melody “she recognized the song by the tune more than the words which came out as gibberish tinged with Urdu” (Shamsie 28). Isma, a resident of English-speaking culture and a British national, frequently thinks back on her earlier life. Even though she does not frequently use Urdu, she finds it intolerable when someone of her own race is unable to understand them. “Do you know any Urdu? So don’t you know bey takalufi” (Shamsie 29). She finds it repulsive that Home Secretary Kamarat Lone failed to teach his son Eamon even the most fundamental Urdu language. It is ironic that “European languages . . . involuntarily lend cultural agency to the colonized subject” (Boutros xv) that the second-generation prefers host languages over their ancestral mother tongue. Thus, it might be argued that these various incidents produce traumatising effects that cast a shadow over the story of the family.

Shelly A. Wiechelt, Jan Gryczynski and Kerry Hawk Lessard claim that “[i]f individuals internalize the cultural traumas experienced by their ancestors, it is possible that both historical and contemporary traumas might exert a cumulative adverse impact on human health” (206). Shamsie does not provide us with a detailed story of Adil Pasha but only of his death on the way to Guantanamo after fighting in Afghanistan for the Taliban and being tortured in Bagram. “It was both a reminder of what his father had suffered and an acknowledgement that this new Parvaiz was born out of vengeance and justice” (Shamsie 172). It is discernible that this statement foreshadows the fate of Parvaiz, as in the well-known Turkish proverb, a goat climbing a tree has a yeanning staring at the branch: Parvaiz idolises his father Adil Pasha who “fought with jihadi groups in Bosnia and Chechnya in the ‘90s and travelled to Afghanistan in 2001 to fight with the Taliban to fight with Britain’s enemies” (Shamsie 210). It might be suggested that Parvaiz follows his father’s path in order to take his revenge.

In *Home Fire*, Parvaiz is deceived by Farooq to find out about his lost father in Syria and makes his way back to London upon failure and violence but is assassinated in İstanbul on the way to the British Embassy. Another instance of traumatising experience is the execution scene in Raqqa which reminds the notion of ‘shellshock’ in Freudian terms that traumatises the normal functioning of the psyche: “The executioner lifted his blade, brought it down onto the kneeling man’s neck. Parvaiz bent over, stomach emptying” (Shamsie 171). Even though there are contrasts between the younger sister Aneeka and Isma throughout the story, there is a thread of parallelism between their diasporic identities and their struggles to be in harmony with their ancestral home. It can be argued that the traumatic nature of the shared past becomes obvious in Shamsie’s novel when Isma, Parvaiz and Aneeka’s relationship is taken into consideration. Initially, engaging in a sexual connection with Eamon, the home secretary’s son, was only a ruse to get her brother Pervaiz back home; however, as time goes on, she starts to show genuine affection for him. Her hijab is wrapped around her head while she engages in intense physical intercourse, “shedding her clothes only the Hijab remained” (Shamsie 88). This indicates the dilemma of the character as opposed to Boutros’s claim that the “ideological core of

colonial societies was compromised by sexual desire for the exploited Other, with its serious challenge of miscegenation" (53). Isma is distraught by the idea of such an experience: "Isma, shattered and horrified, playing the good citizen even now, dragging her sister's name into that shameful act. Isma, traitor, betrayer" (Shamsie 207). These adjectives are employed consciously to reveal the traumatic effects of sexual commitment on the diasporic image in their community. Hence, Aneeka could be regarded as the victim of the diasporic identity created through the prevention of the past which still haunts the family.

"Cultural trauma," according to Jeffrey C. Alexander et al., "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" (1). Community members do not need to be involved in an incident that results in a catastrophic loss of identity and meaning. Trauma does not necessarily occur at once. It may gradually accumulate as it seeps into the community's spirit. Aneeka criticises Eamonn: "Why didn't you mention that among the things this country will let you achieve if you're Muslim is torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport interrogations, spies in your mosques, teachers reporting your children to the authorities for wanting a world without British injustice?" (Shamsie 104). These lines are rather suggestive of the traumatising effects of oppression in her diasporic experiences. Torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport investigations, and spies all lead to trauma-inflicted neurotic effects, dissolving the psyche of human beings. To draw attention to the association between trauma and postcolonial studies, Anne Whitehead claims that trauma fiction and postcolonial fiction are closely related as "[t]rauma fiction overlaps with postcolonial fiction in its concern with the recovery of memory and the acknowledgement of the denied, the repressed and the forgotten" (82). It is important to remember that the trauma theory is also useful in analysing and classifying specific types of trauma, such as obligatory exodus, erotic, ethnic, and radical vehemence, discrimination, extermination, dispossession, and failure in transgenerational trauma transferring. It is meaningful when it is considered that diasporic trauma in Shamsie's novel focuses on the second-generation community of immigrants in which the characters experience the trauma of naturalisation to some degree. Neal stresses that "the cumulative effects of traumas are of central importance in forging the collective identity of any given group of people" (21). It can be claimed that a diasporic identity crisis along with political oppression result in traumatic effects for the Pasha siblings. One of the healers of trauma is forgetting and avoiding allusions and nightmares, if possible, "[Aneeka] fell asleep and at some point, there were arms around her in that childhood familial way. It wasn't a surprise, but that made it no less a pleasure to curl into the warmth of a twin and slip deeper into that level of sleep where nightmares can't reach, held fast by love, a foretaste of heaven" (188).

When the sisters are questioned by the British Deputy High Commission about their brother who had joined Daish after Parvaiz was killed in İstanbul, the commission

disregards their British nationalities and makes a decision based on how they look. Both of the sisters have turbans and hijabs on during the interrogation: “[T]he hijabs are still proof that Pakistani British are still caught in the Past” (Shamsie 202). Natasha Rogers claims that “[w]hen it is considered from public, cultural, or collective level, it is an essential healing facilitator for the community by a version of events that is written on purpose. However, this newly produced version would also be falsifying as political or ideological factors influence the authors” (5–6). It can be inferred that the way authors represent collective or individual experiences, in accordance with the expectations of the ruling or hegemonic powers or not, could function either as healing or traumatising. One other instance of diasporic trauma in the novel is when the British media uses the slang “Knickers” for the Pasha Family and distributed the news depicting Aneeka as a collaborator for the extremist brother. On the newscast, as a replacement for Parvaiz Pasha, they use colloquial and impertinent words like “Pervy Pasha” (Shamsie 204). Pervy is a colloquial used for a sexually corrupted person. The top news release “daughter and sister of Muslim terrorist, with history of secret sex life—The Exclusive Story of Knickers’ Pasha” (Shamsie 204). This reprehensible, ethnophobic, and Islamophobic insolence of the British media, along with their racism, reinforces the idea of rejecting ties to diasporic society as part of their own group, illustrating the neurotic implications of diasporic trauma. Trauma then bears intergenerational qualities and is augmented by external political traumas of the host land.

Aneeka, who inadvertently adopts a more combative demeanour while maintaining her identity as a diaspora agent, continues to be in a premarital relationship while being a devout adherent of religious obligations and customs. Her brother Parvaiz Pasha converted into a fervent fundamentalist like his father in retort to the Islamophobia and bigotry that the British state demonstrated as well as the attitude of America towards Muslims: “Even when the word ‘British’ was used, it was always ‘British of Pakistani descent’ or ‘British Muslim’ or, my [Isma’s] favorite, ‘British passport holders,’ always something interposed between their Britishness and terrorism” (Shamsie 40). Sercan Hamza Bağlama discusses this point as “*Home Fire* wittily literalises the fact that anything positive concerning Muslims in the UK is associated with Britishness by the media while anything negative is rhetorically made ‘unBritish’ and associated with the roots of the victimiser in order to interpose a symbolic distance between terrorism and Britishness” (1649). No matter how hard the immigrants try to participate in society, they are constantly rejected, ignored, and ostracised in Shamsie’s novel; even Parvaiz Pasha’s dead body was sent back to Pakistan from İstanbul rather than buried in England. Hashtags on social media such as “#GOBACKWHEREYOUCAMEFROM” (Shamsie 190) began flooding and Aneeka’s arrival in Pakistan justifies ideas of the diasporic reunion with their origin. Neal justifies the prevalence of national trauma as “national trauma tends to be communicated very rapidly, not only by the news media but also by the exchange of information at the personal level” (13). The refusal of Parvaiz’s burial in England is also another indicator of diasporic trauma which has neurotic effects on Aneeka who “wants



for her brother what she never had for her father: a grave beside which she can sit and weep for the awful, pitiable mess of her family life" (Shamsie 267). Shamsie highlights the need for a ritual of grief and mourning in the Pasha family here, trauma in other terms, especially through Aneeka. Arjun Appadurai, inspired by Benedict Anderson's notion of the imagined community<sup>1</sup> according to Boutros, considers imagination an essential constituent of cultural identification: "Benedict Anderson did us a service in identifying the way in which certain forms of mass mediation, notably those involving newspapers, novels, and other print media, played a key role in imagining the nation and in facilitating the spread of this form to the colonial world in Asia and elsewhere" (21–22). It is of great significance that mass media also functions in the formation of diasporic identities as well as mass migration. Boutros reconsiders Appadurai's conceptualisation of imagination as follows: "Particularly in the case of diasporic communities – in his interpretation of modern societies, these are quintessentially diasporic – the rise of mass-distributed media and mass migration led to a paradigmatic change in the way cultural identities were constituted" (Boutros 42). If trauma has an explosive quality as it brings about "a radical change that occurs within a short period of time" (Neal 3), the shocking motive for Pasha family is the refusal of their brother's burial in England which creates neurotic effects.

One of the obvious themes Shamsie uses to depict diasporic trauma in her novel is 'grief'. Aneeka first defines what it means for her ancestry: "Some as abstraction: their father, never a living presence in their life, dead for years before they knew to attach that word to him. Everyone died, everyone but the twins, who looked at each other to understand their own grief" (198). Then Aneeka describes how it feels for them:

Grief manifested itself in ways that felt like anything but grief; grief obliterated all feelings but grief; grief made a twin wear the same shirt for days on end to preserve the morning on which the dead were still living; grief made a twin peel stars off the ceiling and lie in bed with glowing points adhered to fingertips; grief was bad-tempered, grief was kind; grief saw nothing but itself, grief saw every speck of pain in the world; grief spread its wings large like an eagle, grief huddled small like a porcupine; grief needed company, grief craved solitude; grief wanted to remember, wanted to forget; grief raged, grief whimpered; grief made time compress and contract; grief tasted like hunger, felt like numbness, sounded like silence; grief tasted like bile, felt like blades, sounded like all the noise of the world. (198)

This short and broken narrativisation is one of the devices used to represent trauma. Here the notion of grief seems to involve many qualities of traumatic effects on individuals like allusions and haunting. The suffering of grief cannot be avoided or treated as the memory of their brother keeps haunting them. Repetition of the acute and/or chronic traumatic incident is another indicator of the experience: "Grief was a shape-shifter, and invisible too; grief could be captured as reflection in a twin's eye. Grief heard its death sentence the morning you both woke up and one was singing and the other caught the song" (Shamsie

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<sup>1</sup> For the concept, please see Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Verso, 2006).

198). These lines suggest the collective and shared quality of the traumatic experience. Aneeka tries to reveal her feeling of trauma but makes her mind again and grief haunts her again. The perpetrator and the victim are in an inexorable pursuit. Here grief appears to be a leitmotif and a literary device for grief is the inevitable consequence of the shared family tragedy caused by cultural differences. She starts by asking the question and replying herself:

What was this? Not grief. Grief she knew. Grief was the stepsibling they'd grown up with, unwanted and inevitable. Grief the amniotic fluid of their lives. Grief she could look in the eyes while her twin stared over its shoulder and told her of the world that lay beyond. Grief changed its shape to fit your contours—enveloping you as a second skin you eventually learned to slip into and resume your life. Grief was the deal God struck with the angel of death, who wanted an unpassable river to separate the living from the dead; grief the bridge that would allow the dead to flit among the living, their footsteps overhead, their laughter around the corner, their posture recognizable in the bodies of strangers you would follow down the street, willing them never to turn around. Grief was what you owed the dead for the necessary crime of living on without them. (207)

It indicates that it is grief as compensation of the death for the beloved ones which the siblings are bound to suffer. Several meanings are attributed to grief that is derived from the traumatic experience of the diasporic community which resonate with remembering, forgetting, dissociation and belatedness, all characteristics of classical perception of trauma. It can be asserted that the image is Parvaiz and diasporic trauma is expressed through grief here. Shamsie employs broken narrativisation again and calls it “rage” conclusively:

But this was not grief. It did not cleave to her, it flayed her. It did not envelop her, it leaked into her pores and bloated her beyond recognition. She did not hear his footsteps or his laughter, she no longer knew how to hunch down and inhabit his posture, she couldn't look into a mirror and see his eyes looking back at her. This was not grief. It was rage. It was his rage, the boy who allowed himself every emotion but rage, so it was the unfamiliar part of him, that was all he was allowing her now, it was all she had left of him. She held it to her breast, she fed it, she stroked its mane, she whispered love to it under the starless sky, and sharpened her teeth on its gleaming claws. (207)

The assertion of rage could be considered as one of the indicators of resisting, protesting, and responding to trauma, facilitating healing temporarily. Neurotic effects like helplessness and vulnerability are employed on purpose to indicate diasporic trauma. From my point of view, Shamsie keeps the notion of ‘grief’ by the end of the novel to emphasise the significance of diasporic trauma. Her depiction of second-generation diasporic trauma in her novel stresses the intergenerational transmission of traumatic effects throughout history. Thus, it is not merely a story of a migrant family in England but the voice of all asylum seekers in foreign lands away from their motherlands if they survived the journey through dark waters and territories along the way. It is of great

interest that Aneeka is hindered in every attempt to settle the matters by Home Secretary Karamat Lone, who believes that those who “set [them]selves apart” from British society deserve to be “treated differently” (Shamsie 87, 88) and denied a homeland. This must be read as the counter motive of the diasporic trauma in *Home Fire*.

### Conclusion

It might finally be deduced that Shamsie's work bears the qualities of diasporic trauma as well as postcolonial literature motifs. *Home Fire* deal with the theme of trauma conveyed through “torture, rendition, detention without trial, airport interrogations” of Muslim civilians and scenes of “a nineteen-year-old, rotting in the sun while his sister watches, out of her mind with grief” (Shamsie 93, 266). The author constructs the characters' background and current situation with substantial evidence effectively. Thus, the novel is not a sheer story of current diasporic groups, but it develops such themes by exploring features of unintentional expatriation, exodus, separation, and partition. In doing so, it presents their neurotic wounding effects like grief, threat, anger, protest, and silence for the diaspora members and people. In describing the history and the society through the family and ordinary people, the dual load of the tragic incidents is accentuated and conceptualised in Shamsie's novel. Shamsie's novel proves that despite all seemingly humanistic efforts in theoretical writings about refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants from particularly Africa, the Middle East and the Asian subcontinent, there still exists a race and geographical location-based discrimination and biases against all these people, if it is not a quixotic claim, which are justified by the double standards even today. Shamsie's novel accomplishes proving the reality of trauma in similar contexts throughout history drawing attention to the autochthonous tragedies of immigrants in today's world. The novel offers the most precise vision of diasporic identity, and its essential allegories work well and are an efficient illocutionary device for conveying the effects of diasporic trauma on people. She grapples with a traumatising identity shock, diasporic trauma that climaxes in the haunting of that experience by the final chapters of the novel.

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- ✕ The author of this article confirms that this research does not require a research ethics committee approval.
- ✕ The author of this article confirms that their work complies with the principles of research and publication ethics.
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- ✕ This article was screened for potential plagiarism using a plagiarism screening program.
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