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Original Article

Alienation in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire and Burnt Shadows: an Orientalist Perspective

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to analyse the theme of alienation in Kamila Shamsie's Burnt Shadows and Home Fire. Since Shamsie writes about the difficulties of assimilating to a foreign country with its own culture and beliefs, her works in some ways mirror her own diasporic experience as an immigrant. Readers can get a glimpse of immigrant life and the on-going struggle between the home country and the foreign nation through these novels. On the basis of Edward Said's Orientalism, an attempt is made to examine the idea of alienation in the respective novels by tracing the protagonists' journeys in the concerned texts.*

Keywords: *Alienation, Assimilation, Diaspora, Immigrant, Orientalism.*

Alienation, a sensation brought on by a sense of estrangement felt by people when they live away from their birthplace, is a recurrent theme in diasporic literature worldwide. People's psychological well-being is severely impacted by the mental struggle they have when attempting to blend in with their new culture while maintaining ties to their own. As a result, they do not feel like they belong anywhere, which leads to an identity crisis where they frequently battle with issues like who they are and where they fit in. The pressure from society and the need to uphold their traditional values, which frequently conflict with their new environment, exacerbate this issue. Language hurdles, racial prejudice, and the absence of a caring and understanding community are just a few of the reasons why someone who lives far from family and community feels alone in their new country. The diasporic group frequently expresses feelings of loss and longing for their own country as they reflect on what they have lost and what they are missing out on. Second-generation immigrants occasionally struggle to fit in because they are conflicted between the culture they were raised in and the values of their parents

Many people have regrettably been compelled to migrate to other nations for a variety of historical and political reasons, including colonialism, war, and politics, which causes animosity, survivor's guilt, and ultimately social estrangement. Scholars from a wide range of fields, including sociology, philosophy, literature, and postcolonial studies, have studied alienation in great detail. They have done so primarily in relation to identity, society, and colonial or postcolonial contexts. The idea of alienation has its roots in Karl Marx, especially in his Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts. According to him, under capitalism, alienation is the separation of people from their work, the goods they produce, their co-workers, and their own humanity (1). According to Marx, economic systems dehumanise people by treating them like simple gears in a machine (1). Said's criticism of Orientalism as a system that marginalises the "Other" (2) and perpetuates alienation in colonial contexts is consistent with Marx's perspectives on systematic dehumanization, despite his emphasis on economics.

Fanon examines alienation in the context of colonialism in Black Skin, White Masks and The Wretched of the Earth, concentrating on the social and psychological estrangement of colonised peoples. He explains how people are alienated from their culture, identity, and humanity as a result of colonial institutions' imposition of inferiority complex. The internalised struggle of colonised subjects negotiating their own identities against colonial stereotypes is highlighted by Fanon's work (3,4).

Homi Bhabha examines alienation in postcolonial situations, when people occupy liminal areas between cultures, resulting in a sense of displacement, in The Location of Culture, which focuses on hybridity and the "third space"(5). He talks on how cultural ambivalence and colonial prejudices cause subjects to become estranged by depriving them of a solid identity. Georg Simmel examines the sociological idea of the stranger in his article "The Stranger". The stranger is a person who is both a part of and separate from a society, representing a particular kind of alienation. The stranger, according to him, is someone who is physically present but socially and culturally remote, a situation that fosters both independence and loneliness (6). Ania Loomba's "Colonialism/Postcolonialism" explores how racial and cultural hierarchies imposed by colonial discourses alienate colonized individuals. Building on Said's "Orientalism", she investigates how, especially in postcolonial contexts, literature both reflects and challenges these alienating institutions (7).

Some of the diasporic writers who have made significant contribution to diasporic literature may include Bharti Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Khaled Hosseini, Zadie Smith, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and many others. In one of the diasporic novels, The Namesake, Jhumpa Lahiri examines the sense of alienation experienced by an Indian family in the United States, the land of dreams, with special attention to Gogol, the main character, and his identity issues (8). The struggles of two families in London who are dealing with the challenges of a multicultural society and who suffer from identity crisis and alienation are chronicled in Zadie Smith's book White Teeth (9). In Americanah, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie tells the tale of Ifemelu, a young, ambitious Nigerian woman who comes to the US to pursue higher education but is overcome by the foreign culture and confronted with numerous issues such as racism and financial limitations, leading to a complete sense of alienation and identity crisis (10). The story of Khaled Hosseini's And the Mountains Echoed intertwines the lives of several individuals from different eras. It centers on Abdullah, a young Afghan boy whose sister Pari is sold to a wealthy family, causing him to feel a great feeling of loss and alienation. As he struggles with broken familial ties and cultural exile, especially after immigrating to the US, this isolation feeds Abdullah's lifelong estrangement. The book examines how identities are shattered by war, migration, and personal sacrifices, leaving characters alienated from their heritage, one another, and themselves (11). The protagonist of Bharati Mukherjee's Wife is Dimple Dasgupta, a young Indian woman who immigrates to the US following an arranged marriage to engineer Amit. Dimple expects to live a fulfilled life, but instead she experiences cultural displacement, loneliness in a strange country, and the restrictive limitations of traditional gender roles. Her alienation manifests as she struggles to reconcile her identity as an Indian wife with the unfamiliar American society, leading to a psychological unravelling marked by dissatisfaction, detachment, and ultimately, a violent act of rebellion against her oppressive circumstances (12).

In his seminal work Orientalism (2), Edward Said explored the ways in which Western academics, artists, and other authors- known as 'Orientalists'- have depicted the Middle East in their writing. Historically, these authors have created a skewed and simplistic perception of the East, or the 'Orient' as a mysterious and exotic place. According to Said, these Orientalist works portrayed the inhabitants of the Middle East as inferior, docile, and in need of Western intervention, in addition to reinforcing preconceived notions about how the region was seen (2). Additionally, Said maintained that Western conceptions were not merely passive depictions but actively contributed to the development of the worldview and the defence of colonial dominance (2). Writers from all over the world have challenged and occasionally repeated Orientalist clichés in the post-colonial narrative. In addition to addressing the intricacies of identity, hybridity, and displacement, their writings provide a critique of the Western perspective that is used to view their nations. According to Said, the Orient is a "semi-mythical construct" that has been imposed on a number of eastern European nations (2). Said focused on how the phrase is used in relation to Southwest Asia, North Africa, or the Middle East, although it has been frequently used to describe governments in Eastern and South Asia (2). The Orient's geographical unpredictability forces a vastly varied array of people, civilizations, customs, and landscapes into an overtly simplified singular entity.

Like the term 'Orient', 'Oriental' was used to describe people or groups from east of Europe, especially those from Arab or Muslim nations. Said has exposed the harmful prejudices about these Orientals in his book, portraying them as lethargic, mysterious, and deceitful. Westerners are depicted as civilised and logical, while people from the Middle East are frequently depicted as savage and illogical. This way of thinking, which forms the basis of Orientalist ideology, separated the world into the mutually exclusive categories of East and West, or Orient and Occident. Orientals were not restricted to scholarly circles alone. The contributions of authors, poets, painters, philosophers, and politicians including Eugène Delacroix, Victor Hugo, and Arthur Balfour were also covered by Said. Said contends that the persistence of Orientalism's potency comes from its constant repetition; these ideas have been reaffirmed in recent decades and still influence public opinion (2). Before attempting to analyse the works from an Orientalist standpoint, this article will first look into how displacement impacts people's life and causes strong emotional upheaval and estrangement.

As a diasporic writer whose literary subjects and personal history capture the difficulties of juggling multiple cultures, Kamila Shamsie holds a special place in modern diasporic literature. Shamsie's life has been characterised by both actual and symbolic cross-border travel. She was born in Karachi, Pakistan, and later received her education and lived in the United States and the United Kingdom. This global experience is reflected in her literature, where concerns of identity, belonging, and home are continuously explored. As a writer who has been influenced by many cultures, Shamsie's writing is concerned with the complex awareness of a diasporic person: deeply ingrained in memories of her native country, but also acutely aware of and influenced by the Western environment she lives in. Her works exhibit a keen awareness of the struggle and compromises that characterise life in the diaspora.

Shamsie narrates the tale of a British-Pakistani family entangled in a web of personal allegiance, Islamic militancy, and official monitoring in her work Home Fire (13). The novel's characters struggle with their position in British society, continually juggling the conflict between national identity and cultural heritage. One of the main concerns of diasporic

literature is how to create an identity in the space between origin and settlement, which is echoed by this struggle of being both inside and outside the country. Shamsie considers how historical influences, governmental regulations, and personal interactions constantly modify identity through these characters.

Another important factor in creating Shamsie's diasporic voice is language. She exemplifies the hybridity inherent in diasporic expression by writing in English while incorporating Urdu phrases, cultural allusions, and historical memory throughout her prose. Her stories create a space where many voices, memories, and identities coexist rather than merely translating one culture for another. The dual consciousness of the diasporic subject, who must continuously translate between contexts while being conscious of the voids and silences that such translation entails, is mirrored by this linguistic layering. Her writings demonstrate that diaspora involves more than just geographical relocation; it also entails mental and emotional transformations as well as the ability to live with contradiction. In this way, Shamsie makes a significant contribution to diasporic literature by providing stories that embrace the fluid, frequently painful, but profoundly human experience of being in-between, challenging fixed identities and national boundaries.

Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire revolves around two families in London that are the political Lone family and the Muslim Pasha family. As the story opens, we already see the hardships of an immigrant when Isma Pasha is arrested at Heathrow airport while she is trying to board a flight to Amherst, Massachusetts, to enrol in a PhD program in Sociology for which she has been awarded a scholarship. Isma had been practicing mock interrogations with her younger sister, Aneeka, who was a law student at a university in London. Aneeka and Parvaiz, her twin brother, have a tight relationship. They rarely talk about their absent father, a terrorist who died while being sent to Guantanamo. The twins were raised by Isma and their Aunt Naseema after the death of their mother and grandmother. When Isma eventually arrives in Amherst, she meets Eamonn Lone, the son of a prominent British politician who was married to an Irish American woman and was formerly a Muslim. Eamonn's father was appointed Home Secretary after he met Isma. Parvaiz, on the other hand, is perplexed about life's meaning and his naïve nature makes him a prime target for terrorist recruiters. As they observe the deceptive tactics used to recruit Parvaiz, the readers are devastated. Farooq, the primary recruiter, has a highly crafty demeanour and starts acting like a father figure to Parvaiz. In the end, Parvaiz and Farooq depart for Raqqa on the guise of travelling to Karachi to see relatives. In the meantime, Eamonn meets Aneeka when he returns to London and they fall in love. When Eamonn's father finds out about their relationship, things become extremely twisted and deadly since Aneeka has a secret goal. In this novel, Kamila Shamise tries to clarify how British Muslims who practice their faith face discrimination and exclusion, while British Muslims who have assimilated fully embrace British culture and values in their renunciation of their Muslim identities in a last-ditch effort to avoid being viewed as 'the other' in society.

Stereotyping is both a common habit and a result of estrangement. Isma avoids carrying items that could attract unwelcome attention since she is conscious of her status as a stereotyped Muslim in the nation. She was careful not to bring anything that would spark discussion or inquiry, such as books about her academic interests, family photos, or the Quran (13). She feels violated and alone at the same time when she is stopped and questioned at the airport despite having taken all the required precautions. Her Muslim name alone raises suspicions, and the officer's questioning of her about whether the pricey jacket in her suitcase was hers although she had nothing else to point to further demonstrates the stereotyping. As implied by her hijab, Isma is likely a terrorist, so it stands to reason that she would be unemployed or impoverished, which would indicate that she stole the jacket. She really surprised the police by saying that she is the manager when he inquired if she stole it from her manager (13). This demonstrates how society as a whole felt about immigrants, especially those who practiced Islam. Isma was subjected to the British test even after her belongings were questioned. "Do you consider yourself British"?(13) The unstated considerations here are whether Isma truly belonged to Britain, if she was affiliated with Britain's adversaries, and whether she was sure she would not blow up the building and commit acts of terrorism. Her passport alone is insufficient to demonstrate her devotion.

It is seen that Isma's sexuality being questioned throughout the narrative and connected to her religious beliefs. As we can see when Dr. Shah advises her to reconsider wearing her hijab because it might be keeping Eamonn far away from her, her fashion choices seem to reflect her sexual life (13). While Isma is a devout Muslim, she feels that marriage and sex are not mutually exclusive because it is a powerful experience to be with someone as beloved as a husband (13). Even when Karamat first meets Isma, she is viewed as a virgin who does not care about her appearance and is entirely judged by her appearance (13).

Isma feels cut off from society because she is constantly discriminated against and treated like a type rather than an individual. Isma is not like her sister Aneeka, though, who flaunts her sexuality despite wearing a hijab. She doesn't mind dating or wearing loud makeup. Compared to Isma, she is more forthright and does not hold back. She perplexed Eamonn by praying after their sexual encounter. When Eamonn asked her what she was praying for, she said that following her beliefs and beginning each day with a positive outlook were more important than making a purchase (13). Eamonn wanted to know

why Aneeka had to wear her hijab, but he couldn't understand her because she was contradictory in both her demeanour and her life choices. According to Aneeka, she chooses which body parts she wants Emmon to view and which she would like strangers to see. Through Aneeka, Shamise has made an effort to challenge the western stereotype of women in particular. The hijab is seen as inferior and a symbol of traditional and archaic values in the west. Aneeka is a symbol for everyone in the West who is made to feel alone and rejected due to their religious beliefs. The Home Secretary's speech serves as an illustration of the unjust treatment of those who practice various religions. His speech in which he advises people not to dress differently, think differently, or associate with conservative or backward views makes it clear that he stigmatizes Muslims (13). The audience was greatly impacted by this speech and became increasingly intolerant to those who practiced other religions. Aneeka experienced prejudice and was also spat on in the metro, an act demonstrating total intolerance for outsiders. The newspaper's title, "Pervy Pasha twin sister engineered sex trysts with Home Secretary's son", painted her in an unfavourable light even after her relationship with Eamonn was made public (13). Accused of brainwashing Eamonn, she was referred to as "knickers" and "hojabi", which are likely a combination of the terms-- hooker and hijabi. Parvaiz, Aneeka's twin brother, was another stereotype in the book who experienced alienation. The British media depicted him as a terrorist who was slain while attempting to enter the British consulate. The news that stated, "Wembley-born Pervy Pasha, the latest name in a string of Muslims from Britain who have joined ISIS," was believed by the public since they were unable to hear the reality due to his Muslim identity (13). Since terrorists do not have the right to be buried at home, Parvaiz was denied even the dignity of dying since he was wrongly accused of working with the enemy. The idea that Parvaiz was killed merely to make amends and return home would never be accepted. His neighbour Gladys, who knew Parvaiz well, stood up for him, claiming that the Home Secretary ought to feel ashamed of himself because he was a lovely soul (13).

The concept of alienation is present throughout the novel in the experiences of the protagonists, particularly in light of their Muslim ancestry and the sociopolitical climate following the horrific events of 9/11. The growing Islamophobia and the current political environment exacerbate the alienation that Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz feel, making them feel alone and different. It is heart-breaking how stressed they are just trying to get by in their normal lives when everyone around them is suspicious of them. The characters' attempts to carve out a place for themselves in a marginalizing environment result in identity crises, internal strife, and mayhem that affects them more than one may think. In his book Orientalism, Edward Said goes into great detail about how the West creates a dichotomy that elevates Western identities by constructing an image of the East. Through societal perceptions, Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz undergo a form of 'othering' that diminishes their unique identities to merely stereotypical representations of terrorism and extremism. When they are compelled to live in a world that treats them suspiciously, their sense of alienation is intensified. Furthermore, we see cultural misrepresentation because Said's claim that Western narratives frequently distort Eastern cultures is exactly consistent with how Muslims are portrayed in the novel by the media. It causes people to feel invisible in a society that wants to see them, care about them, and value and appreciate their differences.

An excellent illustration of Said's viewpoint is the inaccurate portrayal of Aneeka and Parvaiz in the news headlines. Said asserts that colonial history has a significant influence on how an individual forms their identity. All of Home Fire's main characters bear the burden of their Pakistani ancestry and are moulded by their post-colonial circumstances. Amma, the mother of Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz, is shown to be having a difficult time adjusting to life as a Pakistani immigrant due to racism and social prejudice. Even as second-generation immigrants, Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz's lives are weighed down by their colonial past, which still shapes their identities.

The novel features juxtaposition when it comes to Isma and her family on one side and Eamonn's family on the other. Despite having a Muslim origin, Eamonn was raised with all the virtues of the West by his father, Karamat. His father may be making a last-ditch effort to blend in with British society by severing his ties to his culture and religion. He is most likely aware that his Muslim identification would draw too much attention, which would hurt his chances in life and at work. When Emmon uses a huge word that reflects his affluent upbringing, Isma is caught wondering how his father could have taught him that big word while failing to teach him fundamental Urdu (13). The characters' lives reflect the power dynamics that Said has examined in his writings since they are continuously impacted by societal perceptions and ideas as well as political decisions. The power systems that have portrayed Muslims as threats to others are directly responsible for the alienation that many experience. For example, Parvaiz's radicalization might be interpreted as a response to this disparity, illustrating the ways in which individuals may respond to marginalization and structural oppression like in the novel.

In the other novel Burnt Shadows, Shamsie tells the tale of two families from different eras and environments, which spans several decades from World War II to the 2001 World Trade Centre attack and the horrific fallout that followed. The narrative follows two families with contrasting nationalities and relationships over a long period of time. It illuminates the various conflicts that generations encounter as well as post-colonial issues of home, nostalgia, alienation, and identity crisis. Shamsie discusses a Pakistani criminal and his Japanese mother, an Indian father, and an Afghani friend who are all part of

the colonised world and experience a terrible sense of displacement and otherness. Hiroko Tanaka Ashraf, a victim of the terrible atomic explosion in Japan, illustrates the severe physical and psychological wounds brought on by the violent shock caused by this World War 2 attack. The terrible incidents that lead to the story's conclusion and the enormous tragedies that result from personal losses are both depicted in this novel.

Because of forced migrations and a sense of not having a true home, all of the characters in the text experience alienation and otherness. After the war, Hiroko moves abroad, Sajjad, Konrad, and Elizabeth are uprooted by India's Partition, and Harry departs the nation because of political unrest. Due to the explosion, Hiroko lost both her father and her fiancé. She was compelled to flee Nagasaki and travel to Delhi in pursuit of a new life, where she discovers that her fiancé Konrad's half-sister is now wed to James Burton, a British colonial official. The novel continuously depicts this journey, in which the displaced people attempt to survive between their home country and the alien land while experiencing a sense of alienation.

The prologue of Burnt Shadows shows Raza's narrative coming to a conclusion as he asks, "How did it come to this?" (14). His mother, Hiroko Tanaka, a Japanese schoolteacher who survived the atomic bomb in 1945 and known as a "hibuksha", or war victim, is where the story of this excruciating exile began. She was expelled from Japan after discovering that America was defending the strikes and asserting that they were essential to preserving American lives. She first travelled to India before relocating to Pakistan, where Raza was born. Despite the fact that his mother's background and their past made it difficult for him to adapt, he made desperate efforts to blend in. In contrast to his parents' hopes, Raza struggled academically and, despite numerous attempts, failed the test.

Due to his Japanese heritage, Raza also experienced romantic disappointment. Salma, his true love, told him straight out that his mother was the reason his parents would never allow her to marry him. She merely said, "Nagasaki", in response to his demand for an explanation. "It's the bomb. No one will marry you their daughter until they are miserable" (14). Salma ignored Raza's attempts to argue with her by pointing out that he was born after the blast. She was brutally honest with Raza, believing him to be deformed. Salma told him, "Go to America, and don't tell anyone the truth there", when he wished to move there and start a life (14). Since Raza had been waiting for a definitive affirmation from society that he was not an outsider, this had a significant negative impact on his psychological health and created a deep sense of emotional alienation. After all, he was not a Pakistani, even if he had lived his entire childhood in a mohalla with them. The idea that he was the "other" scared him. When his friend Bilal asked the rickshaw driver to determine which of them wasn't Pakistani, it brought back memories for him. The fact that he had to repeatedly prove his identity over the years and that all of that work had been in vain truly troubled him. While he was depressed over seeing boys in college, he reflected on the promise of America and wondered what he would do with his own life. He would definitely go there and it would be made possible by Uncle Henry. As long as he had the prospect of America, everything else was irrelevant (14). He soon discovered, though, that Henry had broken these assurances, making his American dream a nightmare. After this, it was quite the roller coaster for Raza, who mustered the confidence to go Sohrab Goth for shipping without realizing that it would mean permanently being apart from his family. He now pretended to be an Afghan child named Raza Hazara, who stood in for the displaced refugee. As he travelled from Kandahar to Afghanistan, Iran, and finally Muscat- where he had to ride in a pickup with animals- his sense of otherness and isolation grew. His physical and mental health suffered greatly as a result of this trauma, and it is heartbreaking to see the road taken by a youngster who had to endure so much in life simply because his mother was Japanese.

The character of Hiroko Tanaka, a straightforward Japanese schoolteacher who was fluent in German and English and fell in love with a German idealist named Konrad, is crucial to a thorough discussion of Burnt Shadows. She was made to feel like a "other" in her own nation and attracted hatred from her own people. "When the world looked Konrad into an enemy, Hiroko refused to endorse away."(14) Although he opposed Hiroko's marriage and was labelled a traitor, her father perished in the conflict. Hiroko's back's permanent burns served as evidence of the trauma that war inflicts on millions of people. She felt as though only "burnt shadows", a reference to the birds that were imprinted on her back after the explosion, remained in her life after Konrad's death in the atomic blast. "Hiroko runs her fingertips along her back…there is feeling, there is no strong emotional and something else. There is feeling where there is skin, and there is nothing where there is nothing… She brushes her thumb over the skin that used to be there. It's scorched and lifeless" (14).

In line with Said's criticism of Orientalism as a discourse that rationalises violence against the "Other" by reducing them to objects within a larger geopolitical narrative, her physical scars represent the long-lasting trauma of Western technological dominance. In accordance with Said's criticism that Orientalist frameworks deprive Eastern subjects of agency by portraying them as passive victims of history (2), Hiroko notes that the bombing reduces people to "a little corner of the big picture" (14). Hiroko felt alone in her birthplace after losing her house. With all of the loss and suffering that comes with war, Hiroko felt psychologically alone and homeless. In her mind, Nagasaki was now split into two images: the green, lovely

one from before the explosion, and the dark, hellfire-flaming one from after. After this, her life would never be the same, and she felt alone in this cruel world after being forced to leave her native country and relocate to an unfamiliar one. "I had never been passionate about Nagasaki and intended to leave it, but when I saw my birthplace reduced to ashes, I realized how much a person craves familiarity after being forced to abandon a place they call home. I could find more that matches Japanese traditions in your world than I can in this English world". (14) She was forced to leave Japan in search of a new life after her existence in the world was reduced to that of a hibakusha. Since she did not really know anyone else, she made the decision to travel to India in order to locate her late fiancé's family.

Hiroko became even more estranged as a result of her later moves to Delhi, Karachi, and New York. But because she is not tied to any one national or cultural identity, her nomadic lifestyle also highlights her alienation. Since Hiroko's lack of roots is a source of isolation and a method of resistance, Said's criticism of Orientalism as a language that denies the 'Oriental' subject full humanity is relevant in this instance (14). Thus, Shamsie paints a nuanced picture: Hiroko challenges Orientalist preconceptions through her mobility, but she is constantly alienated by the international imperialist mechanisms of the Partition and the bombing of Nagasaki. Her romance with Sajjad, a Muslim Indian, is deemed inappropriate by the British colonial elite in Delhi, represented by Elizabeth and James Burton, because of cultural differences. Elizabeth's caution that Sajjad's world is "so alien to yours" (14) is indicative of an Orientalist mentality that establishes strict cultural divisions and portrays the East as inferior and unintelligible.

As a Japanese woman living in colonial India, Hiroko is constantly on the outside of both Indian and Western social structures. This supports Said's claim that Orientalism produces a worldview in which people from the East are not given full humanity and are only seen as exceptions to the Western standard (2). When she met James Burton, a British coloniser with condescending manners, her visit took a turn for the worst. She experienced many highs and lows during her time in India, which was dealing with the fallout from Partition and was rife with political unrest and bloodshed. Living in Indian society also made Hiroko feel alienated because she was always treated as an outsider. After she married Sajjad, they moved to Turkey for a while before settling in Pakistan. She gave birth to her son Raza in Karachi, and Sajjad and her child were the only things in her universe. Following Sajjad's passing, Hiroko moved to America, where her friend Elizabeth lived. She was afraid that Pakistan would join the conflict and violence. She remarked, "Pakistan and India are about to unleash a nuclear war", since she could not forget the horrors of war (14). Her family was further marginalized by the Orientalist stereotypes that permeate the American media and public perception, which associate Islam with terrorism. Hiroko's experiences navigating scepticism and prejudice in a post-9/11 world mirror Orientalism's portrayal of the East as a "semi-mythical construct" linked to danger and irrationality (2). Thus, she feels alienated in two ways: as a mother targeted by modern Islamophobia and as a survivor of Western violence, both of which have their roots in Orientalist dehumanization. Her frequent movement throughout the book illustrates her resilience because she was adamant about surviving despite the rootlessness and alienation she experienced. She experienced an identity crisis as a result of the estrangement and believed that she did not belong in any community, including her own in Japan, where she was viewed as an outsider because of her father's alleged betrayal. "She would always be an outsider in Pakistan... she had no desire in belonging to something as contradictorily insubstantial and harmful as a nation... but it didn't stop her from noticing how Raza winced whenever a Pakistani asked him where he was from," Shamsie explained, shedding light on her predicament (14).

Through the Pasha family, who appeared to be caught between their religious tradition and the scrutinizing eyes of western culture, Kamila Shamsie's novel Home Fire explores the lives of British Muslims. Muslims are often viewed through an Orientalist lens in the West, and their cultural customs are associated with violence and terrorism. In the narrative, Parvaiz's isolation in Britain led him to join a radical group as a result of this type of stereotyping. Ironically, the Western view of Muslims as outlined by Orientalist concepts is the reason why some people are drawn to extremist organizations. In a last-ditch effort to gain power, British-Pakistani politician Karamat Lone totally disassociated himself from his Muslim identity. Despite his deliberate attempts to adapt to Western ideals, he was still perceived as the "other" and evaluated according to his faith by British society, therefore his efforts were in vain. Eamonn, on the other hand, embodies the archetype of the "good Muslim", someone who managed to balance Islamic principles with Western standards but is yet torn between the demands of Islam and Western expectations.

Orientalism, in a sense, produces an idealized version of Muslim identity that is never fully free from colonial scrutiny. The conflict between Western and Eastern values, a hallmark of the Orientalist division between the "civilized" West and the "barbaric" East, appears frequently throughout the book. Since Muslims were the first to come under British suspicion whenever a political crisis arose, this dichotomy is thoroughly examined throughout the plot. The effects of Western imperialism are evident throughout, as the characters struggle greatly in their daily lives due to being continuously perceived as being exclusively of Eastern descent, complete with all the stereotypes that go along with it. The questioning scenario between Isma and an interrogation officer at the start of the book serves as an illustration of this. The lowly status

of an Eastern lady, especially a Muslim woman, is clearly shown in this scene: “He wanted to know her thoughts on Shias, homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, The Great British Bake Off, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombers, dating websites He wanted to know what she thought about the invasion of Iraq, Israel, Shias, homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, The Great British Bake Off, suicide bombers, and dating sites” (14). This is how the idea of “othering” slowly emerges in the life of an exile because of his or her skin tone, upbringing, and even attire. Furthermore, Isma appears to be a quiet and obedient individual in the interrogation room, perfectly matching the stereotype of a colonial subject, rather than resisting the officer's provocative questions. The officer's actions revealed a sense of white supremacy over a non-white race. “So far as the Orient is concerned, standardisation and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of "the mysterious Orient” (2). Her sister Aneeka has been portrayed as more powerful and cunning than Isma, even going so far as to pretend to love Eamomn, a politician’s son, in order to gain what she wanted. “You were hope,” Aneeka said to Eamonn in one of the scenes. “The world was dark and then there you were, blazing with light. How can anyone fail to love hope” (*14*)? She demonstrated her character’s degradation by being willing to use Eamomn to support her brother Pervaiz. Shamsie’s depiction of a female figure demonstrated how Eastern authors occasionally stereotype their own characters-a characteristic that is examined much later in the notion of re-orientalism. In reference to the way characters like as Shamsie’s Aneeka are portrayed, Edward Said stated, “They express unlimited sensuality, they are more or less stupid, and above all they are willing.” (*2*)

The predicament of the marginalised Orients who worked for the English during India’s colonial era is illuminated in Kamila Shamsie’s novel Burnt Shadows. Sajjad, one of the main characters, was an English family employee of the Burton family and had a strong love for poetry. As an Oriental, he was not recognised or acknowledged in the home and was especially detested by Elizabeth Burton. Under British rule, his actual identity was destroyed, and the Burtons’ domineering demeanour damaged his self-esteem. The Burtons in pre-Partition Delhi dissuaded him from dating Hiroko because they saw him as a lower-class “native” whose culture is incompatible with Hiroko’s. Said’s idea of Orientalism as a system that frames the Orient as a “perversion” of Western values in order to legitimize domination and exclusion is reflected in this (2).

Sajjad was forced to relocate to Karachi during the 1947 Partition since he was a Muslim and could not return to his beloved Delhi. His narrative illustrates how the West frequently has a very limited perspective on Muslim nations like Pakistan and treats him as a “other”, particularly in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. Hiroko, the main female character, also stands in for the east Orientals, who are seen as unimportant by the West. Following the American bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Hiroko fled to India in order to find Elizabeth Burton, the sister of her late fiancé, and take sanctuary at her home. She appeals to James Burton because of the unique and enigmatic nature of her Japanese ancestry. Her “foreignness” seemed to captivate him, reinforcing the Orientalist notion that the East is enigmatic and alien. James finds this woman, whom he couldn’t place, “oddly perturbing” (14). Despite everything, Hiroko had the heart to adore Sajjad, who informed her as though confiding a deep secret, “I could see you were going to speak to me as an equal. That’s not something I’m used to from the English. Or from anyone who isn’t Indian” (14). Sajjad knew the constraints placed on him and the consequences that would result from his relationship with Hiroko, “They would have held it against both of us. You would not have been asked to stay” (14). This reaffirmed the Orientalist notion that the East is always viewed as primitive and unworthy of love, while the West never treats it with equality or respect. The American airport officer who addressed Hiroko in one of the moments naively explained away the bombings of Japan by stating, “It was a terrible thing, but it had to be done to save American lives” (14). Elizabeth falsely accused Sajjad of raping Hiroko at a crucial juncture in the novel, even though there was no proof. Even when Hiroko defended Sajjad by claiming that he was “not an animal, not a rapist”, no one took her seriously (14). As demonstrated in the incident where Sajjad tells James, “You are right,” an Orient does not even merit an apology from the Occident for its transgressions. “It is not the question of nation. It’s of the class. You would have apologized if I’d been to Oxford” (14).

The role of the new Orient in the West has also been examined in the novel. Raza, the son of Sajjad and Hiroko, had an identity dilemma after James’s son Harry offered him a job in the CIA, but Steve turned him down because of his history. He said,

> You are an idiot to hire these third country nationalists. Economically, sure, I see the sense. But stop recruiting them from Pakistan and Bangladesh. You are acting as if this was a territorial war and they’re neutral parties. Go with guys from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and the Philippines. Indians are OK, so long they aren’t Muslims (*14*).

Raza is vulnerable to these narratives because of his work as a contractor in Afghanistan, where his detention results from his Muslim identity overshadowing his uniqueness. Said’s argument that Orientalism produces a worldview in which Eastern peoples are denied self-determination and their acts are understood through a lens of Western superiority is echoed

in Shamsie's critique here (*14*). Raza was unpopular in the West because of his Muslim identity, which placed him in the new Orient. Because of his ties to Islam and Pakistan, he was labelled a terrorist and eventually detained at Guantanamo Bay. This is most illustrated in the novel's prologue, which describes Raza's final confinement, when he is deprived of his uniqueness and transformed to the Orientalist cliché of the "dangerous Muslim." "How did it come to this?" (*14*). The novel's opening question, asks the reader to link Raza's alienation to the ideological and historical forces of Orientalism that dehumanise him.

In Burnt Shadows, the theme of alienation is deep and layered, shaped by the powerful historical and cultural impact of Western imperialism. This reflects what Edward Said describes in Orientalism- a way of thinking that turns the East into something exotic, inferior, or even dangerous. The characters in the novel- Hiroko, Sajjad, and Raza- all live in a world where they are often misunderstood or reduced to simple labels. Their identities are shaped and distorted by these narrow and often harmful views. Shamsie uses real historical events and patterns across time to show how these issues are not just local or personal- they are global. Through Hiroko's journey across different countries, we see a character who keeps moving and adapting. Her "nomadic consciousness"-the ability to live between cultures-becomes a quiet form of resistance. But even this can't fully protect her or others from the sense of isolation and displacement caused by colonial and imperial legacies. In colonial India and post-9/11 America, her Japanese identity made her an outsider, which reflects Said's criticism of the Orient as a created area where people are "seen through" as problems rather than equals (2).

The manner in which colonial and cultural hierarchies exclude Hiroko and reinforce Orientalist power relations is shown by Sajjad's statement, "They would have held it against both of us. You would not have been asked to stay" (14). From Hiroko's post-Hiroshima anguish to her displacement in Pakistan and New York, alienation is depicted on a global level in Burnt Shadows, which uses Western perspectives to show the East as a place of ongoing conflict and exoticism. By telling these stories, Shamsie invites the reader to think more deeply about the lasting effects of Orientalism. Like Said, she wants us to question the systems and ways of thinking that still divide people, create stereotypes, and strip individuals of their full humanity. For instance, her novel Kartography also depicts alienation through the personal and societal divisions brought about by the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War and its aftermath in Karachi. In keeping with Said's idea of Orientalism as a discourse that creates inflexible cultural boundaries, the novel's characters such as Raheen and Karim suffer estrangement as a result of concealed family history and Pakistan's socio-political division (2). The city itself becomes a site of disputed identities, shaped by colonial legacies that categorize communities as "Other" within their own nation. Raheen's struggle to reconcile her privileged identity with Karachi's violent past is a reflection of this internalised alienation. The novel depicts Orientalist conflicts between the 'civilized' West and 'chaotic' East (terms often used by Said in his work) through the elites of Karachi, whose Westernised identities clash with Pakistan's socio-political unrest. Raheen's broken connections and buried family secrets serve as a stark reminder of both individual and societal alienation. Within a single cultural setting, Kartography depicts alienation as more introspective and confined, linked to interpersonal betrayals and Pakistan's post-partition identity. Raheen's internal estrangement from her own society is reflected in her incapacity to comprehend Karachi's shattered past (15).

Burnt Shadows, on the other hand, depicts alienation on a worldwide level, emphasising the universal effects of colonialism, war, and post-9/11 Islamophobia through Hiroko's transnational experience. A close analysis of the presentation of the theme of alienation in the two novels reveals that Hiroko's experience is more directly linked to Said's idea of the "Other" as a target of exclusion and domination; whereas Raheen's alienation is based in a particular national narrative and is exacerbated by her on-going outsider status across various cultural landscapes (Said 204). Home Fire explores alienation through family, faith, and citizenship, highlighting the struggles of British Muslims in a post-9/11 world. Shamsie shows how state power and public discourse cast Muslim identities as "Other" (2), creating estrangement both from the nation and within the family. Aneeka's love for Eamonn and Parvaiz's radicalisation reveal the tension between private desires and public identities, making their alienation both personal and political. Nonetheless, both the novels support Said's contention that Orientalism actively upholds geopolitical and cultural hierarchies by portraying alienation as a result of past traumas and colonial legacies that sustain divisions (2).

By questioning and rejecting its tropes, Shamsie's works engage with Orientalism in a profound way. She gives voice to those who are considered "Other" by humanising characters who are marginalized by colonial and postcolonial discourses in both novels. While Burnt Shadows directly challenges Western Orientalist narratives, especially in its post-9/11 sections where characters like Raza are viewed as "exotic" threats, Kartography critiques the internal orientalisation within South Asian societies, where class and ethnic divisions reflect colonial constructs. In keeping with Said's observation that these concepts are still frequently used in contemporary contexts, Shamsie demonstrates how Orientalist frameworks continue to influence attitudes and alienate people by fusing personal narratives with world histories (2). Shamsie's novels expose estrangement as a political and personal effect of Orientalist legacies, challenging readers to re-evaluate the long-lasting influence of colonial ideologies on belonging and identity.

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