



# The Otherness in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*\*

Kamile Şemsi'nin *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* (2017) Adlı  
Romanında Ötekilik

**Fatma Kalpaklı\*\***

## Abstract

Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) tells the story of British Muslims and mainly focuses on the issue of otherness of the non-Christian British citizens. *Home Fire* (2017) won the 2018 Women's Prize for Fiction and it deals with the cultural clashes experienced by the two British families of Pakistani descent due to their otherness in the eye of White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) majority in Britain. It is shown that the harder they try to be welcomed by the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture, the more othered they feel in the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) society. Eventually, some characters try to escape from their otherness by going beyond the borders of Britain and by becoming a global person in the contemporary interconnected global world. Thus, this study aims to explore how Kamila Shamsie defines the 'otherness' and the possibilities of being a global

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\*\* Doç. Dr., Selçuk Üniversitesi Edebiyat Fakültesi / Assoc. Dr., Selçuk University Faculty of Letters / fkalpakli@gmail.com. ORCID ID 0000-0002-0865-5373

citizen in her novel, namely *Home Fire* (2017). Her literary works gains more importance as Rishi Sunak, who has been Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Leader of the Conservative Party since October 2022, has been in the spotlight of media due to his religious, ethnic and cultural background. Sunak, born and bred in Britain, yet has Indian parents who migrated to Britain from East Africa in the 1960s, might also be seen as one of the millions of others living in Britain. Historically speaking, he is the first British Asian and Hindu to hold the office of prime minister in Britain. Hence, this historical event makes Kamila Shamsie's British Muslim Pakistani fictional character named Karamat Lone, who is appointed as Home Secretary in *Home Fire*, more remarkable and puts a spotlight on the novel.

**Keywords:** *Kamila Shamsie, Home Fire, the 'otherness', British Muslims, global world*

## Öz

Pakistan kökenli Britanyalı yazar Kamile Şemsi'nin Türkçeye *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* (2017) olarak çevrilen romanı esas olarak Britanyalı Müslümanların, Hristiyan olmayan İngiliz vatandaşlarının hikâyelerini konu almaktadır. *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* (2017) adlı romanı ile Şemsi 2018 yılında Kadın Yazarlar Kurgu Ödülünü kazanmıştır. Romanda, Pakistan kökenli iki Britanyalı ailenin Britanya'da hâkim olan Beyaz Anglo-Sakson Protestan (BASP) ana kültürü tarafından öteki olarak algılanmalarından ötürü yaşadıkları kültür çatışmaları konu alınmaktadır. Pakistan kökenli iki Britanyalı ailenin üyeleri Beyaz Anglo-Sakson Protestan ana kültürü tarafından kabul görmek için çabaladıkça daha da ötekileştirilmekte ve bir türlü Beyaz Anglo-Sakson Protestan (BASP) ana kültürü tarafından kabul görememektedir ve bu durum onların kendilerini daha da ötekileştirilmiş hissetmelerine neden olmaktadır. Bunun neticesinde, romandaki bazı karakterler Britanya sınırlarını aşarak ve günümüzün birbiriyle bağıntılı, küresel dünyanın küresel vatandaşı olma idealiyle öteki olmaktan kurtulmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu nedenle, bu çalışmada, Kamile Şemsi'nin *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* (2017) adlı eserinde öteki kavramını nasıl tasvir ettiği ve küresel vatandaşlığın günümüz dünyasında ne derece mümkün olup olmadığı konuları romandan örneklerle irdelenmektedir. Kamile Şemsi'nin *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* (2017) adlı eseri Ekim 2022 tarihinde Asyalı bir Hindu olan Rishi Sunak'ın başbakan olmasıyla ve bunun İngiliz siyasi tarihinde bir ilk olması sebebiyle daha da önem kazanmaktadır. Sunak kendisi Britanya'da doğup büyümüş, ancak ebeveynleri Hintli olup, 1960'larda Doğu Afrika'dan Britanya'ya göç etmişlerdir. Bu cihetle, Sunak Britanya'da öteki olarak yaşayan milyonlarca kişiden biri olarak da görülebilir. Tarihsel olarak bakılacak olursa, Rishi Sunak Britanya'da başbakanlık makamına kadar yükselen ilk Hindu ve Asya kökenli politikacıdır. Dolayısıyla, bu tarihi olay, Kamila Shamsie'nin *Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş* (2017) romanını ve romandaki İç İşleri Bakanı olarak atanan Karamat Lone adlı Müslüman, Pakistan kökenli İngiliz karakteri daha da dikkat çekici kılmaktadır.

**Anahtar sözcükler:** *Kamile Şemsi, Yuvamıza Düşen Ateş, ötekilik, Britanya Müslümanları, küresel dünya*

## Introduction

Otherness is defined as “being or feeling different in appearance or character from what is familiar, expected, or generally accepted” in *Cambridge Dictionary* (see “Otherness”) and Kamila Shamsie tries to depict the sense of otherness and alienation that many non-Christian British citizens feel in her novel, *Home Fire* (2017). There are some socio-cultural causes of the sense of otherness and alienation felt by the non-WASP people in UK as expressed in the following statement; “[t]he superiority complex of the [English] resulted in the othering process, racism and in the exclusion of [the non-Christian British citizens] from the [mainstream WASP] circles” (Kalpaklı, 2015: 1215) and resulted in the feelings of inferiority on the side of non-Christian British citizens as narrated in *Home Fire*. This point is also underlined by Memmi and Fanon many times with regard to others (that is the non-WASP people in UK and accordingly, who are different from the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant citizens). Memmi and Fanon state that most of the Indians, Pakistanis and other dark skinned British citizens have been brainwashed and made to believe that a person of white skin is superior to one of dark skin. In the case of the characters depicted in *Home Fire*, this statement might be extended to include people of different religious backgrounds and might be claimed that most of the non-WASP citizens (paradoxically including some of the Muslim British citizens as well) are made to believe that a Christian person is superior to a Muslim person. In such a discriminative socio-cultural atmosphere, the story of the novel mainly evolves around two British-Pakistani families, namely Pasha family; three siblings; Isma Pasha, Aneeka Pasha and Parvaiz Pasha, and the non-WASP home-secretary’s family of Lone; Karamat Lone, Terry Lone, Eamonn Lone and Emily Lone.

## Development

Let us have a look at Pasha family, first at the eldest sister Isma. After taking the role of a parent for her siblings for a long time and making sure that they are self-reliant and self-sufficient, Isma seized the opportunity of doing a PhD in sociology in the USA. If we closely look at her name, it is found out that

Isma is the Turkish pronunciation of the Arabic word ismah. It is an indirect *Quranic* name for boys and girls that means “highness”, “majesty”, “purity from sin”. In the Ayyubid era Isma used to be a title for noblewomen, such as Isma ad-Deen Khatun, wife of Saladin (“Full Meaning of Isma”).

Her name stands for her noble stance in the face of difficulties in life and her purity in her thoughts and deeds. She is on the side of peace, when confronted with cultural or personal clashes. Moreover, she has Puritanic values such as being against violence and avoiding sex before marriage as shown in the novel.

Her sister Aneeka studies law and her brother Parvaiz has not made up his mind about what to do in the future in relation to his life. During his exploration time of what to do, unfortunately, he falls into the traps of a group who trains young Muslim boys to be rebels. When we dig out the reasons behind Parvaiz’s joining this group, we see that though he was

born and bred in London, he feels himself as “the other” at home. It is clearly shown that he is fed up with being surrounded by otherness, despite whatever he does or wherever he goes. We also learn that he was not lucky enough to have the attention and care of his father as a child since his father, Adil Pasha, was mostly away from his home. First, Adil Pasha joins the British Indian Army to protect Britain from her enemies, then he joins a group and is tagged as a jihadi as stated in the following: “[t]here were whispers in the neighborhood about Adil Pasha, he knew, and one day in the school playground a group of boys had accosted him to ask if it was true his father was a jihadi who’d been killed in Guantánamo. I never knew my father, he had replied weakly” (Shamsie, 2017, p.95). Parvaiz and his father, Adil Pasha did not have the chance to get to know each other; despite the blood bond, they were strangers to one another.

Adil Pasha is perceived as a member of an illegal organization by the British authorities, including Karamat Lone, the home secretary. However, some people perceive him as a freedom fighter or a hero. Hence, Parvaiz cannot know exactly which version of these stories about his father is the correct one. Either way, his father had spent most of his time on the mountains away from his family.

Rejected by the British society and culture as well as by his own father, and desperate for acceptance and recognition, Parvaiz eventually tries to find a shelter in his parents’ country of origin and tries to find a place for himself in order to have a sense of belonging and appreciation. Kamila Shamsie seems to use the name of her characters very functionally and she is very fussy in her choice of these characters’ names including the name of Parvaiz; it means “commendable” in Urdu (boy name زورپ). In the novel, Parvaiz feels that he leads a meaningless life; his sisters are pursuing their goals, but he feels very empty and he is desperate to hear some encouraging and supportive words so that he might feel a little bit precious. During this period of confusion, Parvaiz runs into Farooq, an old friend of his father’s, and begins to get under the influence of Farooq as he narrates many stories about Parvaiz’s father, Adil Pasha as pointed out below:

...Farooq would talk and Parvaiz would listen to those stories of his father for which he’d always yearned-not a footloose boy or feckless husband but a man of courage who fought injustice, saw beyond the lie of national boundaries, kept his comrades’ spirits up through times of darkness. (Shamsie, 2017: 98)

Parvaiz is introduced to another version of his father, drawn under a very positive light by Farooq and very contradictory to the one drawn by Parvaiz’s mother and his friends at school until so far. In this way, he is given the chance of being the son of an important person through the stories narrated by Farooq. According to these stories,

[h]ere was Abu Parvaiz, the first to cross a bridge over a ravine after an earthquake despite continuing aftershocks, to deliver supplies to those stranded on the other side; here was Abu Parvaiz using the butt of his Kalashnikov as a weapon when the bullets ran out; here was Abu Parvaiz dipping his head into a mountain stream to

perform his ablutions and coming up with a beard of icicles, which lead to dancing on the riverbank as if he were Adil Pasha at a discotheque rather than Abu Parvaiz in Chechnya, whose every shake of the head produced the sound of wind chimes. (Shamsie, 2017: 98)

In Farooq's stories, Parvaiz's father seems to be a larger-than-life character and this inspires Parvaiz to do important things for the whole world, but he does not know what to do and how to do, yet these stories give hope to him that he can be somebody and can be recognized by the people all around the world; he was not born to be just a grocery boy. Like most of the young boys, he feels the need to do something important to satisfy the hero instinct in his heart. Parvaiz is fascinated by these stories in the same manner Desdemona was fascinated by the stories of Othello owing to their legendary and heroic content as explicitly given below:

Of all the stories this was the one that most clearly evoked the father [Parvaiz] he'd never known: the rushing stream, the dancing icicles, the men around him similarly braving the cold water so they could provide the jester-warrior Abu Parvaiz with an accompanying orchestra. (Shamsie, 2017: 98)

It is noteworthy here to underline the very touching words in the passage given above again; "the stories... evoked the father he'd never known...". Having this information in mind, many psychiatrists suggest that absence of the father in a family triggers the sense of disbelonging on the children and they have a tendency to feel that they are rootless, and that they have nothing to hold onto in life. What is significant about boys are that they model their fathers' behaviours and construct their own identities; thus, establish themselves after their father's character. Boys want to get approval from their fathers from their early ages. As human beings, we grow up by imitating and mimicking the behavior of those people around us; that is how we learn to navigate our way and function in the world. To exemplify, if a father is loving, caring and treats people with respect, the young boy will grow up and behave much the same. When a father is absent, as it happens and is illustrated in the relationship between Parvaiz and Farooq, young boys look to other male figures to set the "rules" for how to behave and survive in the world (see "The importance of a father in a child's life", *pediatricsoffranklin* , and Ed Latimore's " Problems growing up with an absent father (and how to fix them)"). Having acknowledged all these psychological factors in the construction of Parvaiz's identity, the young boy seems to be desperate to get the attention of a father-like male and Farooq is there to manipulate Parvaiz's need to be recognized and accepted by a paternal figure. To put it simply, Farooq perceives Parvaiz's confused mind and need for paternal love as an opportunity to persuade him to join their group and continues to elaborate Adil Pasha's stories and causes him to fall into the traps of a group in Syria. The words uttered by Farooq below have a significant impact on Parvaiz:

“The father every son wishes he had,” Farooq said.

“But I never had him as a father,” Parvaiz replied, tracing the lines of his own palm with the grenade pin-was it really?-Farooq had brought along to the *kabab* shop.

“Do you think he wanted the world to be as it is? No. But he saw it for what it is. And having seen it he understood that a man has larger responsibilities than the ones his wife and mother want to chain him to” . (Shamsie, 2017: 98)

Farooq tries to belittle the significance of household duties and to justify Adil’s negligence of his family and magnifies his travels abroad so that Parvaiz would have admiration for his father and maybe take a similar path visualising himself a hero-in-the-making in the footsteps of Adil Pasha. To assist Parvaiz to understand those so-called heroic responsibilities better, Farooq talked about historical events going back to the times of Crusades by adding his own interpretations, “There didn’t seem to be any part of the Muslim world Farooq didn’t know about...” (Shamsie, 2017: 98).

Parentetically, Farooq shows every sign of a cunning and observant character in his approach towards Parvaiz. For instance, while Farooq is trying to brainwash him, he tries to keep Parvaiz’s attention further on his talk and wants to establish a strong bond between Parvaiz and himself as revealed in the scene below:

If ever Parvaiz started to lose his concentration, Farooq would swerve the conversation toward football... (he supported Real Madrid, Parvaiz. (Shamsie, 2017: 98)

Under the spell of Farooq’s words, Parvaiz as a young boy wants to be like his father and to do something courageous. As a result of his aspiration for grandiose character, he goes to Syria, which he will later regret very much and try to find ways to get out of. His judgment is clouded by his yearning to do important things fuelled by Farooq’s fabricated stories. Hence, he seems to be on verge of collapsing into extremism; he does not have the slightest idea about Farooq’s radical and anarchistic ideology and plans for him.

As a matter of fact, Farooq’s meeting point with Parvaiz, which is mostly the betting shop, reveals that he is not a pious person considering that all holy religions forbid betting and undeserved gain, but Parvaiz, who does not have not enough knowledge about Islam and life, he is easily convinced to join Farooq’s men.

Luckily enough, his sisters Isma and Aneeka are more mature and realistic in terms of the pitfalls of politics and illegal organizations and they try to rescue Parvaiz from the hegemony of this illegal group. Both Isma and Aneeka are aware of the dark face of these groups and do their best to protect the security of British nation since Britain is their home, to which they remain loyal by dedicating themselves to the security of Britain. Accordingly, they inform the authorities about the illegal group which Parvaiz has connections with.

In the beginning of the novel, Parvaiz works at a green grocery, he does not expect much from the future and he utters the following sentences in one of the dialogues with Aneeka: “They only gave you a scholarship because you tick their ‘inclusive’ and ‘diverse’ boxes,” he said, wounded enough to vocalize a sentiment Farooq had recently dredged out of his unconscious (Shamsie,

2017: 100). This illustrates how vulnerable he is. He sees himself as an instrument to add to the diversity of Britain, not as a person.

His involvement with illegal groups and the reactions of Isma, Aneeka and Karamat towards him are very illuminating to illustrate the current situation in the contemporary British society. On the one side, we have these two sisters, who try to bring their brother back into civilian life. On the other side, we have a home secretary of Pakistani descent, namely Karamat Lone, who tries to prove his loyalty to the British values and the British Parliament. As his surname suggests, he is very lonely despite the fact that he is surrounded by many people. Regardless of his many years in the service of the British government, he still needs to meet the expectations of the British public by proving that he is English enough by denying his Pakistani cultural heritage. Everything related to him is closely put under scrutiny in media since he has a Muslim background. Similar to Parvaiz, he cannot “escape from his otherness” either. As an irony of history, Rishi Sunak, of Indian descent, is selected as the prime minister of Britain in October 2022 (see “Rishi Sunak...”) and he becomes the first prime minister of colour in British political history. Keeping this in mind, it can be suggested that this historical event makes Kamila Shamsie’s British Muslim Pakistani fictional character Karamat Lone, who is appointed as Home Secretary in *Home Fire*, more remarkable. We, as the readers, observe that he becomes more royalist than the king and he cannot have an objective stance towards Parvaiz and Aneeka at the time of crisis, and only with the guidance of his wife, Terry, he begins to understand what is going on, on the side of Aneeka. As a dutiful sister, Aneeka just wants to bring the dead body of Parvaiz back and bury it at home, that is, Britain. He is so cut off from his own roots to prove his Englishness that he cannot have empathy with Aneeka until his Irish-American wife, who has experienced otherness in WASP culture, and does have empathy with Aneeka, intervenes and guides him in the path of having more “mental flexibility” (Çakır, 2008: 186) in the resolution of intercultural conflicts:

... this orphaned student, 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. Look at her, Karamat: look at this sad child you’ve raised to your enemy, and see how far you’ve lowered yourself in doing that. (Shamsie, 2017: 193)

Ironically enough, Karamat applies the othering process even to himself at such lengths that he himself cannot read Aneeka’s emotions and, only with the help of Terry, his eyes open to the reality. He unconsciously internalizes being the other. His self-inflicted otherness as well as media-driven otherness put him in a very suffocating position. To exemplify, to be welcomed by the WASP culture, he avoids going to mosque and defines it as a “gender-segregated space” (Shamsie, 2017: 32), which illustrates that he evaluates everything by wearing WASP glasses and acts according to the WASP cultural codes. Instead of going to mosque, he prefers going to church with his Irish-American wife as if he were a Christian. He used to read some suras, passages from *Quran* as a child, but he no longer does read them, yet

he becomes a Church-going agnostic. It seems that he tries to erase everything related to his Islamic background and assume a new Western identity. Yet, the harder he tries, the harsher he is criticized as shown below:

The accompanying article described the newly elevated minister as a man “from a Muslim background,” which is what they always said about him, as though Muslimness was something he had boldly stridden away from. Inevitably, the sentence went on to use the phrase “strong on security.” (Shamsie, 2017: 32)

To our surprise, the words of Muslim or Islam immediately are followed by words of security, threats to national security and so on. The negative images about Muslims broadcast in media pave the way for increasing the otherness of Muslim British citizens and, eventually, Karamat as an MP cannot escape from being victimized by the British press. His son, Eamonn, tries to explain it to Isma with the following statement:

It’s harder for him [my father],” he said. “Because of his background. Early on, in particular, he had to be more careful than any other MP, and at times that meant doing things he regretted. But everything he did, even the wrong choices, were because he had a sense of purpose. Public service, national good, British values. He deeply believes in these things. All the wrong choices he made, they were necessary to get him to the right place, the place he is now. (Shamsie, 2017: 45)

Looking back in history, Benjamin Disraeli is the first Jewish prime minister and in the novel, Karamat seems to be the first Muslim home secretary, which is nearly impossible and can become real only with the help of a miracle. And his name might be foreshadowing his miraculous rise in the ladder of British politics since his name Karamat (کرامت) means “miracles” in Urdu. His rise in the world of British politics seems to be very exceptional, considering his Pakistani origins. Having ethnic, religious and cultural differences that hold him back, he has to work and prove three times harder than a white English politician and he is deeply conscious of this fact. He has to pay a huge price to be a home secretary and not to lose his image in public eye. He has to cut off all his connections with his roots and Pakistani cultural heritage. In order to erase the signifiers showing his Pakistaniness, he names his son Eamonn, not Ayman (which means “the righteous”) since Eamonn sounds like an Irish and Christian name, not a Pakistani and Muslim name.

Moreover, he has to follow Christmas rituals, while ignoring Ramadan and Eid rituals (see Shamsie, 2017: 49) and he does not teach Islamic rituals to his children. In the scene below, his otherness becomes more striking because of his decreasing popularity among both the Christians and the Muslims in Britain as time goes by:

“We’re going,” is all his father would say before the annual outings to Eamonn’s great-uncle’s house every Eid, a holiday that his mother explained as “marking the end of the month of not observing Ramazan for all of us.” On that one day of the year, his father became someone else, and it was this that he knew his mother hated as much as he did. Surrounded by his extended family, Karamat Lone disappeared into another language, with its own gestures and intonations—even when he was speaking English. (Shamsie, 2017: 48)



In the scene above, Karamat portrayed like another person coming out of himself, when he is with the members of his extended Pakistani family. The way he speaks and his mimics change in accordance with the people around him. This raises the issue of identity/identity crisis, the question of which identity Karamat adapts himself to is his real identity, and where he feels at home and comfortable enough: with his English family and friends or with his Pakistani family and friends? This is a question whose answer is not even known to Karamat himself in the novel as indicated in the following passage:

One year, when Eamonn was nine or ten, *Eid* fell just after Christmas. The American family was visiting, and there were plans every day for outings with cousins. “You don’t have to come this year,” his father agreed after some judiciously timed postprandial Christmas Day pleading, and went on his own. The next year it was “Do you want to come?” and he didn’t seem to mind when his wife and children said no. Just when Eamonn was becoming old enough to want to know the part of his father’s life that remained so mysterious, there was the whole business with the mosque photographs and a falling-out with the cousins over the necessary damage control. (Shamsie, 2017: 50)

Most of the time, Karamat finds himself in an either/or situation, and whatever he does to turn something into a both/and situation, he is forced to awaken to the reality that he cannot be all and he cannot have it all. Neither English people with very exclusive WASP mentality nor Pakistani people with a very traditionalist mindset towards life consider Karamat as one of them; in the eye of both communities, he is the other. Subsequently, Karamat constantly lives in a social limbo. He wanders on the borders of nowhere land, accepted neither by Christian British people nor by Muslim British people in the UK as thoroughly explained in the following sentences below:

All because he’d expressed a completely enlightened preference for the conventions of a church over those of a mosque and spoke of the need for British Muslims to lift themselves out of the Dark Ages if they wanted the rest of the nation to treat them with respect. (Shamsie, 2017: 49)

It is very striking to observe how things run in Karamat’s life and how he and his family members suffer from a sense of disbelonging and try to prove that they deserve to be a part of the British society just like the White Anglo Saxon Protestants do.

Eamonn begins to understand his father, only after he gets old enough in order to grasp what is going on in the world of politics. He also begins to be more sensitive about his father’s and family’s situation in terms of where he should stand and what he should or should not do with regard to cultural manners and religious festivals. Taking into account that the negligence of cultural distinctions might be the source of conflict between Christian and Muslim British citizens, Eamonn gets more conscious of cultural distinctions and of the need to display respect to the cultures of other persons and communities. Kamila Shamsie touches on these issues picturing Eamonn remembering himself and his cousins in an *Eid* afternoon. However, in those afternoons, Eamonn could not help admiring his sister’s free spirit, resilience and conformity described in the following quotation:

His sister, habitually free of the burden of alliances, would be upstairs with the girl cousins, throwing herself into a rapture of family feeling that would disappear as soon as they were back in Holland Park. She was, everyone said, her father's daughter, a claim she was proving with her determined ascent, at twenty-two, through the world of investment banking in Manhattan. (Shamsie, 2017: 50)

Therefore, it can be stated that those early life experiences exert a powerful influence on Eamonn's and he develops sensitivity towards the cultural distinctions through his experiences early on. In addition to all these, his name adds to the issue of the diversity of cultures or cultural distinctions/clashes in Britain depending on one's perspective. In other words, some people might take his name as a symbol of multiculturalism or integration, whereas some others might take it as a sign of the erasure of the indigenous cultures by the English culture.

If we look at his name closer, "[Eamonn] is of Irish, Gaelic and Old English origin, and the meaning of Eamon is "wealthy protector" ("Eamonn"). As in line with the meaning of his name, he tries to protect his girlfriend, Aneeka from the press and from his very own father. In relation to his name in the novel, it is said that "[a]n Irish spelling to disguise a Muslim name— "Ayman" becomes "Eamonn" so that people would know the father had integrated. (His Irish-American wife was seen as another indicator of this integrationist posing rather than an explanation for the son's name.)" (Shamsie, 2017: 19).

Ayman, a Quranic name for boys, means "blessed" and "good fortune", and literally means "on the right side". Parallel with his name and its meaning, he stands on the side of Aneeka when she claims the dead body of her brother in order to bring it back home, since Eamonn believes that she does the right thing; thus, he is on the right side and acts in accordance with the spirit of his name.

Otherness is also a problem for Eamonn in the novel. Firstly, starting even from his name, Eamonn, an Irish spelling to disguise a Muslim name- "Ayman (Shamsie, 2017: 19)"; it is something, but sounds something else. Therefore, he is also "an inbetween" and, being the son of presumably a Catholic Irish-American mother and a Muslim agnostic Pakistani father who live in Britain, he does not know where he should stand in life. In reference to his childhood days, he expresses that "[o]n the rare occasions he remembered his father's family it was only to recall 'the feelings of estrangement' that visits to them brought up, ..." (Shamsie, 2017: 50). Thus, he does not have the sense of belonging to the side of his father's family either. It is fortunate that he finds meaning in life only after his path crosses with Aneeka's. His efforts to learn Urdu for the sake of Aneeka is very expressive of his love and fondness for Aneeka. As things go, they begin to derive fun together from simple daily life activities given in detail below:

They cooked together, alternating roles of chef and sous-chef with perfect good cheer. Parallel to all this, his friends' teasing about his "double life" faded away-as did their invitations to join them on weekends in the country, Friday evenings in the pub, picnics in the park, and dinners within the two-mile radius in which they all lived. He knew it

was a paramount failure of friendship to disappear into a relationship, but to be in his friends' company now felt like stepping back into the aimlessness that had characterized his life before Aneeka came along and became both focus and direction. (Shamsie, 2017: 65)

Thus, Aneeka enriched his life and brought a kind of purpose and direction into his life along with herself and he is unconsciously reconnected with his roots by learning Urdu and his mind is widened by learning new things from Aneeka in relation to contract law and so on.

Compared to Isma, the elder sister of Pasha family, it can be suggested that Aneeka is more independent and acts more courageously. She is not only beautiful, but also smart. Interestingly, her name covers all the character traits of her as Aneeka means "unique, neat, elegant, smart" in Arabic (see also "www.kidpaw.com"). Aneeka also has some other meanings in Sanskrit such as sweet-faced, fearless, soldier and splendor. Considering Aneeka's Pakistani background, its meaning, which is "beautiful" (بِلَطْمِ اَكْمَانِ حَقِيْنَا) is also noteworthy. She attracts Eamonn's attention with the help of her facial features as well as her beautiful figure. Her looks is what creates an interest in Eamonn at first sight; however, later on, he likes spending time with her thanks to her intelligence, humour and personality. That is, "she is a beauty with brains" as it can be expressed in colloquial language. It is clearly shown in the novel that she does not hesitate to make use of these personal traits in order to achieve her goals in life. In the beginning of her relationship with Eamonn, she gets closer with him so that Eamonn, being the son of the home secretary, may help her to save her brother, Parvaiz. Yet, later on, she also falls in love with Eamonn. The hunter becomes the hunted and eventually, she realizes that she herself also has feelings for Eamonn.

As opposed to her expectations, she cannot get the support from her lover as Eamonn is hindered by his father, Karamat Lone. Meanwhile, Aneeka learns how to stand on her own feet. However, first she becomes "an outcast" in the eye of the British public and media. Her otherness stems from the fact that she does not conform to the accepted patterns of the British society. In other words, in the public eye, she seems to be very beautiful and confident for an illegal group member's sister. Looking more closely to her, we can say that the news watchers would like to see a Muslim girl with hijab, who is supposed to be very shy and timid conforming to the stereotypes in the minds of most of the people. Contrary to all these assumptions, Aneeka makes her claims and intentions very clear in front of the cameras in a very courageous way. Being a Muslim girl wearing hijab and studying law and trying to get her brother's dead body back home to London, to England, is not something that the British public see everyday on the news. Thanks to her extraordinary beauty, she also becomes the focus of British media. Considering all these things, we can say that she challenges the stereotypical image of Muslim women and goes beyond it by claiming her rights as an individual in front of cameras and by raising consciousness about the sufferings of the families whose children fall into the traps of illegal organizations.

What is more, in the novel, Kamila Shamsie adds to Aneeka's otherness by drawing her as a Muslim girl who can sleep with her lover before marriage and who also tries to observe religious prayers every morning. Therefore, readers' responses towards the character of Aneeka might be very diverse too. In other words, some Muslims might find her a bit carefree and some others might find her a bit conservative as she wears hijab and prays every morning. To put it another way, she might not be Muslim enough for some readers because she has sex before marriage, and not be English enough for others because she wears hijab. Accordingly, "the construction of acceptable otherness" (Bağlama, 2020: 1641) seems to be nearly impossible. Also, what is interesting about her is that she studies law, which might not be a random choice in the novel. Psychiatrists claim that people who witness injustice from their early ages decide to study law so as to protect themselves and help establish "justice" in the world (see Budayıcıoğlu's book *Madalyonun İçi [Inside the Medallion]*). Being the other in Britain because of her Pakistani religious and ethnic background, and feeling her otherness from her early ages on, she must have felt that some are more equal than the others and, to have a chance to deconstruct the discriminative and unfair social systems, she must have determined to study law so that she can work for the establishment of a better society and an egalitarian system, where everybody is included as equal and can eventually be global citizens.

### **Conclusion**

Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) reveals the stories of British Muslims pertaining to the theme of otherness of the non-Christian British citizens. It is observed that most of the characters, yearning for acceptance, seem to be suffering, one way or another, from otherness in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017). The Muslim upbringing of many characters (e.g., Karamat, Aneeka, and Isma) depicted in the novel can be given as one of the highly influential factors that appear to add to the character's feeling of otherness. Under the light of the events and the examples given in the novel, one can deduce that, in Britain, there is still a long way to go in order to achieve egalitarian ends. As an alternative solution, some characters like Parvaiz try to escape from their otherness by going beyond the borders of Britain with the hope of becoming a global person in the contemporary, interconnected global world and he ends up falling into the traps of illegal groups. It is exemplified that the harder the others try to be accepted by the White Anglo-Saxon Protestant (WASP) culture, the more otherized they happen to feel in Britain.

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