Thinking beyond Nation: Planetary Belonging as an Alternative in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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Kamila Shamsie, a Pakistani-born novelist, wrote the 2017 novel, *Home Fire,* which intricately weaves a narrative around themes of love, loyalty, identity, and the clash between personal aspirations and societal expectations. Inspired by the Greek tragedy *Antigone*, the narrative centers on the lives of three British Muslim siblings – Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz – each embodying different aspects of the contemporary immigrant journey. Set against the backdrop of contemporary Britain, the novel delves into the complexities of identity, belonging, and the sacrifices individuals are willing to make in the face of ideological conflicts and familial ties. Through its nuanced exploration of terrorism, immigration challenges, and the intricate dynamics of Muslim communities in the West, *Home Fire* offers profound insights into the struggles and dilemmas of the modern world.

This article is divided into four sections. In the first section following this introduction, one is introduced to the prevailing *norm* of rights-granting and exercise in a hegemonic Western liberal state taking a cue from the novel. The second section highlights individual discourses from the novel that outline how individual subjects *qua* characters respond to the demand for conformity with such structures of endowment and privilege. The third section is a theoretical attempt to account for the differences in response in the second and reveals the innate potency of such modes of discursive behavior; the fourth and penultimate section highlights the urgency and ethical necessity of engagements with the Other using planetarity (see below) as a substitute for sovereign rules or laws that help in using the novelistic narrative as a microcosm of representation of a larger political discourse.

Kamila Shamsie's work, like that of Ayad Akhtar[1] and Mohsin Hamid,[2] delves into the challenges faced by European Muslims, including issues related to citizenship, cultural disparities, identity, assimilation, and resistance. This essay delves into Shamsie's reimagining of Sophocles' ancient tragedy, *Antigone*, situating it within the political discourses of the War on Terror. Shamsie's novel becomes a lens through which the political dialogues surrounding this war act as a means of epistemic violence and simultaneously serve as a method of resistance for Muslim immigrants in Britain and Europe. Events such

as 9/11 and the terrorist attacks in France and the UK over the past decades have further shaped the discourse around terrorism, which serves as a pretext for xenophobic narratives against Muslims. This discourse primarily revolves around the sacrificial implications of the concept of *jihad*, which has become a singular symbol within the Western imagination. The geopolitical climate of that era persistently promoted a singular form of Western secularism to appropriate and vilify the Islamic faith and its associated call for practicing religion in the public sphere. In such circumstances, it becomes crucial to examine the boundary that distinguishes the individual and their right to practice religion from the statist ideologues demanding a unified political subjectivity.

This boundary becomes a pivotal arena for understanding the limitations of the modern nation-state and its methods of self-construction. In the contemporary biopolitical global atmosphere marked by increasing Islamophobia and populism, where Muslims are often stereotyped, Kamila Shamsie highlights the intricacies that underscore the complex relationship between the individual and the state within overlapping cultural frameworks. She accomplishes this by adopting a planetary perspective, transcending the confines of the national and the global, as advocated by scholars such as Gayatri Spivak (2004), Masao Miyoshi (2011), and Paul Gilroy (2004).

Planetary communities

Spivak imagines "ourselves as planetary creatures rather than global entities" ("Terror" 73). This planetarity—the "mysterious and discontinuous, an experience of the impossible" (102)—is in a future that acknowledges differences and recognizes interconnectedness. Gilroy advocates for the concept of "planetary humanism" (4) as a more effective approach in combating racism, oppression, and inequalities. This perspective replaces nationalism and modernity, aiming to establish a genuinely inclusive cosmopolitan relationship that embraces all of humanity. According to Miyoshi, in "Turn to the Planet," the primary objective is to foster a collective connection to the planet. This goal necessitates moving away from exclusionary ideas such as familialism, communitarianism, nationhood, ethnic culture, regionalism, globalization, or even humanism, and embracing the ideal of "planetarianism" (138). Gilroy's notion of planetary humanism also reinvents the definitions and contours attributed to the "human" in classical Western thought. Gilroy's "planetary humanism" seeks to reinstate those other modalities of being and becoming that have been otherized in the construction of the nation-state and its exclusive realms of citizenship and fundamental human rights. Gilroy's decolonized political vision aims to restore the concept of a shared humanity without reverting to the regressive notions of Western

Enlightenment. It calls for a form of solidarity that challenges existing hierarchies and preconceived categories that divide humanity. Taking his cue from Aimé Césaire's critique of Western civilization in *Discourse on Colonialism*, Gilroy attempts to develop "a humanism made to the measure of the world" (Césaire 73). In other words, Gilroy provides an important intervention to the problems of identitarian politics that form the threshold of the idea of the nation-state and its conditioning of the terms of citizenship.

Vivek Chibber and Nivedita Majumdar, among others, have critiqued postcolonial analyses of enlightenment discourses. Vivek Chibber contends that postcolonial theories that focus on political action rather than cultural analysis will weaken the instruments of radical critique, turning the reason for Enlightenment universalism into collateral damage in the postcolonial critique of "Western" epistemic dominance (Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital*). Moreover, Nivedita Majumdar also puts forth a radical universalism-based alternative framework for analysis that does not ignore historical particulars and cultural variances but rather explains them as components of a whole—a totality (Majumdar, *The World in a Grain of Sand*). Planetary humanism transcends restrictive identity boundaries, aiming to signify the emergence of a shared, trans-identitarian planetary space that is boundless and unconditional in shaping both self and Other.

Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) can be read as a response to the parochial and inconclusive contours of citizenship and home that the western idea of the nation-state offers against the more inclusive and evolving contours of Gilroy's planetary humanism. Shamsie offers a *planet-based totality* and cohesiveness of public spaces and resources as a counter to the monolithic, exclusionary realms of cultural globalization in the post-imperialist world order of the post-9/11 geopolitical climate. The novel gestures towards the common bonds of the planet, substituting the more overt markers of homogenous cosmopolitanism and its peddling of monochrome identity markers. Shamsie's *Home Fire* delves into the trials and tribulations of a family bespattered with a legacy of terrorism in contemporary England to dissect the tensions between society, family, and faith in the contemporary world against the backdrop of post-9/11 Islamophobia.

Islamophobia, mainly associated with a general prejudice and hostility towards Islam and Muslims, was already around in the West long before 11 September 2001. In the early 1980s, much before the Western coinage of the term Islamophobia, the phenomenon was already a part of the Western response to Islam and the Islamic world. Within Paul Gilroy's framework of planetary humanism, Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* emerges as a noteworthy literary reaction to the constraints imposed by Western interpretations of citizenship and belonging. Gilroy's concept of planetary humanism advocates for a

broader, interconnected view of humanity that goes beyond the limited confines of nation-states.

In the post-9/11 geopolitical climate, characterized by rising Islamophobia and cultural globalization, Shamsie challenges the exclusionary nature of cultural boundaries. Instead, she advocates for a *planet-based totality*, emphasizing the unity and cohesion of public spaces and resources on a global scale. This concept rejects the monolithic and exclusionary realms of cultural globalization prevalent in the post-imperialist world order. Moreover, by rejecting the overt markers of homogenous cosmopolitanism and challenging the peddling of monochrome identity, Shamsie's work gestures toward a more nuanced and diverse understanding of global citizenship. The characters in *Home Fire* navigate their identities in a multicultural society, highlighting the complexities of living in a world where individual and collective identities are constantly negotiated and redefined. In embracing Gilroy's planetary humanism, *Home Fire* underscores the common bonds that connect humanity beyond the limitations of national borders. Through the lens of this inclusive framework, Shamsie's novel becomes a powerful exploration of the human condition, probing the tensions and intersections of identity, belonging, and faith in the contemporary global landscape.

Home Fire brings to the fore how the tensions between individual subjectivity and a communitarian adherence to culture and faith manifest themselves in this narrative. The narrative illustrates the tension arising from the allure of a lifestyle rooted in liberal individualism and that of family and community, between speaking as a non-agential being and on behalf of a collective. In this contemporary milieu of globalization, the relationship between the global and the local deserves extensive interrogation. I intend to investigate the recalling of the *Antigone* metaphor used in the novel to represent the contemporary predicament of religious prejudice and personal conflict, where meanings are articulated, distorted, and negotiated. While the family is an extension of individual culture and the minority group itself, its expressive domain often comes in conflict with the collective ethos of the nation-state and its field of power. The tragedies, dilemmas, and complex web of negotiations that occur at the level of the family are reflective of a macrocosmic conflict between the nation-state and the individual or minority group. This is presented through the character of Aneeka Pasha, whose twin brother, Parvaiz Pasha, leaves London to work for the media arm of ISIS after discovering that his absent father died en route to Guantánamo. During the story, the twin's elder sister, Isma Pasha, reveals to the police her younger brother's whereabouts, much to Aneeka's horror. In a touching Sophoclean strain, Aneeka is far angrier with her sister for betraying their brother than she is with her brother for betraying them both. Finally, I read the novel through the lens of post-9/11 paranoiac

Islamophobia and as a radical response to young Pakistani-British Muslims' legacy.

The article explores the politics of violence, torture, radicalization, and gripping tensions of citizenship, home, and belonging in the contemporary liberal Western democratic atmosphere. Unlike the monolithic presentation of the Other in the discourse of political life as embodied and maintained through the nation-state, a sympathetic reading of such reactions in the novel enables us to consider *planets* of responses. This happens through a dialogue with diverse Others who do not fit into the dominant paradigm of otherization in legal discourse. In this context, the family, through its independent structure, formulates its own ways of talking about and addressing issues that may not always acknowledge the authority of governmental directives.

The contesting sites of Britishness

In 2013, the former British home secretary Theresa May announced that Britain would revoke the citizenship of naturalized citizens suspected of terrorism. In earlier times, people holding dual nationality were endangered, even if their ties to another denaturalized homeland were comparatively weaker. Her office declared: "Citizenship is a privilege, not a right, and the home secretary will remove British citizenship from individuals where she feels it is conducive to the public good to do so" ("Theresa May Strips Citizenship"). In *Home Fire* Kamila Shamsie captured this crisis and change, thus questioning this political act, which revoked the naturalization of citizenship law in Britain in 2002 and 2014. Shamsie was shocked to find the authoritarian structures maintained by the Secretary of State post-9/11, and wondered how citizenship became a privilege, not a right. It is worth quoting her here:

> It's true that acquiring citizenship is, for naturalised citizens, a privilege insofar as there is an element of discretion involved. But once you become a citizen then, as Helena Kennedy has written, "citizenship is not a privilege; it is a protected legal status". What is so dishonest about citizenship deprivation, Kennedy said, is "that it's using 'go back where you came from.'" (Shamsie, "Exiled")

Shamsie contends that discrimination on racial or religious grounds gives birth to *stateless* people who are *legally deprived of citizenship*. The "casting out" and the expulsion of Muslims from Western law and politics, as Sherene H. Razack (2008) argues, has gripped the Western world with discriminatory policies and laws. The Western world is being reconfigured through the socio-legal abandonment of "Muslim-looking" people with a "strong resurgence of an old Orientalism and an immediate intensification of surveillance, detention, and the suspension of rights" (Razack 18). The limitations placed on rights and the increase in anti-Muslim racism post-9/11 are akin to, as Razack

points out, the formation of communities where people lack "the right to have rights," echoing Hannah Arendt's description of the impact of the First World War (21). Razack insists on the "racial underpinnings of empire" (314) to cast out Muslims from the political community in the "name of national emergency" (315) and labels them as pre-modern and dangerous. *Home Fire* brilliantly conceives the racialization and the structure of feeling by foregrounding the layers of difference with British values.

Shamsie recounts the lives of of orphaned Pasha siblings, Isma and the twins Parvaiz and Aneeka. Adil Pasha, their father, is an earlier jihadi fighter leading a financially stilted life in a suburb near London. A Muslim politician's son associates himself with a lady supposedly with connections to people who tread a path of Islam that is not generally perceived to be *liberal* in the conventional sense. Parvaiz follows his father and joins the Islamic State in Raqqa, Syria, through a recruiter called Farooq. Nevertheless, he soon perceives his mistake and wants to return to London. While Aneeka persuades Eamonn Lone, the son of the home secretary, Karamat Lone, for a safe passage home for her brother, they eventually fall in love. The home secretary, a seasoned politician and a key member of the ruling party, refuses to help Aneeka's brother. On his way home, Parvaiz is killed in Turkey outside the British High Commission office. However, it is decided that Parvaiz's body should be sent back to Karachi and not repatriated to Britain. Aneeka reaches Karachi outside the British High Commission to claim back Parvaiz's body as Karamat Lone shows his reluctance in helping the matter as he perceives it to be the dead body of a stateless terrorist. As a sign of protest, Aneeka, like Antigone, performs a grieving ceremony with her brother's coffin in front of live-streaming cameras outside the British High Commission in Karachi only to demonstrate her fight for the burial rights of her dead brother in their UK homeland. The burial rights for her dead brother will redeem him from the stigma of being a radical whose death cannot be mourned by the nation-state. A section of the press brands Karamat Lone an extremist for his son's earlier association with Aneeka. His place among London's Muslim population who voted for him remains in a dilemma, as

> 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, *Home Fire* 69)

Karamat Lone and his family see themselves as legitimate "law-abiding British Muslims" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 213), and Karamat hates the Muslims who "make people hate Muslims" (252). As the novel progresses, we see an ardent and logical appeal from Aneeka and

her mourning, "an iconography of suffering" (240) and an articulation for social justice to the home secretary:

> In the stories of wicked tyrants, men and women are punished with exile, bodies are kept from their families—their heads impaled on spikes, their corpses thrown into unmarked graves. All these things happen according to the law, but not according to justice. I am here to ask for justice. I appeal to the prime minister: let me take my brother home. (245)

The deprivation of burial rights to Britain's migrant Muslim communities and the reiteration of a populist cultural template that associates terror with British Muslims clearly expose the ways in which erstwhile colonial laws on sedition and the anti-terror rhetoric of the twenty-first century feed each other to *otherize* the minority sections of the population within the liberal fabric of the democratic nation-state. Aneeka, who is a non-British Muslim subject and is perceived to have some unfaithful associations with democracy as a result of the radicalization of the 7/7 attackers in Britain, considers herself "outside the law" (217) and less patriotic due to the "fragility of her place" (13).

Strategic Islamophobia and the parochial contours of world peace

During a university lecture on the restriction of human rights and on the impact of British law and colonial history on civil liberties, the anonymous Kashmiri professor argues about the framing of non-British citizens. Isma argues against her professor by noting:

> The 7/7 terrorists were never described by the media as "British terrorists." Even when the word "British" was used it was always, "British of Pakistani descent" or "British Muslim" or, my favourite, "British passport-holders", always something interposed between their Britishness and terrorism. (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 48)

Young British Muslims such as Isma, Parvaiz, and Aneeka find a symbiotic upsurge in surveillance and racialization mediated by the nation-state through a concomitant growth of intensive scrutiny run by counter-radicalization programs in the UK. In addition, the Counterterrorism and Security Act 2015, which was implemented in response to 9/11 and as retaliation against domestic terrorist activities, calls for Muslim individuals to serve as community informants. Despite the fact that Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz Pasha are under intense MI5 surveillance on account of their father's radical views and his imprisonment at Bagram in 2002, prior to his death on the flight to Guantánamo Bay, and his inclusion of Parvaiz into the "media wing" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 173) of the Islamic State in Syria, the critical interrogation of their subjectivity ranges from the denial of

citizenship rights, the reduction to exilic filiation, and the proximity of exclusions and precariousness.

At the very beginning of the novel, at the airport on the way from London to Massachusetts for her studies in America, Isma is interrogated by the immigration officer for nearly two hours, and the officer also quizzes her on Shias, homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, the Great British Bake Off, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, suicide bombers, and dating websites:

> "Do you consider yourself British?" the man said. "I am British."
> "But do you consider yourself British?"
> "I've lived here all my life." (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 13)

The Britishness that is demanded of her is symptomatic of a postcolonial subject position that adheres to and responds endlessly to the colonial gaze. It is unable to enunciate itself along the lines of any political agency that might disrupt the comfortable paths of the white man's discourse. Torture, imprisonment, detention without trial, airport interrogations, and spies in mosques are the persistent processes of othering that have been carried out on British immigrant Muslims. However, used as an affirmative stance, *planetarity* recognizes and appreciates the difference of subject position in Isma's response since it remains untied to contingent mandates of adjudging Britishness and recognizes the concept itself as infinite, non-exhaustive, and open to as many possibilities as there are subjects. The emergence of such an approach is constrained by the political priorities of a hegemonic regime. The apathy to the unique enunciations of the Other renders such authoritative mandates as the first cause for familial disrespect for so-called 'national' priorities such as home security.

The kernel of ambivalence, thus, disrupts safe passage to the monolithic identity formation that colonialism thrives upon. Rather it gestures towards the formation of a planetary totality (in the theories of Paul Gilroy) that does away with any monochromatic stereotypes or singular identity formations. The attraction for and repulsion towards the other—British Muslim subjectivity—is prominent when an office-bearer from the Pakistan High Commission in London visits the Pasha family to inform them of Parvaiz's death. Aneeka replies to him by saying, "He wasn't one of yours, ... we aren't yours" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 239), and the opacity of difference that sets the women of the Pasha family district apart from Britishness is spotted as Eamonn asks Isma, "The turban. Is that a style thing or a Muslim thing?" (35). To this she answers: "You know, the only two people in Massachusetts who have ever asked me about it both wanted to know if it's a style thing or a chemo thing" (35). Laughing, he says, "'Cancer or Islam—which is the greater affliction?'... I meant, it must be difficult to be Muslim in the world these days" (35). Isma then replies, "I'd find it

more difficult to not be Muslim" (35). What Isma addresses is the proclamation and the framing of British Muslims as *jihadi*, *terrorist*, *niqabi*, *hijabi*, and *fundamentalist* for the effortless consumption of a category with *cultural mummification* wherein the identity of the subject is restrained by the overpowering dominance of the authoritarian Other. The relation, thus, becomes a fetishized token of otherization that dictates the contours of conditional hospitality as implicit in the construction of the modern nation-state.

Muslimness as performance

The imperative associated with "Performing national allegiance" is what Peter Morey and Amina Yaqin (2011) cite as the main reason behind the dilemma and precariousness of British Muslims who must perform *Britishness* and *Muslimness* in order to corroborate themselves to fit the established national identity. This leads to something akin to a "double bind of performativity" (Morey and Yaqin 40). This imperative becomes evident when Karamat Lone, the "Lone Wolf" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 51), enters a mosque that made headlines for its "hate preacher" (53); on the other hand, pictures of him and his wife walking hand in hand into a church are peddled endlessly for display on tabloids. Karamat is someone who desperately wishes to be seen and desires to see himself acting in the interest of the nation. In the elections, his Muslim-majority constituency votes him out, but he comes back as a champion in the Parliament via a by-election on a safe seat with a largely white constituency and finds himself before the public eye as a "lone crusader" taking on the "backwardness" of British Muslims (54).

Eamonn also flaunts his secularism and is irked at Muslims who critique the policies of Karamat Lone, the novel's Creon figure. Eamonn resonates with his father's *mysterious* life and the mosque photographs, and his strategic organization of space discreetly addresses and mitigates issues as he avoids crossing a road near a mosque on his way to visit the Pashas on Eid (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 82). This is disrupted by the presence of his father: "He was nearing a mosque, crossed the street to avoid it, then crossed back so as not to be seen trying to avoid a mosque" (83). Their (father and son's) "enlightened preference" for the application of a church over that of a mosque and the articulation 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" are part of the rhetorical revelation of a citizen taking on the unsettling tinges of treachery, dissent, extremism, and allegiance (83). Paul Gilroy aptly discusses this peculiarity of the post-9/11 democracy where

> authoritarian modes of belonging to the national collective supply the norm … anyone who objects to the conduct of their government is likely

> to be identified as an enemy within and bluntly advised to go and live elsewhere.… We are then reminded that the principle of duty must, above all, be a national one and that our dwindling rights cannot be separated from obligations that will be defined … by an ideal of patriotic citizenship. (Gilroy 26)

The ideals of patriotic citizenship are at odds with Gilroy's notion of planetary humanism, wherein these parochial imperatives to identify with any singular ideology are laid to rest. The exclusionary realm in which the characters find themselves might be differentially punctuated through the idea of planetary humanism, wherein strategic universalism substitutes the parochial idea of conditional citizenship.

In this context, Nivedita Majumdar's concept of radical universalism becomes pertinent since it argues against the valorization of the local in the realm of postcolonial theory which uncritically negates the idea of the universal as a stand-in for Eurocentrism. Her idea of an alternative universalism that treads the path of Eurocentric Universalism becomes relevant in this situation (Majumdar, *The World in a Grain of Sand*). While the idea of a transnational cosmopolitan world order might seem to tread the path of the liberal humanist construction of a trans-cultural collective realm, it is important to note that Gilroy avoids the traps of abstract universalism and instead punctuates the absurd parochial continuities of the modernist nation-state and its incessant peddling of a sectarian identity kernel. Following Benedict Anderson, Gilroy particularly highlights the role that the media plays in reiterating a certain sense of solidarity and national consciousness that appeals to certain sections of the population, thereby creating a conditional sense of belonging.

A headline in the tabloids raises questions about the motives of Karamat Lone: "National interest or personal animus?" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 323). Later, his wife Terry consoles him: "Be human" (333). Again, he is quite intelligent and does not want to be caught performing anything wrong and, therefore, persuades himself that he would have done everything the same way if his son was not involved, which is quite impossible. Karamat is betrayed and wounded as his son's focus is no longer on acknowledging him as the central one. It instead proceeds in the direction of Aneeka's feelings of civic liberty. Aneeka is a mourning sister, and her lament, love, and cry semiotics are part of a broader frame of personal grief as well as a bigger grieving of democratic negotiation of the un-belongingness, alienation, and statelessness of the immigrant. Though Karamat Lone shapes himself according to the nation's cultural fabrics, he finds the "Ayat-al-Kursi," a Quranic verse, to be a kind of breather in trouble. Eamonn reveals that every year on Eid, Karamat visits his relatives hailing from Pakistan, where surrounded by his extended family, he "disappeared into another language, with its own gestures and intonation—even when he was speaking English" (82). His possible

efforts to define his *Britishness* find subtle acculturation as Karamat's speech earns media attention and a projection of himself:

> There is nothing this country won't allow you to achieve—Olympic medals, captaincy of the cricket team, pop stardom, reality TV crowns. And if none of that works out, you can settle for being home secretary. You are, we are British. British accept this. So, do most of you. But for those of you who are in some doubt about it, let me say this: Don't set yourself apart in the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behavior you cling to, the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you will be treated differently—not because of racism, though that does still exist, but because you insist on your difference from everyone else in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours. (119)

On the other hand, the split ethnic identity and questionable nationalist loyalties of Muslim immigrants such as Parvaiz succumb to the category of an outsider. It is the Britishness of the majoritarian voice that interprets the individual's representation of *minority's democratization*. Parvaiz's alienation and non-inclusiveness also highlight the role of visibility and hearing in endorsing the perceptions of others. The practice of veiling, keeping beards, and prayers at a mosque with a community is what Rehana Ahmed argues is "dominated by services that cater for its religious culture—that makes British Muslims especially susceptible to racism" (R. Ahmed 9). Though religion is one of the crucial components of their lives, and they are guided by it, it is not everything to them. Moreover, this spatial rupture and disjunction of resistance and retaliation with the proportional pain and agony find solace in believing the legacy of the caliphate: "What you do to ours we will do to yours" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 197).

Unconditional hospitality

Aneeka's repeated use of the phrase "Hear that," to school Eamonn in listening to the "sounds of the world" with the "soundscape" of his days explores the focal point of the novel—to listen closely to understand the other with the diminutive demonstration of signs and symbols and in encountering the difference (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 121). In *Home Fire*, the art of listening to others in terms of religion and culture involves the ethical question of recognition and the "reification of the figure of the stranger" (S. Ahmed, *Strange Encounters* 99) within the discourse of nationhood. Sara Ahmed in *Strange Encounters* (2000) deciphers the rubric of good citizenship that operates through the "recognition" of others as strangers through the "concealed and revealed" forms of social exclusion and ensures how certain spaces maintain their value by "certain lives" becoming "valued over other lives" and how communication fails to get across the desired medium (30). She puts forward the "transparency of meaning" or the "pure

exchange" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 155) while dwelling in the same place: "To hear, or to give the other a hearing, is to be moved by the other, such that one ceases to inhabit the same place" (156).

While a liberal viewpoint might suggest a mutual recognition and acceptance of the strangeness or uniqueness of subjects as an ethical stand in the nation-state, it must be first acknowledged that certain subjects are already far more otherized than others in the said political space. The (un)ethical encounter of the Western liberal subject with the disenfranchised British immigrant Muslims opens up newer vistas for interrogating the myriad ways in which subject-formation occurs at the fringes of the nation-state and its majoritarian tropes of citizenship. For nineteen-year-old Parvaiz, insecurities, loneliness, and the absence of community imaginings are palpable and lead to the inescapable lure of the seductive and brutal violence of the ISIS recruiter. In the essay "Terror: A Speech After 9/11" (2004), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak provides an "aural map" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 242) for steering into the "soundscape" (101) of listening to others even if they are the perpetrators of terror— "listen to the other as if it were a self, neither to punish nor to acquit" (Spivak, "Terror" 83). Claire Chambers also elaborates on this oeuvre of the "politics of listening" (Chambers 202) in her essay "Sound and Fury: Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*" and aptly argues that "Shamsie's account of contemporary society not only deserves a hearing; it should be played on repeat in Britain's Houses of Parliament" (218). The art of listening also entails an unconditional welcome to the unimaginable contours of a cultural and social alterity whose emergence transcends the cogitative fields of identity and communal adherence and ensures that a certain unconditional *yea-saying* occurs prior to the encounter itself.

Aneeka's twin, Parvaiz, "the terrorist son of a terrorist father" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 226), joins ISIS and on return, is denied citizenship, as the home secretary "revoked the citizenship of all dual nationals" (245) who have left Britain to join enemies. His firm declaration that Parvaiz Pasha's body will be repatriated to his home nation, Pakistan, because they "will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death" (245) symbolizes a stripping of the burial and citizenship rights and leads to rethinking the concepts of adaptation and resistance in relation to the UK's anti-terror laws, especially *denaturalization*. The question of the citizenship of a British national, whether it is a privilege or a right with a definitive factor of race, digs up the epistemic violence as Karamat Lone, Britain's Muslim home secretary, shares the anti-immigrant politics of Theresa May.

Here, Shamsie reflects that these people are our "own citizens" and "our judicial system and prison system and probation" finds the crime invincible to deal with and leave out the country on account of "a real failing of a state" to declare that the judicial system is incompetent in

upholding the meaningful measure of this criminal act (Currier n.p). Stripping Parvaiz, the "repentant jihadist" (Ben Driss 24), of his British citizenship and burial rights finds rationale in Miranda Fricker's *Epistemic Injustice* (2007), of whether a terrorist or a jihadist should have the right to voice himself as an epistemic agent in a court of law without the right to trial and defend himself as the "testimonial injustice" (Fricker 17) causes a "deflated level of credibility to a speaker's word" (1).

The systematic epistemic injustice is denied the right to be heard, as Gayatri Spivak (1988), in her article "Can the Subaltern Speak?", contends about the marginalized groups that are muted and denied epistemic agency. Spivak's theorization of epistemic violence focuses on who speaks and who listens. Can the terrorist speak? Martha Nussbaum (2002) empathizes and argues for

> the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and desires that someone so placed might have. (Nussbaum 299)

The new 2019 Counterterrorism and Border Security Act denies the power of citizenship from s40(2) of the British Nationality Act, as the given phrase, "satisfied that the deprivation is conducive to the public good" (Sokhi-Bulley n.p.) raises the difficult question of whether citizenship should be a privilege or a right.

Through Tony Blair's Third Way, David Cameron's Big Society, and Theresa May's Community and Society, the surrogacy of rights with responsibility are in play with the promise of individual right. The state's abandonment and the annulling of state responsibility neglects the colonial past and assists a persistent vilification of not only the brown, but the Other in general. Donna Haraway, in *Staying with the Trouble*, deciphers that the "response" and "ability" of the task is to

> make kin in lines of inventive connection as a practice of learning to live and die well with each other in a thick present. Our task is to make trouble, to stir up potent response to devastating events, as well as to settle troubled waters and to rebuild quiet places. (1)

Haraway finds the indispensable urge to make trouble by developing sensible and pioneering modes of thinking about how to build space for livable ways of being together with a focal point of *making* as we talk of making kin. What she stresses is the necessity for us to shape, not as individuals and communities with rights but as relational beings. The fact is that certain legal sovereign rights are enjoyed by citizens, but the guarantee of their exercise is predicated on relations with diverse subjects who do not subscribe to this sovereign category. This is tied to planetarity as it enhances our ethical understanding of who

are endowed with rights and how the rights discourse must be endlessly rewritten to engage with unfamiliar others. This relational nature of being already provokes us to see how subjects not falling within the sovereign rubric of rights enable us to exercise them—a turn to the subject rendered hitherto invisible by sovereign jurisprudence centered on the nation-state. This enlargement and enhancement of the scope of our vision is captured in the description of "planetarity" itself.

The home secretary's decision to revoke the citizenship of the "terrorist" and the refusal of a decent burial on British soil raises the question of the right to have a right that should be treated with responsibility. The empathetic engagement that Shamsie initiates is based on a kind of shared estrangement that "breaches the boundaries of gender, race, class and generation and that encourages radically democratic forms of citizenship and civic participation" (Roach 12). Under the vexed operation of 'prevent,' policies are important tools in response to these anxieties. If in Sophocles' *Antigone*, the tyranny of Creon is bound to the kingdom of Thebes, and in Homer, cruelty occurs in Troy, the twenty-first-century battlefield is global, bureaucratic, and judicial. Keeping the "trash"—the dead body of Parvaiz—out of Britain will not let the "terrorist" "sully that very soil in death" and keep Britain clean (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 286).

Conclusion

Citizenship laws in most countries are based on racial exclusion: e.g. the 1952 American citizenship laws, the 1965 citizenship laws, the disallowing of birthright citizenship laws in America by Donald Trump along with hatred, suspicion, and the extensive frisking of Muslims, and the UK's 1948 citizenship laws that were amended in 1981 with an additional clause of not depriving a "person of British citizenship if it appears to him that the person would thereupon become stateless" ("British Nationality Act 1981"). From 1973 to February 2002, the deprivation clause in British citizenship statutes was not applied. Many of these citizenship laws are modelled upon erstwhile imperial and colonialist legal machineries that pertain to the idea of the state of exception. The granting of conditional citizenship becomes the prerogative of the nation-state and its will-to-power.

With the war on terror and the freezing of civil liberties, the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002 finds not only "naturalised citizens who could be stripped of citizenship," but the "British-born fell under the deprivation powers provided they had a second nationality" (Shamsie, "Exiled"). The Deprivation Order was taken only once between 1973 and the 2010s. Shamsie, in her 2018 Orwell Lecture, titled "Unbecoming British," speaks volumes regarding the disorientating renovation of citizenship rights, the "'tiered' system of citizenship" where some people are "more British"

than others and the "two categories" of people—British people of White Christian descent, and the "British until the home secretary decides otherwise who are invariably not white" (Shamsie, "Exiled"). She writes:

> Even if a person of White British Anglo-Saxon stock with a single passport commits the most heinous act of treason, they will still be protected by all the rights that come with British citizenship and a right to remain, while a young British Pakistani with absolutely no experience or connection to Pakistan will face deportation. ("Exiled")

The British Mahdi Hashi incident is the most prominent narrative of separatist politics, as the British citizen of Somalian descent, a community youth worker who migrated to England at a young age with his parents, was continually pressured by MI5 to cooperate with them and spy on fellow Somalis and harassed by security officers.

The fear of the stranger, which is foregrounded on the preconceived notion of ethnically dissimilar communities in the form of a jihadi, terrorist asylum-seeker, is the kind of response to work as "an economy of fear" (S. Ahmed, *Cultural Politics* 67) in the collective consciousness. The invisibility of the deceased "terrorist" Parvaiz to the extensive state policies requires him to prove that "he is one of them [Pakistani], not one of us [British]" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 52). Stripping the jihadist body of British citizenship and burial rights with the politics of negotiation endorses aggression for a political choice. Theresa May's inflexible immigration policy and the vicious counter-terrorism laws of Britain with some measures taken from the war on terror by America elaborate on how the liminal body negotiates with government agencies to form a strong foothold in governing themselves to oppose violence in the planetarity of community and nationhood.

The disintegration of Parvaiz's burial rights transforms itself into a lived embodiment of what Frantz Fanon opines is "sealed into that crushing objecthood" (Fanon 77) under the exclusionary essentialization of differentiation as the rights of the British Muslims in *Home Fire* navigate spatial exile. The translation of the topography of possibilities of relations and the production of precarity and hate is where "corpses thrown into unmarked graves" and "heads impaled on spikes" (Shamsie, *Home Fire* 294) echo the bestiality of the "enemies of the state" (8) and injure the lives that struggle to maintain their social, political, and democratic reality.

In the context of Gilroy's concept of planetary humanism, prevalent myths and foundational ideologies within identity politics, including those rooted in race, class, nationalism, and geopolitical positioning, are debunked. Planetary humanism advocates for a unified communal identity that centers around the ecocentric planet, rather than being confined within the limitations of the Anthropocene and the nation-state discourse of modernity. The identity crisis depicted in the novel

arises from the discourse of the modern nation-state, characterized by fixed categories of the sovereign self and the perceived 'other.' Gilroy's planetary humanism presents a communal self akin to the ideals of the *ummah* in Islamic thought, emphasizing unconditional cosmopolitanism and strategic universalism. These principles break through the parochial constraints of modernity and the state-induced Anthropocene, which define the parameters of migrant displacement and the subsequent experience of 'otherization.' The symbolic act of burial becomes a significant marker, representing the profound reality of death. It prompts introspection into the porous and impregnable boundaries that perpetually challenge the lived and imagined dimensions of ethnic citizenship and the modernist constructs of nationality, especially in relation to socio-ontological 'Others.' Within Gilroy's framework of planetary humanism, these denials highlight an exclusionary planetary conditionality, deviating significantly from the inclusive networks of universal citizenship. They signify a return to a biopolitical existence centered on a sacred and marginalized 'Other,' whose burial within the homeland triggers a series of paradoxical disruptions that question the authority of the sovereign state and its claims to power.

Notes

1. The novelist and playwright Ayad Akhtar has won the Edith Wharton Citation of Merit for Fiction, the Pulitzer Prize for Drama, and an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Akhtar addresses the uncertainties and rifts in the ideological and biopolitical registers of nationality, homeland security, the racialization of Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians, and national belonging in the years following 9/11 in his important works, such as *Homeland Elegies,* and the play *Disgraced.*

2. Mohsin Hamid earned his fame for his fictional depictions of Islam and Muslim identities in his novels *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Exit West* which have drawn more attention recently, particularly in light of the post-9/11 political atmosphere and its associated skewed perceptions of terrorism. Over the past ten years, the War on Terror has supplanted other political narratives in Europe and the US, effectively associating Islam and Muslims with terrorism. The current worldwide refugee crisis gave birth to the characters created by Mohsin Hamid. The status of the protagonists in Hamid's works is a topic of national and cultural membership. Hamid challenges the binary division of panic/normalcy, empathy/violence, citizens/immigrants, tolerance/intolerance, hospitality/vulgarity by portraying characters with brief vignettes of the suffering of refugees who are prone to falling under the category of "illegal," to restore the

human right, of how human lives are ephemeral, and to include more globalized positions and perspectives.

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