

Dynamics of Fear: A Psychoanalytical and Cultural Study of *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie

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Abstract

The narrative of fear has acquired its very own momentum in Anglophone literature. Although the term "Fear" is not explicitly used in fiction but the main driver of most of the characters' lives seems fear. This situation clearly embarks on the better understanding of how fear is generated in individual's mind that influences one's behaviour and how media and politicians manipulate this fear for their own benefits. For this purpose, the researchers have critically analyzed the working of fear in the novel Home Fire by Kamila Shamsie through dual lens of Freud's Psychoanalytical theory and Frank Furedi's socio cultural perspective of fear from his book "How Fear Works: Culture of Fear in 21st Century." The researchers have employed psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud to analyze the psychological dimensions of fear through the interplay of id, ego, and super-ego. Moreover, Furedi's socio-cultural perspective is employed to examine the societal and cultural influences shaping fear within the novel. Moreover, this paper seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of fear within the narrative of "Home Fire". The researchers have found that characters' fear is not only due to their personal experiences and traumas but also due to societal expectations and cultural influences. Additionally, politicians and media have played crucial role in shaping these fears which are further manipulated by them for their own purpose.

Keywords: *Psychoanalysis, Id, Ego, Superego, Conscious and Unconscious Mind, Home Fire, Frank Furedi, Fear, Culture*

1. Introduction

Aristotle has elucidated fear in Rhetoric as a kind of pain or disturbance due to mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future which is near at hand. Fear has emerged as an influential perspective that shapes thoughts and behavior of individuals. Fear is used and manipulated in our society, from politics to media. Society is trained to believe that people are insecure. It has cultivated helplessness. As a result, we are always searching for new means of security. Professor of sociology Frank Furedi has mentioned in his book "How Fear Works", published in 2018, that fear and culture are closely related to one another (Furedi, 2018).

Fear includes variety of feelings like uneasiness, sense of insecurity, powerlessness and feelings of being threatened by some crime or terror. It is through culture that fearful subjects are created to control the minds of people. Media has great impact in creating fearful subjects. David Altheide points out that media is the most important social institution (Furedi, 2018). It is through media that people become aware of the problems and threats to their lives. Stefanie Grupp has mentioned

about a general shift from a fearsome life towards a life with fearsome media (Furedi, 2018). Furedi (2018) is of the opinion that only media is not responsible for our fears. Direct experience along with personal circumstances and social context also play an important role in how individual fears. Furedi (2018) further explains that media itself is also under the influence of culture and politicians. Social media usage affects performance (Ramzan et al., 2023). If a good leader instills hope it can make people more secure (Ramzan et al., 2023). Politicians play fear cards to gain influential place in politics. Overall Furedi explores how fear works in human psychology and society.

The researchers have adopted Psychoanalytical theory proposed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) to understand the psychology of human mind. Freud has divided human psyche into three parts: id, ego and super ego. Id is an instinct of one's individual. It functions on the pleasure principle. It seeks immediate gratification (Barry, 2002). According to Freud (1856-1939) fear arises when id faces threat while achieving instinctual needs or feel insecurity. Id is also the unconscious part of mind that acts like a store house for ignored repressed memories like unresolved conflicts, unadmitted desires or traumatic past events that have been moved from conscious to unconscious with the passage of time (Barry, 2002). Ego is the reality of one's personality. Ego maintains balance between id and super-ego. It tries to satisfy id in a realistic manner which is socially acceptable. It tries to fix the fears resulting from the threats that are socially and culturally constructed by adopting defense mechanism (Mustari, 2021). The third part super-ego deals with moral standard value. It is the conscience part of mind (Barry, 2002).

1.1 A Snapshot of the novel *Home Fire*

This study explicates the working of fear in Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire*. The researchers have taken insight from Freud Psychoanalytical theory and Frank Furedi's book "How Fear Works". *Home Fire* was published in 2017 and won the Women's Prize for Fiction in 2018. It explores the themes of fear, identity and loyalty. The novel is set in Britain, America and Pakistan. The story revolves around the two families: Pasha Family and Karamat Lone's family. Pasha's family consists of three sibling Isma, Aneeka, and Pervaiz. After the death of their mother, Isma brought them up. Their father Adil Pasha was Jihadi.

The book comprises of five parts. Each part narrates the stories of main characters and their fears that shape their behavior and decisions. The lives of Aneeka, Isma, and Pervaiz are haunted by the memories of their Jihadi father, and they struggle to keep their identity hidden. Pervaiz is trapped by Farooq and joins ISIS. But soon he realizes his mistake, but it was too late. Aneeka establishes sexual relationships with Eamonn, the son of Home Secretary, to bring Pervaiz home but all in vain. Pervaiz was killed by Farooq in an attempt to escape from ISIS. Aneeka tries her best to bring home the dead body of Pervaiz but Karamat Lone revokes the dual nationality of Pervaiz and sends his body to Pakistan. Aneeka and Eamonn fall in love with each other. The novel ends in a scene where some men have tied a belt of explosives around Eamonn waist. Aneeka runs towards Eamonn instead of escaping. A true picture of the two lovers above all fears of life.

In the whole novel we see fear as the main driver of narrative. Fear is an outcome of interrelationship between its social, biological and cultural aspects. Epictetus notes that fear is created due to one's own evaluation and struggle for certain things (Ivana, 2023). An individual process reality depending upon his experience, psychological characteristics, and the situation in which it is located. Fear is also a spirit of age. Furedi (2018) indicates that today's society is characterized by a culture of fear. Klein also sees fear as a powerful tool for achieving economic and political interests in society (Ivana, 2023).

The researchers have examined the historical and social context of the novel to better understand the phenomenon of fear. Kamila Shamsie has mentioned about ISIS in *Home fire* 2017, ISIS were involved in number of attacks on western countries. ISIS recruited many Muslims from America and England through their brainwashing as discussed in the novel. The character of Karamat Lone reminds us the real character of Sajid Javed. He was also a Muslim but similar to Lone in personality. Sajid Javed's loyalties were with Conservative Party. From literary point of view this novel is the retelling story of Antigone in modern society. This novel has also the traces of author's own life. Kamila Shamsie is a British - Pakistani novelist. She has also studied in Massachusetts like Isma. Kamila Shamsie has also faced many problems for British citizenship. She is the author of seven novels, *In the city by the sea*, *Salt and saffron*, *Broken verses*, *Katrography*, *Burnt shadows*, *A God in every stone* and *Home fire*. Kamila Shamsie is the winner of the 2018 Women's Prize for fiction for *Home fire*.

2. Literature Review

Kamila Shamsie's *Home fire* is an adaptation of Antigone by Sophocles. Most of the researchers have explored *Home fire* from the perspective of Antigone. Dr. Taimur Kayani has examined the Politics of Indigenization in Kamila Shamsie's *Home fire*. It explores the influence of Greek culture on contemporary society. The researcher has employed Linda Hutcheon's theory of Adaptation to analyze the similarities of character and contextual differences. Moreover, the researcher has analyzed the views about Muslims in the eyes of world. ISIS and authorities of Britain. Overall this research paper sheds light on politics of indigenization, cultural adaptation and the role of religion and gender in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (kiyani, 2023).

Maryam Akbar has also explored gender roles in Shamsie's novel *home fire* and examines how gender roles determine the character's individuality in the text. She has adopted Mead (1964) and Blamer's (1969) concepts of interaction and interpretation to analyze gender roles. This research paper reveals the gender equality in *Home Fire*. It has challenged stereotypes and presents balanced representation of male and female characters (Akbar, 2022).

Moreover, the researchers have done their thesis on deception towards British Muslims in the novel *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie. *Home fire* is a symbol of place which is full of havoc and sense of insecurity. British Muslims are deceived by both government and ISIS recruiters. The individuals in the novel don't get security from the government and are deceived by ISIS that they will give them security as well as bright future. The government deceives Muslims through manipulation and limited right. Deception by ISIS is done through propaganda. The researcher has done his research in a unique way by exposing the deception towards British Muslim and the way that Government and ISIS recruiters use to manipulate young people. Pervez, Isma and Aneeka are representations of the British Muslims who suffer deception. Karamat Lone stands for British government. Farooq is a representative of ISIS recruiter (Monika, 2019).

Researchers have also studied diasporic identities in *Home Fire*. Padel Muhammad Rallie has done close textual analysis of *Home fire* to examine how Pakistani diasporic community construct their identities within the novel by utilizing Hall's Identity theory (1990) and Bhabha's *Unhomely* (1992). It shows that the novel represents heterogeneity within Pakistani Muslim diasporic identities rather than single collective identity (Rallie, 2019).

The element of grief in novel has also been a hot topic for researchers. Jaine Chemmachery has analyzed Kamila Shamsie's novel "*Home fire*" through the lens of Judith Butler's work on public mourning grievable lives to examine the issue of body repatriation. This paper gives insights into the complexities of mourning repatriation and the representation of Muslim subjects in contemporary literature (Chemmachery, 2023).

Umme Farwa has analyzed the re-oriental tendencies in *Home Fire* and *Burnt Shadows*. The researcher has selected Lau's (2009) framework of Re-Orientalism along with the basic concepts of Said's (1979) orientalism. This study reveals that the modern orients are facing more hate and prejudice in the host country for being an orient and a diaspora Muslim. It highlights the settling issues of the modern orients in past 9/11 fiction, distinguishing it from traditional ways of writing (Farwa, 2023).

Henry Garrett has also searched about different forms of subjugation to the power of death and mourning by utilizing Judith Buttlers theorization on the uneven distribution of grievability. He has also used Achilles Mbembe's notion of necropolitics to show how power functions through the control and manipulation of life and death in a society where citizens are deprived of their rights. The researcher has also discussed the postcolonial rewriting of Antigone as a mean for resistance. Gender vulnerability is also under discussion in this paper (Garrett, 2022).

Nalini Lyer in an article has examined how Muslim women in Kamila Shamsie's *Home fire* and Samira Ahmed's *Internment* (2019) navigate physical and digital spaces to claim their rights as citizens. In both the novels, resistance emerges as a transnational subaltern counter public in traditional and digital media. The paper examines how Muslim young women in *Home fire* oppose xenophobia and restrictions on them (Lyer, 2022).

There are also researches from political perspective. Shaista has conducted her research to discover how the conflict occurs between the state and individuals using concept of theological apparatus and interpellation of Althusser. This research paper examines the impact of political ideologies on social order. It discusses the role of media in shaping individual identity. The writer has related the concepts of theological apparatus and interpellation to the novel in a unique way. The author has critically read the novel and her assessment is that whenever there is a clash between state and society, state always dominates at the end. State uses different ways of oppression and repression to control people and society. It can be clearly evaluated with Isma's treatment at the airport in the novel *Home Fire*. Isma has to prove that she is loyal to state (Shahzadi, 2021).

Moreover, the researcher has also explored trauma in their studies. Abdul Kadir Unal has examined in detail the diasporic trauma along with Postcolonial literature. The words used in novel like torture, rendition, detention without trial, airports interrogations represent some aspects of trauma. Kamila Shamsie's *Home fire* proves that there still exists a race and geographical based discrimination. There are double standards everywhere. The researcher has artistically explored the impact of diasporic trauma on the lives of immigrant in the novel *Home fire* (Unal, 2022). Good writing helps improve psychological affects (Javaid et al., 2023). Negative events lesson confidence and patience whereas expressive writing therapy makes trauma manageable (Javaid & Mahmood, 2023). Psychological flexibility (Gull et al., 2023) and mindfulness (Javaid et al., 2023) improves quality of life (Adeeb et al., 2017) and helps people relive. Psychological distress is reduced with resilience (Riaz et al., 2021). Parents may also play role in traumas of kids and make them aggressive (Kamran et al., 2023).

In Addition Mohd Saquib has discussed Islamic identity and cultural hegemony in Kamila Shamsie's *Home fire*. The researcher has adopted Antonio Gramsci's Cultural Hegemony and Identity concepts to analyze Islamic cultural hegemony and identity in *Home Fire*. To be a Muslim in these days can give tough time just like Isma's interrogation at Heathrow airport, Hijab, a symbol of pride, for Muslims is also criticized by the people. Some guys gave difficult time to Aneeka because of Hijab (Saquib, 2021).

3. Research Methodology

This research is interpretative in nature. The researchers have conducted this research through psychoanalytical and cultural study of *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie to examine the phenomenon of fear in contemporary Anglophone literature. The researchers have focused on individual personality of characters, societies and cultures. To gain insight into the psyche of characters, psychoanalytic theory by Freud (1856-1939) has been employed. The key terms of theory used by the researchers are id, ego and super-ego along with conscious and unconscious mind. Freud's Psychoanalytical perspective on fear lays stress on the dynamic interplay between instinctual desires of Id, reality based decision making of ego, internalized moral standards of super-ego and the strategies which the mind uses as defense mechanisms to deal with fear and anxiety (Ivana, 2023).

To gain insight into the culture of fear in *Home fire*, the researchers have extracted key points From Furedi's Book, "How Fear works: Culture of Fear in the 21st century" And has further related these points to the primary text. This book was published in 2018. The main focus of the researchers was the fourth chapter of the book in which Frank Furedi, explores the phenomenon of how fear works. The main points utilized by the researcher from rest of the book are:

1. Furedi states that fear has emerged as an influential perspective that shapes thoughts towards uncertainty.
2. This perspective has been so thoroughly internalized that many who adopt this outlook are not aware of its influence on their behavior.
3. One of the most alarming aspects of the way that the fear perspective works is its ability to recast the normal features of life as threat.
4. Politicians use this perspective of fear as motive to force people think that vulnerability and insecurity they are facing can be ended by them only.

In addition, the researchers have also scrutinized different journals and websites to comprehend the working of fear.

4. Textual Analysis:

Furedi (2018) asserts that one of the disturbing aspect of the way that the fear works is its ability to show the normal features of life as a threat.

The novel starts with Isma being interrogated by the officer at Heathrow airport. Isma ensured not to pack anything that might invite comment or questions

"No Quran, no family pictures, no books on her area of academic interest." (Shamsie, 2017, p. 1)

Family pictures or books are normal features of one's life but Isma is perceiving them as a threat to her security. And according to Freud(1856-1939) fear arises when id faces threats while achieving instinctual need or face insecurity. Quran and family pictures show her Id's desires. Isma's decision not to take Quran can be associated with ego. As ego maintains balance between id and super ego, it forces her not to take such items. Owing to her father's background as Jihadi, the internalized moral standards don't allow her anything that shows her association to Jihadi father who is perceived as terrorist in western norms. It can be seen as defensive mechanism that ego adopts in respond to the fear, that is always in the unconscious part of her mind.

The interrogation at the airport can be interpreted as an attempt to bring the unconscious to conscious to know the real self of Isma. But Isma has rehearsed with her sister Aneeka how to respond to the questions during interrogation. This role play can be seen as ego's defensive strategy. But Isma has to face slip of tongue responding to the question if she considers herself British. Freud calls it as parapraxis whereby repressed material in the unconscious finds an outlet (Barry, 2002). Dr. Shah used this experience of Isma's fear during interrogation in the shared paper they were working on.

“The Insecurity state: Britain and the Instrumentalization of fear” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 39).

In America Isma meets Eamonn, a son of Home Secretary Karamat Lone. He inquires Isma about the turban she wears in these words:

“The turban. Is that a style or a Muslim thing...It must be difficult to be Muslim in the world these days”(Shamsie, 2017, p. 21).

Kamila Shamsie has tried to portray the dominant narrative of western culture in those days which is still prevalent. To be a Muslim was a fearful subject. Hijab is a symbol of Muslim identity and it has been rooted in the unconscious of western people to treat hijab as a threat to their security. People are living in the culture of Fear. Furedi(2018)states in "How Fear works" that “One of the most disquieting features of the culture of fear is that its premises and practices are unconsciously accepted even by parties and individuals who are hostile to many of its manifestations”(Furedi, 2018, p. 68).

It can be seen from the double roles that Isma is playing. On one side she wishes to save Pervaiz from ISIS but on the other side she is showing her loyalty to save her remaining family in England: “We are in no position to let the state question our loyalties” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 42).

She even informs police about Pervaiz joining to ISIS. In most of her decisions we see compliance to super ego but in Aneeka's personality id is dominant that seeks instant gratification. Aneeka manipulates Eamonn to bring Pervaiz back to home. She tries to control Eamonn by establishing sexual relations with him. Eamonn was a hope for her she thought that the Home Secretary's son could help her brother come home and avoid charges. Furedi (2018) is of the opinion that fear has emerged as an influential perspective that shapes thoughts towards uncertainty(Furedi, 2018).Farooq uses this uncertainty of Pervaiz about his identity and sense of belonging. He uses the traumatic past of Pervaiz and his sense of insecurity to trap him. He manipulates Holy verses for his own purpose. It seems that he worked on Pervaiz's superego by changing the standard moral values for him. He tries to manipulate his super-ego.

“They want you in the house. Men are in charge of women because Allah has made one of them to excel to other” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 130).Farooq's manipulation unconsciously internalizes fear in Pervaiz's mind. A fear of insecurity, a fear of not acting like his brave father and fear of not fighting in the way of Allah.

“Everywhere he saw evidence of rot and corruption, lies and cover-ups” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 148). Furedi (2018) has stated in his book, "How Fear Works" that fear can force an individual to make wrong choices that can have tragic consequences. Pervaiz also makes a wrong decision to join ISIS in order to have a bright future as well as mental satisfaction that he is living a life of bravery like his father. But soon he realizes that he is wrong. He is shot by Farooq in an attempt to escape from ISIS in front of British Consulate in Istanbul. Karamat Lone, the British Home Secretary, does not even accept Pervaiz's body to be buried in Britain. Karamat Lone's attitude and decisions have great influence of fear. He fears if he will not move according to the standard social and cultural values of west, he will be set apart by the society. He will lose his power. In the beginning of his career, he uses Islam to gain power. Furedi (2018) is of the view that politicians make people think that the vulnerability and insecurity they are facing can be ended by them only. Karamat Lone also uses a sense of insecurity that Muslims were facing but after coming into power, he sees Islam as a threat for his political career. He starts manipulating his own people to gain favor of dominant majority. In his speech at a Muslim School in Bradford he says,

“There is nothing this country don't allow you to achieve... don't set yourselves apart in the way you dress, the way you think.... (Shamsie, 2017, p. 87).Karamat Lone's urge for power can be associated with his id's desires. Fear of losing power leads ego to make decisions keeping in view

the expectations of dominant society. Eamonn tries to justify the wrong choices of his father. He asserts that he did so for public service, national good and British values. These decisions can be interpreted as self-defense mechanism. He revoked the citizenship of all dual nationals who had joined ISIS. He says that British nationality is a privilege not a right for British Muslims who have a dual nationality.

Although Karamat Lone has adopted the dominant culture but still there is a conflict in his mind between his internalized moral standards and the decisions he takes. His identity as Muslim has been repressed in his unconscious. He admits,

"I grew up a believing Muslim. Didn't harm anyone but myself with it" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 107). He often recites Ayatulkursi as a reflex action in dangers. He has transformed himself into a man who criticizes the community that has voted him out. A journalist writes about him whether he is Muslim or Ex-Muslim, Proud-son of- Migrants or anti-Migrant, or Traditionalist Who is the real Karamat Lone? (Shamsie, 2017).

Fear of losing political status has transformed him to such an extent that he even doesn't care about his own family. He once said that he doesn't have a son or wife. He has just a Great office of state. Media has also played an influential role to spread fear in contemporary society of the novel. It is through media that people become aware of the threats to their lives. Politicians use media for their own purpose. Furedi (2018) is of the opinion that although media has great impact on people's choices but it is not media alone who is responsible for it. Personal experiences and social context also contribute in how people fear. Repressed memories are always there in the unconscious mind of people and most of the time media acts like a stimuli to bring this unconscious material to conscious and people react accordingly. Soon after the speech of Karamat Lone in Muslim School Aneeka was humiliated by some guys for wearing hijab. Media had gained the attention of people. Home secretary was appreciated for his truth-telling, his passion and his attitude towards his own culture and community in which he had grown up.

"You Are We Are British was trending on social media, .The phrase future Prime Minister was everywhere (Shamsie, 2017, p. 88).

Firstly, Karamat Lone created a fearful subject in the form of Muslim culture and values. Media articulated it everywhere and appreciated Karamat Lone. Soon Karamat Lone as a Future Prime Minister was echoing at all places. This is how politicians use fear through media to gain benefits for themselves.

Soon after Eamonn is revealed as a lover of terrorist's sister, the opponents of Karamat Lone use it through media to turn the people against him. According to Furedi (2018) community values, attitudes and expectation provide a cultural context for the articulation of individual fears.

In the end of the novel, two men tied explosives around Eamonn's waist. Aneeka stands up Eamonn shouts "Run! Get away from me, run!" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 260). She runs but towards Eamonn she does not want to escape from the fear of death "For a moment they are two lovers in a park, under an ancient tree sun-dappled, beautiful and at peace" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 260).

5. Conclusion

This research has delved deep into the working of fear through a psychoanalytical and cultural lens centering, on Kamila Shamsie's *Homefire*. The psychoanalytical theory has provided the framework to analyze the psychological dimensions of individual's fear whereas socio cultural insights from Frank Furedi's book, "How Fear Works" has explored the mechanism through which fear is manipulated in the novel. The researchers have found that the personal experiences and traumas of the characters in the novel are not solely responsible for their fears. The societal expectations and cultural values of contemporary society are also responsible for shaping their

fears. The analysis has revealed the crucial role of politicians and media in molding these fears for their own benefit. The combined theoretical framework of psychoanalytical theory and Frank Furedi's (2018) socio cultural perspective has broadened our comprehension of how fear operates within narrative. This framework can be utilized by other researchers to explore multifaceted nature of fear as portrayed in *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie.

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