

Politics of Indigenization in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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Abstract: *The study exhibits the Politics of Indigenization in Kamila Shamsie's novel Home Fire. It explores the traces of Greek culture in the contemporary society. It also unearths that how the culture affects the role of gender and religion. For textual analysis, the study takes insight from Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation. Transcultural adaptation and Indigenization are serving as a tool to explore the study. In this research the geographical changes and its effect upon the characters has been discussed thoroughly. The study aims to explore the importance of old text with reference to present day society. In indigenization the adapter brings the issues into the spotlight. The researcher scrutinizes into the lives and actions of characters with reference to gender. The data is collected after the study of facts, events and incidents in the novel Home Fire as well as from the play Antigone. The theory of Adaptation gives a view that there is a difference between original text and adapted text. So, in this study the difference has been sorted out. Home Fire is adapted as a new form of Antigone. The researcher has found out the similarities and difference from the Greek to the South Asian culture.*

Keywords: *Culture, indigenization, Linda Hutcheon, politics, transcultural adaptation*

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Introduction

Indigenization and transcultural adaptation are important now a days. The title Politics of Indigenization

means the reasons and effects of adapting Greek culture by Kamila Shamsie in her novel *Home Fire*. The adaptation has been done because the traces of Greek society is still related to

South Asian context. In this process of regenerating stories, Hutcheon states that 'art is driven from other art'(Hutcheon, 2006). So, in indigenization of story, the meanings are pulled out by the audience and readers which they relate according to the current society. Adaptations are done worldwide in order to bring change in the story (Ellis, 2022). Adaptations are common practice nowadays. Adapters bring change in the story according to the society.

This study explicates the *Politics of indigenization in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire*. In the novel *Home Fire*, Shamsie with her peculiar style has dragged the story in the South Asian society. She has retold Greek Drama Antigone according to the culture of contemporary society. In her novel, she features out the problems of Muslims worldwide (Cilano, 2007). Antigone is the tragic heroine in the way she faces the death and punishment by her uncle Creon as a ruler. The play starts with the story of both brothers Polyneices and Eteocles. Both die in the fight but Creon calls Polyneices a traitor whose corpse

is left unburied. Antigone as a sister feels bad for brother so she buries him secretly. When Creon knows about the incident, he punishes the promised bride of his son Haemon. Haemon and Antigone are fiancé and in love with each other. So when Creon punishes Antigone in the cave, she commits suicide. In the same manner Haemon commits suicide in front of his father and king Creon.

Kamila Shamsie re-imagines Antigone in her novel and talks about the Muslims dual-nationals, their problems and how the authorities question their faithfulness. She is a British-Pakistani novelist. She has lived in Pakistan, United Kingdom and Massachusetts in United States of America. She has selected UK as her place of living. Her belongings are from the feudal family of Lucknow. She is the niece of Attia Hossain, Indian novelist and writer of her times. Luckily, Shamsie's mother also belongs to the field of literature, Muneeza Shamsie one of the best critics, editors, writers and bibliographers. Kamila Shamsie wrote her first novel when she was in college.

Her works point up the sensitive issues of the society. Her latest writing, *Home Fire* is the new form of the Greek Play Antigone. She has written seven novels. *In the city by the sea, Salt and Saffron, Broken verses, Katrography, Burnt Shadows, A God in every stone and Home fire* are the novels written by Kamila Shamsie.

Her first novel "In the City by The Sea" was shortlisted John Llewelyn Rhys Award in UK. Her writings have been translated into many languages. Politics, role of women, class system and lives of immigrants have been the constant themes in all her novels. Shamsie, as the female writer, is trying to hit the social issues without creating any ambiguity. Shamsie's novels highlight the issues of Muslims. According to the theme of novels, dual personality, society pressure, class system and political issues are faced by her characters of novels specially the major characters.

The title of the novel *Home Fire* shows that home is the place where one can feel easy, comfortable and contented

in one's life. The novel *Home Fire* shows that three British nationality holder siblings are not safe in their own land.

Moreover, to investigate *Politics of Indigenization in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire*, the researcher takes insight from the theory of adaptation of Linda Hutcheon. She has achieved her Ph.D degree from Toronto. She has taught at McMaster University for about twelve years. She has been elected as a president for the Modern Languages Association. Her theory contributes in fiction, feminism theory, and literature.

In this way, Linda Hutcheon's theory of adaptation states that re-describing stories share the ideas which can mold in the modern culture. The stories give the ideas of the past literature which the adapter relates to the present conditions. According to theory adaptations are product and process. In product, the adaptation is not entirely loyal to its original text. According to it, the changes depend upon the society, culture, time and place.

Literature Review

Indigenization means localization of the text. Antigone is the famous Greek Tragedy by Sophocles. It is the story of suffering and self-sacrifices. Antigone is considered as the tragic heroine of the history. She sacrifices her love, her relation in love of her brother. She does burial of her brother against the King. She challenges the ideology of Greeks that the patriarchal society of that time.

More interestingly, Sethulekshmi (2018) has discussed the Antigone and Home Fire in the research paper *An Antigone at the Time of Islamophobia: Analysing the Muslim Diasporic Identity in Home Fire*. In this paper the researcher talks about Antigone and its revivals. Antigone is the Greek tragedy. The poet Anne Carson's translation is about timings. Seamus Heaney has rewritten Antigone and he gives importance to the Irish Culture in it. There are many retellings of this drama but Kamila Shamsie has dragged the drama into modernistic Muslim society. In the research paper, the researcher puts light on every character. First letter of every character is same with

Antigone. People in British face many problems (Sethulekshmi, 2018)

Furthermore, the researchers have done work in their thesis on *Deception towards British Muslims in the novel Home Fire (2017) By Kamila Shamsie*. Their thesis is an analysis of novel *Home Fire*. They talk about *Home Fire* in a very different way. *Home Fire* is having three symbols i.e. place of havoc, destruction, deception. The researchers talk about the deception of British and ISIS. British consider Muslims as a terrorist and ISIS trains the mind of people to get their own benefits. Karamat Lone hides his thoughts and actions as a Muslim. He has a dual personality. He does this because to maintain his high position in British Government.

He behaves like an atheist in Public to avoid any confusion and question on his character as well as his Muslim identity. He announces that the girls should not wear hijab in public. The dress code should be according to the context or the prevailing surrounding. In his speech, he utters the words in favour of British life. He says

‘There is nothing this country won’t allow you to achieve’(Shamsie, 2017). Farooq says to Parvaiz to fight like his father. He brainwashes him by saying that your house is under the control of your sisters, so they do not want you to behave like a brave man. Their attitude is making you coward ‘They want you in the house, doing the garden, so they’ve tried to keep you a boy (2017, p. 120).

These lines show that ISIS and the agents are trying to inculcate their own definition of religion. They play with the words and dreams of the youngsters. Misconception of mind is dealt by them with trickery. The researcher beautifully describes the condition of Parvaiz in the following line ‘Mean while he does not have enough money to start his dream and he is not either receive any scholarship’ The line represents that ISIS deludes the youth and says them that they’ll become hero after being Jihadi. Like Parvaiz, there is a large amount of youth whose fate is in their hands by their

decisive attitude(Al Nindita & Al-Hafizh, 2019)

Furthermore, Ahmed has done his analysis; ‘*towards an ethics of reading Muslims encountering difference in Kamila Shamsie’s Home Fire*’. The researcher explores that how the class system is prevailing in UK. The Muslims are considered as minorities. The study tells that the girls who do mantilla or head covering have not been looked admirable in the eyes of people Aneeka wears Hijab and Eamonn respected her but she put off her hijab and attracted Eamonn towards herself.

Additionally, Shaheen et al, (2018) work on the *Obsessive ‘Westoxification’ versus the Albatross of Fundamentalism and love as Collateral Damage in Kamila Shamsie’s Home Fire*. In this article the researchers have done their marvelous job by giving the new look and sight to the novel. According to the paper, Shamsie has extracted the new concept of ‘*Westoxification*’ and ‘*Fundamentalism*’ in the characters of Karamat Lone and Parvaiz Pasha. Karamat’s behaviour and

attitude towards his belongings is different from the mindset of Parvaiz. According to study this Islamophobia has increased after the incident of 9/11. As, the result people in west develops fear of Islam. The word 'Islamophobia', meaning 'hatred', 'hostility', and 'fear of Islam' and 'Muslims', and the 'discriminatory practices against Muslims" (Shaheen, Qamar, & Islam, 2018).

In this article, the researchers put focus on the novel in a new way that Shamsie has brought a wide change in both characters, Karamat as Creon and Parvaiz as Polyneices. Karamat is under the British rule even he tries to change the identity of his kids as a Muslim. He gives them names from different spellings. His non-religious attitude is shown when he marries a non-Muslim woman Terry. On the other hand, Parvaiz faces the emotional abuse by Farooq and the young guy like Parvaiz becomes interested in being a part of Jihadi group.

In *Home Fire lives Touched by Immigration, Jihad and Family love*. The view of the writer is that the novel

Home Fire is about the Muslim family that lives in Britain but the character of the father of siblings, chases them where ever they go. Isma has a tough time in interrogation room. She has been mistreated because of her Muslim identity. Basically Shamsie is a British-Pakistani so she has excellently described the lives of Muslims over in Britain. Parvaiz gets involved with ISIS, soon he realizes about his mistake. Behaviour of government towards the dead body of Parvaiz shows the discriminating attitude of the helms of affairs. According to article, the novel *Home Fire* is new and marvelous retelling of Antigone which aims to have theme of civil disobedience (Garner, 2017)

Moreover, In the article of Financial times there is a blog *Home Fire By Kamila Shamsie-Family on the edge*. In this blog the discussion is about Shamsie's novel and reactions face by the Muslim characters from American society and British society. The Isma's episode is giving the glimpse of rude attitude towards Muslims. The class division is flashing on the top by

Shamsie's characters. This class variation has been representing the mindset of characters as well (Ranasinha, 2012)

Additionally, *Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire: A Review*, the novel in which the lives of immigrants is discussed. The loyalty is challenged by the country in which they are living like in the novel *Home Fire* the government puts a question on the loyalty of the Pasha's family even the Home secretary did not put any ear on their requests. All three siblings Isma, Aneeka and Parvaiz are British nationality holders but the country cannot give any space and flexibility even the dead corpse of Parvaiz has sent to Pakistan. The novel shows the issues of immigrants that their faithfulness is challenged.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, a research method has been proposed that is used in conducting this study, giving emphasis to the analysis of the text. In this research project, the researcher utilizes Linda Hutcheon's Theory of Adaptation as a theoretical framework

to analyze the text minutely. It is evident that *Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire* is an adapted version of Greek Playwright Sophocles' *Antigone*. Adaptation is a major way to share the themes with different cultures. One work is adapted in another culture by changing its character, cultural context and background according to the traditions of other culture. If an adapter changes a story, which is not true to original text is called product that is switching text into some new context. If the story stays true to original text strictly, this is called process. The animation of one text into another by the process of remaking and recreation is a way to preserve worthwhile text that is facing the barrier of language and culture (Hutcheon, 2006)

Transcultural adaption is described as how the two cultures get transformed having something mutual. In such transformation the time and place are of paramount importance. It is another way of globalization as sharing things universally. The Romans adopted from Greek it has been repeated over the

ages across the boundaries. "I found the work exceedingly difficult, beyond anything I had anticipated" and especially adaptation is across the genres like from "writing a screen play based on a great novel" (Hutcheon, 2006). It shows that when a story is indigenized in the other culture the original text is given importance in order to relate new one as a product. Hutcheon states huge difficulties in indigenization process.

She says that "Adapting across cultures is not simply a matter of words. For audiences experiencing an adaptation in the showing or interacting modes of engagement, cultural and social meaning has to be conveyed and adapted to a new environment through the body language"(Hutcheon, 2006). This represents that cross culture adaption is not as simple as it can thought to be. Basically writing a story in own culture changes are made on wider prospect in order to grab the attention of the reader. The adapter will do this to highlight the issues and environment of own society.

In addition, this research was qualitative, applied and basic in nature. In this research the researcher focused on individual personality of characters, societies and cultures. Additionally, the researcher collected the data from the text of novel *Home Fire*. The researcher studied the journals and articles from the reliable resources. However the main focus was to find out that how the novel *Home Fire* revives the Greek drama *Antigone* in its own culture. The key points of theory are given in the following:

- i. According to theory an adaptation should be creative and bring novelty in the society
- ii. Time, space and culture are very significant when an adaptation is done
- iii. Re- interpretation and re-creation are associated as the forms of adaptation

Textual Analysis

The study aims to conduct analysis on the novel *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie from the perspective of Linda Hutcheon *theory of adaptation* by

focusing her tenet of indigenization and transcultural adaptation. It is observed that Greek playwright Sophocles' masterpiece *Antigone* in to South Asian Culture by Kamila Shamsie's *Home fire*. This chapter is going to illustrate the similarities and differences of both texts, *Antigone* and *Home Fire*. The researcher is endeavoring to observe the comparison of the characters. The contextual differences between the literary texts are also undertaken. In the contextual difference, the study unveils the cultural difference, the difference between Greek and South Asian culture. Additionally, the study exhibits the religion in both contexts, despite of having the shift of time periods and genres. The brief view of this analysis is given below.

Comparison of Characters

Firstly, the names of the characters in the novel are adapted and they have a discernible link with the characters of Sophocles' play *Antigone*. All the names of characters of *Home fire* are being started with the same initials as those of characters from *Antigone*.

Shamsie in novel draws a parallel character with the characters of play *Antigone* Aneeka, heroine of novel, having comparability with *Antigone* of the play undertaken. Both the characters are bold enough to take their decisions cleverly.

Contextual Difference

The analysis unveils the adaptation of time and place as Hutcheon says "...adaptation has its own aura, its own presence in time and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be" (Hutcheon, 2006). This section propounds the cultural aspects of the selected texts i.e. *Antigone* and *Home Fire*. The theory of adaptation lays much focus on context. Context influences the process of adaptation as it is inevitable. As Linda says "Context conditions meanings" (Hutcheon, 2006). Moreover, circumstances, behavior and culture change by the time passes. In the Greek age the outspoken attitude was not welcomed. The faithfulness was to remain silent or surrender to the situation. The mass had to obey the

orders of king by hook or crook. With this, the environment in the contemporary society is changed.

To illustrate further, Modern people of the present society cannot welcome the oppressing acts. People do sit in, they involve in processions if they have complaints or dislikeness regarding governmental orders, law and justice. The present age is the age of media and telecommunication. Nothing gets out of sight from public and Government.

Moreover, Shamsie brilliantly shifts the story in the South Asian families, the characters and their role change according to the context. It can be seen in both texts *Antigone* and *Home Fire*. Greek civilization is under the influence of west. The role of women in Greeks is passive. This can be seen in the character of Eurydice as a mother and queen cannot utter any words in front of her husband and king Creon. In order to control her own situation, she commits suicide. Conversely the same west culture is in Europe that is in England, where Aneeka speaks out against MP Karamat Lone. In The discourse of Aneeka is

shown so strong that she vocalizes her thoughts about MP (Karamat) in front of her son Eamonn. Shamsie portrays the strong power of female in the current context. The time period of *Antigone* and *Home Fire* is giving the enormous alterations in society and norms. The close perception of play shows that at the time of Greek era women were not associated with education. They were bound to the words of king and their relations. Greek era showed the role of gods and goddesses. At that time, the king deserved the position next to gods. The mob must obey the saying of king. No one had courage to speak or utter anything against the will of king. In the same way in drama *Antigone*, Ismene says to her sister Antigone “We two are women so not to fight with men” (Sophocles, 496-406 BC)

Indigenization has also done in the account of religion. History reveals that Greek's religion is developed in the time Homer, the influence of religion spread widely from West to South Asian environment. Within the religion of Christianity, they consider their heroes and deities as saints. The religious

influence is also obvious by the representation of a group that is named as “Jihadis”. This group has religious representation as it is being considered as occupied by the fundamental Muslims. The contemptuous behavior towards the religion of this minority group is evident from the behavior of M.P who is a Muslim and he himself feels proud of calling himself a secular person as he announces in his speeches and allows all type of dress codes, even by transgressing religion. This line of his speech gets a violent coverage “don’t set yourself apart in the way you dress”(Shamsie, 2017) His personal attitude towards his own religion is not encouraging one as he even feels embarrassment while passing nearby Mosque, “He was nearing a mosque and crossed the street to avoid it, then crossed back as not to be seen trying to avoid a mosque”(Shamsie, 2017)

The scenes of Parvaiz sketch the different picture of Islam and different frame of mind of People. In Syria, a woman dies but the radical mind set does not save her from death. The

extremists show the rigid view of Islam in Syria where they see a woman dying but they don’t want to help her as well as they guide Parvaiz to stop showing any sympathy for that woman who is showing her face. According to extremists who are misleading the youngsters in Syria, “If we go to her to help, surely that isn’t a greater sin than leaving a sister to suffer” (Shamsie, 2017).

Moreover, the novel is sketching the view of Muslims in the eyes of world, ISIS and authorities of Britain. The story is putting a focus on role of ISIS in manipulating the youngsters from Britain, America and France. Basically the agency traps youngsters and use their energies and skills against the Muslims and Government as well. Back to time when novel was written in Syria, the agency ISIS was inculcating their own Islamic view in the people. This shows the fundamentalist attitude of the people of agency.

The novel is a fiction but to some extent it is depicting the state of Muslims over the time when novel was,

in writing process. Parallel to the character of Karamat in the novel, the real character of Sajid Javid is putting on view by Shamsie. He, Sajid is also from the Muslim background; his attachment was with the Conservative Party. On the point of religion, his loyalty and devotion is also like Karamat as he does not have a religious affection. The fathomless study of the novel *Home Fire* reveals that while transforming the text in other text similarity in names of characters should be chosen according to the old text. According to Hutcheon (2006), it shows fidelity to the source text.

Conclusion

In this study, the researcher has taken the novel *Home Fire* by Kamila Shamsie and has built a link with Sophocles' *Antigone* as both are having somewhat similarities and differences. For studying it, the researcher has taken guideline from Linda Hutcheon theory of adaptation that change themes, role of characters and the influence of the time in which it is being adapted. Following are the important topics which have been discussed and are leading to the

gap of connection with the masterpiece by Sophocles as Islamophobia, Obsessive Westoxification and fundamentalism, deception towards Muslims, Necropolitics and Muslim identification. These papers are describing suffering and pathetic condition of Muslims especially in western culture.

The reading of the primary text has led to the raising of some questions. The characters have been showed being influenced by the western culture. South Asian and Western both cultures are dealing the characters distinctly. The characters have to suffer because of their gender and belonging to different classes of society. Following is given a brief sketch of the research questions and how are they analyzed.

The first question is about region and geography that how the characters are influenced by both of these factors. The evidences of the above mentioned assumption are from the novel *Home Fire* which is supporting the major influence of zone on the lives of characters. Pasha and Lone family have been shown living in London, the area

where Muslims are minority and treated suspiciously. If this nation in minority is having some favour it has to disown the real identity and change itself with something that is identical to that of majority. As Karamat Lone becomes the Home Secretary of London and starts treating his own people badly. He misuses his power and does not listen to Aneeka even on her valid request of taking the corpse of her brother Parvaiz. When she protests against the orders of Home Secretary, he spurns her British nationality. Aneeka gets media coverage in Pakistan and becomes talk of the town. Despite of all this coverage her request is not granted and she finds no help.

The second question of the thesis is to find out the role of gender in Antigone as well as in *Home Fire*. Gender is the important in both literary texts. Let's talk about novel *Home Fire*. In novel Aneeka is a rebellious girl who constructs the plan to get rid of her brother. In this era of 21st century she gets that it is not possible without any assistance so she attracts Eamonn, the

son of Home secretary, for her personal pursuit. It has been shown in the novel being a girl is no hurdle for both of sisters as Isma flies to America to chase her dream of Ph.D. The female characters are more bold and blunt than the time of Antigone. Unfortunately the boldness and education are not enough still for females to get the decisions according to their own will. Like Aneeka is Law student but in novel She is struggling for law and justice. Karamat Lone has the discourteous attitude towards the orphan siblings and he dismisses the nationality of both twin siblings. Like Karamat, Creon in the Greek drama Antigone, takes the decisions of the mob and public against their will. The gender and conspiracies against the female gender is common even although the hundreds of years have been passed but the female gender is still struggling for their voice to be listened by the society and authorities.

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