SNAP TO READ

WEAPONIZING IRONY: A POST-COLONIAL ANALYSIS OF KAMILA SHAMSIE'S HOME FIRE (2017)

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Abstract:
This paper examines the use of verbal and situational irony in Kamila Shamsie's novel Home Fire (2017) to uncover the exclusion experienced by the Muslim immigrant communities in the United Kingdom. The novel points out the contradiction between the state's glorification of equality, multiculturalism, and citizenship with the harsh reality of exclusion experienced by the Muslim community. Through an analysis of irony as a main literary strategy and strengthened using postcolonial concepts such as Othering, Mimicry, and Neocolonialism, this study examines how Shamsie reveals these contradictions. The findings reveal that verbal and situational irony expose how Muslim identity is constructed as "the Other" and forced to adjust to dominant cultural standards. Furthermore, the findings indicate that modern neocolonial power operates not through physical colonial violence, but more through legal systems, governmental authority, and cultural expectations that determine who is accepted as part of society. Therefore, this study implies that Shamsie's use of irony in Home Fire serves as a poignant critique of the postcolonial conditions experienced by Muslim immigrants, exposing how institutional power continues to shape identity, a sense of belonging, and exclusion in contemporary British society.

Keywords: *Kamila Shamsie, Irony, Post-colonial, Neocolonialism*

INTRODUCTION

Colonialism in the 21st century no longer manifests itself in the form of military invasions or physical land seizures, instead, it hides behind the immigration policy, state surveillance, and media discourses that marginalize some specific identities. This phenomenon is most visible in the era after the 9/11 attacks, where the issue of Muslim immigrants in Western countries has become increasingly sensitive (Djohar & Komalasari, 2024). Consequently, the identities of religion and race are no longer celebrated as a part of diversity, but they are seen to be something "other" or even as a subject of suspicion.

The domination of power that the West holds over the East, Orientalism, is shaped by the way the West wants to define and represent history (Bertens, 2014). By turning the East into an object of study without including the voices of Eastern people themselves, this process produces biased knowledge that is far from neutral (Said, 2014). The history of the East, as constructed through the colonial state lens, is often used to justify stereotypes that portray the East as violent, backward, and often as inferior. As Edward Said (2014) explicitly stated, the Orientals are often seen not as citizens or a people, but they were seen as a problem that needs to be solved or needs to be helped by the colonial power who think has a better culture. This view created the foundation for what Spivak (1985) later called the Othering, which is the process of colonial and neocolonial systems portray particular people as inferior and different in order to justify their exclusion. Othering works through social and institutional relations by influencing how particular people are accepted, respected, or marginalized in society. This is an example of how historical dehumanization still has a deep impact even in the modern era. As a result, Western institutions, particularly the state, may treat immigrants from the East differently, leading to unequal forms of citizenship. Although citizenship status should serve as a guarantee of equal rights, for Muslim diasporas in the West, it is now fragile and conditional.

Irony is a figure of speech whereby the intended meaning is different from the meaning of the terms used. (Haverkate, 1990). As a literary device, It

often reveals the difference between reality and the appearance (Mavlonova & Ruziyeva, 2020). In her book Irony's Edge: The theory and Politics of Irony, Hutcheon (1995) argues that irony cannot be understood merely through the semantics of the words or the syntactic structure of the sentence. Other aspects are important as well, such as who is speaking, to whom, in what situation, and the social, historical and cultural context.

Hutcheon (1995) states that irony is transideological, meaning that it is not tied to any particular ideology, neither left-wing nor right-wing. It is not bound to any single ideology or political position. Instead, irony works as a tactical strategic tool, whose meaning and purpose depend on the context in which it is used. Therefore, irony here is not merely a literary device, but also a strategic tool that can be used to (legitimately) support, weaken, or even challenge a particular position or viewpoint.

Kamila Shamsie's novel, Home Fire (2017), explicitly shows this neocolonial reality by portraying the struggle between the British State and a British Muslim Family, the Pasha family. The novel follows the three orphaned children from the Pasha family, Isma, Aneeka, and Parvaiz. They are burdened by the horrible past of their absent jihadist father. Their citizenship is always considered a threat, even though they were born and reared in Britain. The narrative escalates when an extremist recruiter manipulates Parvaiz, who is emotionally alienated and experiencing an identity crisis, into joining ISIS in Syria to find the path that their father has been through. However, instead of achieving what he has been looking for, Parvaiz is killed while trying to return home after realizing his fatal mistake. The tragedy reached its peak when a strong British-Pakistani Home Secretary, Karamat Lone, used the legal system as a weapon to deny Parvaiz his citizenship and prevent his body from being returned and buried on British soil. This leads to his sister, Aneeka, terrible and desperate resistance against the state's attempt to claim her brother's remains.

Through this heartbreaking narrative, the novel emphasizes that laws and politics are applied differently to individuals who are categorized

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as the “Other", a term that refers to the processes of stereotyping and racialization (Thomas-Olalde & Velho, 2011). Through this novel, it reveals how citizenship, which is often represented as equal and neutral, suddenly has something conditional for some marginalized identities. To expose the hypocrisy of the state, Shamsie uses irony as her primary narrative strategy. Through verbal and situational irony, this novel critiques the process of Othering, the failure of mimicry presented by the Native Informant, and the ruthless nature of Neocolonialism. By analyzing these ironies, this paper will demonstrate how the state’s claim of civilization is coated by its own discriminatory practices.

While several researchers have conducted studies on the socio-political themes in Home Fire, there still remains a gap in existing research concerning the narrative strategies utilized by Shamsie. There are some previous studies that the researcher uses as a guide to produce credible research. The first previous research is from Baglama’s Kamila Shamsie’s Home Fire: Neo-Racism and the ‘House Muslim’ (2020), which reveals how Neocolonialism practice forcing Muslim character to be represented as ‘House Muslim’ or a Muslim who follows the British standard of being ‘good Muslim’ by following their rule which also can be mean throwing their Islam identity just to get the respect from the white people. Another research that conducting this novel is the study Analyzing Cultural Hybridity in Home Fire: A Post-Colonial Perspective, Shehzadi (2023) looks at how the second generation of diasporic families deals with the conflicting influences of their parents' home country and the host country.

While Isma as a child from Muslim Family got a discrimination several times, Eamon, who is also a child from a Muslim family that was already hybridized, and his father, who has power in the country, on the other hand, get treated differently. Their research focuses on how these young people's hybridity and cultural copying habits tend to lead them to an identity crisis because neither group fully accepts them. Another study entitled Flames of Islamophobia and Radicalization on Muslim Representation in Shamsie's

Home Fire, Raza and Mansoor (2025) shows how islamophobia in Home Fire is a form of systemic oppression that created by Western nations to maintain their power which ironically end ups forcing Muslim youth, like Parvaiz, toward the trap of radicalization which in the end can be use to against the Muslim community itself by farming and generalizing that all the Muslim people is radical.

Those studies successfully show the socio-political oppression that happens to the minority character, but have not touched the narrative strategy that the author uses to respond to the oppression. A related study by Salsabila & Djohar (2024) examines how literary devices, such as sarcasm, function as a form of resistance in Nadine Courtney's novel All-American Muslim Girl, which depicts how the Muslim protagonist characters use sarcasm to fight against the everyday prejudices she confronts. On the other side, a study about irony in narrative text was conducted by Kriker (2019) in his dissertation entitled The Significance of Irony in Jane Austen's EMMA. This study explored the reasons behind the author's use of this literary device and hypothesized that Austen utilized four types of irony primarily to illustrate the main character, Emma Woodhouse's self-discovery and self-consciousness through her relationships with other characters.

Therefore, by integrating the focus of the previous studies with the analysis of irony, this research aims to fill the gap. This paper analyzes how Kamila Shamsie utilizes verbal and situational irony in Home Fire not only as a narrative device but also as a means to critique neocolonial practices and reveal the marginalized conditions of citizenship experienced by Muslim immigrants.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach to examine how verbal and situational irony works as a narrative strategy to critique the marginalization of Muslim immigrants in contemporary Britain in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire (2017). This approach is chosen because the focus of this study is on

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interpreting literary meaning rather than measuring numerical data. According to Creswell (2008), qualitative research is a research method that aims to comprehend how an individual or a group of people understand a social issue or problem that arises in human lives. Qualitative research provides a strong basis for the reasercher exploring the political and cultural meanings hidden in the novel, given the research's focus on how irony reflects unequal power relations between the British state and its Muslim immigrant citizens.

The primary source of this research is the novel Home Fire (2017) itself, while secondary sources are scholarly articles on irony studies, which are further linked to postcolonial theory that functions as the analytical framework and utilizes the postcolonial concepts of Othering, Mimicry and Neocolonialism as mentioned before. The data collected from the novel consist of dialogues, narrative descriptions, and situational events that directly address these issues and are experienced by the Muslim characters. To analyze these, the research uses close reading as its main method, focusing on the language and textual features of the work.

This process was accomplished through reading the novel several times in order to find those passages where the ironic language is used in relation to themes such as personal identity, citizenship, and state. The evidence was further categorized by the type of irony that was being used. The selected passages were analyzed through the postcolonial theoretical concepts of Othering, Mimicry, and Neocolonialism. This process is in line with the procedures for qualitative research as stated by Creswell (2008), which are collecting information, interpreting the meaning of the information, and drawing conclusions from the evidence. Therefore, it is through this method that the study can prove Shamsie's use of irony in Home Fire not merely as a literary device, but as a conscious political tactic to reveal and challenge the neocolonial authority in contemporary British culture.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

In order to comprehend how Kamila Shamsie reveals the hypocrisy of the neocolonial state in Home Fire, it is important to know about her primary literary weapon. Shamsie refusing to make an explicit, direct statements, instead, she expresses her political criticism through irony. Shamsie's critique of the state's rhetoric and its treatment of minority citizens reveals the hidden systemic violence of the British legal system.

In the context of power, irony can be used by those with a stake in maintaining their grip on power. In contrast, irony can also be used by marginalized groups as a tool to question, convey criticism, or even indirectly challenge the ruling authority. Therefore, the ideology embedded in irony relies on those who use it, the purpose behind its use, and the social and political context in which it is employed. Thus, irony is fundamentally neither aligned with nor opposed to any specific ideology or form of power.

From this standpoint, irony has become an effective strategy to expose the contradictions between the dominant ideology and the reality experienced by minority groups. In the context of postcolonial studies, these contradictions relate to promises of equality, assimilation, and justice. When those expectations are left unfulfilled, they become revealed through irony, which exposes the gap between the state's discourse and its actions. The following section will analyze how Shamsie utilizes both verbal and situational irony to critique the postcolonial concept of Othering, Mimicry, and Neocolonialism.

Verbal Irony

Irony can be manifested in several forms, including verbal irony. Verbal irony occurs when the speaker says one thing but means the opposite, often to create humor or even sarcasm. In this kind of irony, both the speaker and listener are aware of the contrast and understand the true context (Kriker, 2019). Shamsie uses verbal irony through the conversation between the migration officer and Isma to reveal the contradiction between legal citizenship and how the muslim identities is still being questioned by

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the state. Starting from the book's opening page, Shamsie utilizes verbal irony to reveal how the status of citizenship, which is supposed to guarantee their right to life, suddenly becomes something fragile for Muslim identity. This is revealed when Isma, a muslim woman who wants to leave Britain through Heathrow Airport, is being interrogated by the officer. As a British citizen with a valid passport, which means her citizenship status is legally recognized, she still has to prove to herself that she is truly qualified to be called a British citizen. The question asked by the officer was a form of verbal irony because he was still questioning Isma's identity, even though it was clear that she owned a British passport to support her claim.

The following dialogue illustrates the questioning of British national identity in the novel:

"Do you consider yourself British?" the man said.

"I am British."

"But do you consider yourself British?"

"I've lived here all my life." (p. 12)

This dialogue reveals how the protagonist's British identity is questioned despite his assertion of belonging to the nation. The man's repeated question, particularly the contrast between "*Do you consider yourself British?*" and "*But do you consider yourself British?*", suggests that the protagonist's claim to Britishness is not readily accepted. His response, "I've lived here all my life," emphasizes his lifelong connection to Britain, yet the need to justify his belonging exposes the conditional nature of national identity for individuals perceived as outsiders. Thus, the exchange demonstrates how national identity can be contested through everyday interactions and how certain individuals may be required to prove their belonging even when they consider themselves British.

While the officer's question seems to be concerned with Isma's identity, it actually implies his assumption that Isma might not truly be British or be underqualified to be called British. The officer did not discriminating Isma in

a direct way by saying it, but he hide it through the repetition of the question itself by showing that a passport and other legal documents are not enough for Isma to be fully accepted as part of the British nation. Therefore, Shamsie portrays that, for Muslim immigrant communities, citizenship is determined not only by the law but also by how the state perceives their identity.

This scene is closely related to the concept of Othering, because the state continues to position Isma as the Other even though she has legal status as a British citizen. According to Thomas-Olalde & Velho (2011), Othering refers to the process of creating "the Other" through specific forms of knowledge production, which ends up justifying the dominant systems. In this case, the suspicion toward Isma was not merely a personal judgment of the officer himself; instead, it was part of a larger systemic phenomenon whereby society has constructed a specific identity as something distinct and potentially threatening (Alimahomed-Wilson, 2019). This pattern of institutional suspicion is part of a broader phenomenon that Djohar (2024) terms "collective surveillance," which refers to the situation where the Muslim community is not viewed as a group of individuals but as a community that is constantly monitored by society. Through this lens, various forms of exclusion and surveillance targeting the Muslim community are considered normal, even necessary, especially when justified in the name of national security, as if the Muslim community were nothing but a source of trouble.

However, Shamsie reveals that neocolonial discourse does not merely operate through state policy and public discourse, but also works in everyday interpersonal interactions. Another subtle but disturbing example of verbal irony in interpersonal interactions can be seen through the conversation between Karamat Lone and his son, Eamonn, regarding Eamonn's decision to date a Muslim girl which described as a devout Muslimah. Karamat casually comments, "*I suspect she can be persuaded out of the hijab in time… I'm mostly joking" (p.84)*. This statement illustrates the process of *Othering* through the speaker's assumption that wearing the hijab is a practice that should eventually be abandoned. The phrase "persuaded out of the hijab"

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implies that the woman's religious expression is regarded as something undesirable that can and should be changed. Although the speaker adds "*I'm mostly joking*," this qualification does not necessarily eliminate the underlying assumption that abandoning the hijab would be preferable. Instead, the remark may normalize the expectation that Muslim women should adjust their religious practices to conform to dominant cultural norms. From a postcolonial perspective, this statement can be interpreted as an example of *Othering*, in which Muslim identity is positioned as different from, and potentially incompatible with, the dominant social culture. It may also suggest cultural assimilation when considered within the broader context of the novel, particularly if acceptance is associated with relinquishing visible markers of religious identity.

The verbal irony is clearly shown through Karamat's statement, "*I'm mostly joking*." Shamsie demonstrates how neocolonial oppression does not always appear as a strict law, but is often disguised as benevolent advice or casual humor. Although he frames his comment as a joke, there is actually no sense of humor behind his words. Instead, he uses the joke as a rhetorical cover to mask his Islamophobic prejudices. In other words, although framed as a joke, the statement still contains stereotypes and discrimination against Muslim identity. As a result, although it is actually a negative prejudice, when it is wrapped in humor, it doesn't seem too offensive and even feels normal. In this way, Islamophobic discourse can be expressed more subtly in everyday interactions without being easily noticeable, and this will eventually perpetuate that "normality." After all, this statement shows how Karamat genuinely believes that Muslim women need to lose their religious identity in order to be more fully accepted by society.

Through this irony, Shamsie exposes Karamat's internalization of Western standards and the pressure placed on Muslim women to abandon parts of their identity for social acceptance. This reflects the concept of the Native Informant, where members of a marginalized group may reinforce colonial and Islamophobic narratives against their own community. Hamid

Dabashi, as cited in Rahbari (2021), argues that some members of the diaspora may take on this role by voluntarily supporting dominant discourses that marginalize their own identity.

The idea of native informant is further emphasized through Karamat's statement, "You know I grew up a believing Muslim. *Didn't harm anyone but myself with it" (p.84).* This statement also functions as verbal irony because, even though Karamat frames it as a personal reflection, his words ironically violate his own faith and lead him to reinforce the colonial and Islamophobic views. By describing his ow faith as a form of "harm," Karamat uses his Muslim background to legitimize Islamophobic assumptions and suggests that Muslim identity is something that must be overcome. Through this portrayal, Shamsie demonstrates how colonial values can be internalized by individuals from marginalized communities themselves. Consequently, these individuals distance themselves from their roots and internalize the values of the dominant group in order to gain acceptance from society.

After all, these examples of verbal irony reveal that Islamophobic prejudices in Homefire are rarely expressed explicitly. Whether voiced by state officials or internalized directly by the Muslim characters themselves, these prejudices are consistently conveyed through denial, humor, or even self-reflection, which makes the discrimination less obvious and makes it seem insignificant. The next section will continue analyzing irony, specifically situational irony, by examining how these same contradictions arise not only in speech but also in a country's actions and decisions.

Situational Irony

In the novel Home Fire (2017), Shamsie uses situational irony to reveal the contradictions in postcolonial identity and citizenship. This type of irony arises when a character's position or actions lead to results that are the opposite of what is expected (Lucariello, 1994). Claire (in Kriker, 2019) claims that situational irony involves human expectation, in which they believe in predictions and the final result outcomes is the opposite of what is expected. Through the character of Karamat Lone, Shamsie depicts the

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irony of a marginalized individual who gains power within the state through the voice of marginalized people, yet ironically ends up reinforcing the same system that excludes people from his own background.

In the novel, the speaker comments on the possibility of persuading a Muslim woman to abandon her hijab. Although the remark is partly presented as a joke, it reflects an assumption that her religious identity can be changed to conform to the expectations of the dominant culture.

The statement reads:

"I suspect she can be persuaded out of the hijab in time… I'm mostly joking" (p. 84).

The statement illustrates *Othering* because the speaker treats the woman's religious practice as something that can and perhaps should be abandoned. The phrase "persuaded out of the hijab" suggests that her visible Muslim identity is perceived as an obstacle to cultural conformity. Although the speaker qualifies the remark with "I'm mostly joking," the humor does not necessarily remove its underlying implication that the woman would be more acceptable if she stopped wearing the hijab. This comment therefore suggests a pressure toward cultural assimilation, in which members of a minority group are expected to modify their religious or cultural practices to fit dominant social norms. From a postcolonial perspective, the statement can be interpreted as an instance of *Othering*, as Muslim identity is positioned as different from and potentially incompatible with the dominant culture. However, its connection to *neocolonialism* would require further evidence from the broader narrative to establish how such expectations reproduce cultural or ideological dominance.

Rather than challenging existing colonial structures, Karamat Lone reinforces the practice of forceful assimilation, which pressures marginalized immigrants to erase or abandon their cultural identities in order to gain recognition and acceptance from the dominant society. This form of behavior is aligned with the concept of "mimicry" proposed by Bhabha, according to his explanation, colonial mimicry is the desire for a recognizable, reformed

Other as a subject of difference that is nearly identical but not quite (Bhabha, 1984). The situational irony is found in the word "not quite," which means that no matter how closely Karamat or the students mimic the white British elite, the neocolonial system will always find a way to see their flaws and distinctions, such as their Muslim names or skin tone, to make sure they never achieve full equality. As stated by Tyson (2012), the colonial subject is the cultural outsider who wants to be accepted by the cultural elite.

Furthermore, he continues his speech by stating, "*because you insist on your difference from everyone else in this multiethnic, multireligious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours." (p.77),* which creates the deeper situational irony. The contradiction of this sentence is seen when Karamat proclaims the idea of Britain as a multicultural country, but, at the same time, he also illustrates how marginalized communities must abandon their own culture in order to integrate with British society. Through Karamat's speech, Shamsie shows how multiculturalism is acceptable as long as marginalized groups do not seek to challenge the dominant group. A further example of situational irony lies in the state's belief that controlling and removing the legacy of Adil Pasha, who was an extremist jihadist of ISIS, will prevent the repetition of radicalism. The neocolonial state uses its authority not only to criminalize the actions of marginalized individuals but also to control the way their histories and memories are represented. After investigating the Pasha family, the state seizes their possessions and keeps certain pictures of Adil Pasha, as described: "*They'd returned most of the items they took, but not the pictures of Adil Pasha climbing a mountain... always with a gun slung over his shoulder" (p. 95).* The photos seized by the officers will later be used not merely as proof of his criminal acts, but also as a tool to construct a narrative for the public that he is an extreme jihadist who is indeed a danger to the state. As a result, his children, especially Parvaiz, were also suspected and placed under surveillance, even though they had committed no crimes and there was no indication they would follow in their father's footsteps. In fact, Parvaiz revealed in his statement that he did not really know his

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father because no one had ever told him anything about him. Ironically, the state assumes that a tendency toward radicalism can be inherited through bloodlines. This illustrates the concept of inherited othering when a person is treated as the other not because of their own actions, but because of their family background.

Ironically, the state's attempts to erase the connection between Parvaiz and his father by taking all of Adil Pasha's photos and ensuring Parvaiz never truly knew his family history ultimately led to confusion and a sense of lost identity within him. Because he did not understand his roots and felt alienated, Parvaiz became more vulnerable to being influenced by extremist groups like ISIS, which offered answers to what he had been searching for all along, which ends up making him decide to join them. Through this irony, Shamsie reveals that systems of control and surveillance can unintentionally produce the very alienation they aim to eliminate.

The irony culminates when Parvaiz finally realizes that his decision to join ISIS was a terrible mistake, but by that time it was already too late. The idea of a pursuit of self-discovery and a defense for religion and justice by joining ISIS has turned out to merely be an illusion (Fitriani & Djohar, 2026). He left England to discover more about his father and to escape the label of being a threat to his country. But ironically, that desire for freedom ended in regret as he realized that joining ISIS only pushed him further into the stereotype that the colonial power had attached to him from the very beginning.

Trapped within ISIS, that illusion of freedom finally crumbled. Parvaiz realized that he was considered a "terrorist," not only because of his actions, but also because of his father's legacy. As stated, "*But he was the terrorist son of a terrorist father. He didn't know how to break out of these currents of history, how to shake free of the demons he had attached to his own heels" (p.129)*. This personal realization further illustrates how unavoidable Inherited Otherness is. He understands that he has unintentionally fulfilled the state's prophecy rather than escaping his father's shadow. After coming to this

realization, he makes his last attempt to escape from the radical organization and return to Britain, which finally ends in his being killed in Istanbul.

Nevertheless, his death is not the end of the neocolonial state's punishment. The most severe situational irony in the book results from the state's complete rejection of Parvaiz, which continues into his afterlife. Shamsie uses situational irony through Karamat's decision on Parvaiz's burial to reveal how citizenship, which is supposed to guarantee belonging, becomes conditional when someone is viewed as a threat. This dialogue is an interview between Karamat Lone and a journalist. They are discussing about the government's controversial decision towards Parvaiz Pasha, Aneeka's brother, a British-born boy who died in Istanbul after trying to escape from a radical group in Syria, which is framed as being shot by the jihadi's rival group. In this dialogue, Karamat uses his legal authority to justify why Parvaiz's body is banned from being buried in his own birthplace by stating, *"His body will be repatriated to his home nation, Pakistan… We will not let those who turn against the soil of Britain in their lifetime sully that very soil in death." (p. 140 – 141)*, The state uses Parvaiz's jihadist family story to strengthen the reason why Parvaiz cannot be buried in his homeland. This part shows a situational irony in how the government uses Parvaiz's dual nationality as a legal excuse to send his body to Pakistan. Calling Pakistan as his "*home nation*" is not true because he was born and raised in Britain for the rest of his life, which became his real home. However, his body will still be sent to Pakistan, a country that he never even visited. This proves that for immigrants of color, citizenship is not an absolute right, but a conditional privilege that can be revoked at any time by the state.

This decision perfectly pictures Mbembe's concept of Necropolitics, which he defined as "the subjugation of life to the power of death" (Mbembe, 2003). In this case, the state has absolute authority to determine who is important in life and whose body is worth a grave. The state points out the way they see Parvaiz as a terrorist descendant, and he also ever joining the ISIS as concrete proof that his body would "*sully*" the British soil. The

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heredity of "Otherness" is how the state refuses to let Parvaiz's body be buried in Britain, completely ignoring his legitimate British passport. In the end, the necropolitical state claims that isolation and exile do not end with death for the excluded minority.

Another important situational irony in the novel is the systemic hypocrisy of the British legal system. The irony is exposed when the state completely redefines the concept of citizenship. A human rights campaign group, Liberty, heavily criticizes the government's policy, as stated by Karamat Lone, the Home Secretary, that "*citizenship is a privilege, not a right or birthright."* (p. 149) This passage shows a situational irony regarding the identity of a democratic state. Britain, a nation globally celebrated for its democratic and human rights campaigns, exploits its legal authority in a dictatorial manner to strip minority citizens of their citizenship. The situational irony lies in the conflict between reality and expectation. A democratic state is expected to protect the right to their own people, but in reality, it uses its legal power to discriminate against minority citizens and render them stateless.

Citizenship being termed not as a "birthright" is the way the neocolonial state makes The Othering legal. According to Lois Tyson (2006), the colonial mentality sees the marginalized people as the "other," diminishing them to the point that they are not seen as entirely human beings. This mindset is strongly reflected in the state's willingness to strip minority citizens of their rights. Shamsie uses this situational irony to expose that modern neocolonialism does not need physical abuse, but it simply uses the legal rule to unconsciously marginalize the minority.

In general, these examples of situational irony, starting with Karamat's betrayal to his own community then continue until the state refused to allow Parvaiz to be buried on British soil, reveal a consistent pattern, the neocolonial state's promise of belonging is always conditional, and citizenship serves not as a guaranteed right but as a status that can be revoked the moment someone is categorized as a threat. Therefore, through irony, Shamsie reveals what

the state's official discourse tries to cover up.

CONCLUSION

According to this analysis, Kamila Shamsie utilizes situational and verbal irony as discursive techniques as well as literary devices to highlight the contradictions that exist in postcolonial power dynamics. The story uses irony to highlight the gap between the British state's promises of equality, justice, and integration and the discriminatory practices that their Muslim citizens suffer. Irony serves as an effective criticism of Othering, Mimicry, and Neocolonialism throughout the story by highlighting these contradictions.

Furthermore, this study reveals that irony may serve as a useful tool for challenging dominant ideologies and revealing subtle forms of oppression rather than being purely entertaining or artistic. In Home Fire, irony reveals how practices of exclusion are normalized not only through state policies, but also through everyday discourse, casual humor, and social expectations. Therefore, this study contributes to postcolonial literary criticism by highlighting how irony can empower literature to challenge dominant narratives and encourage readers to critically examine the lasting impact of neocolonial power in contemporary society.

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