



WEMBLEY IS NOT RAQQA, YET BOTH ARE HOME: THE LOCAL-GLOBAL NEXUS OF RADICALIZATION IN KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *HOME FIRE*

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Abstract

This article reads Parvaiz Pasha's radicalization in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) as a problem of scale, not ideology. His journey from Wembley to Raqqa dramatizes something closer to Doreen Massey's account of place not as a bounded container that produces loyal citizens or fails to, but a dynamic meeting place where local and global forces collide. Most existing scholarship reads Parvaiz's radicalization through inherited trauma, his absent jihadi father, or the securitization framework built around British Prevent policy. This article traces how Farooq's recruitment narrative functions as a spatial substitution where an idealized, borderless elsewhere of dignity is offered as an alternative to the local deprivations of a devalued Wembley. The article draws on Massey's global sense of place, together with transnationalism's understanding of migrant lives as shaped by social relations that extend across national borders. This brings Karamat Lone's pursuit of assimilation into discussion, the state's treatment of citizenship as a privilege, and the ways London continues to shape Parvaiz even as he embraces an increasingly global ideological identity. *Home Fire*, the article argues, therefore does not explain radicalisation, or its opposite, through either local grievance or global ideology alone. The local and the global remain closely intertwined, revealing the limits of both securitization discourse and recruitment ideology in explaining how migrant subjects become alienated from, or continue to remain attached to, the places they consider home.

Keywords: *Citizenship, Diaspora, Doreen Massey, Home Fire, Local-Global Nexus, Migration, Radicalization, Transnationalism*

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1. Introduction

Midway through his passage from Wembley to Raqqa, Parvaiz Pasha passes a clothing shop near Istanbul's Galata Tower and feels, unexpectedly, comforted. It reminds him of London (Shamsie 170). It's a brief moment in the novel, easy to read past, but it registers something the novel's larger plot of ideological seduction tends to obscure. The local doesn't simply vanish once a subject is drawn into a transnational network of belonging, however disavowed that local attachment might be. This article takes that moment as its interpretive anchor. *Home Fire*, I want to argue, stages radicalization not as a move from one bounded place (London), to another (Raqqa), but as an unstable oscillation across scales in which local and global are never fully separable. Read this way, Parvaiz's story becomes less a case study in ideological capture than a demonstration of what Doreen Massey called the "global sense of place" (Massey 4). The recognition that even the most intimate, particular locality is itself constituted by the global forces passing through it, so that no neighbourhood, however parochial it may feel from within, is ever purely local.

The critical urgency of this reframing lies in what it displaces. Much of the scholarship and journalism on *Home Fire*, as well as on British jihadist recruitment fiction more generally, tends to explain radicalization in one of two ways. One approach looks inward, focusing on individual psychology, family history, and inherited trauma. For Parvaiz, this means his absent jihadi father and the humiliations he experiences at school and in his neighbourhood. The other approach looks outward, towards transnational ideology and the appeal of a global caliphate narrative that reaches young people through digital networks that seem to cross national borders with ease. *Home Fire* refuses that separation. Parvaiz's vulnerability is produced locally by the particular socio-economic texture of Wembley, by a schoolyard cruelty that dismisses his scientific curiosity, by neighbourhood boys who mock his outdated phone despite knowing little of the Islam they invoke, and by a childhood raid in which MI5 agents confiscate his father's photograph album, severing his one material link to paternal memory (Shamsie 122-123). And yet Farooq's recruitment pitch works precisely because it isn't local at all. It's explicitly, deliberately global, an appeal to "imperialism" (Shamsie 128) and neoliberalism, a fantasy of a placeless elsewhere "where migrants coming in to join are treated like kings" and "skin colour doesn't matter" (Shamsie 144). Farooq doesn't offer Parvaiz a better neighbourhood. He offers him an escape from neighbourhood in the form of a frictionless global space unmarked by the local histories of humiliation that have shaped how Parvaiz sees himself.

This article's central claim is that the seduction of that offer, and its ultimate hollowness, can only be understood by holding local and global together analytically rather than treating them as competing explanations. Massey's insistence that places are best

understood not as enclosed, self-contained locales but as particular, unrepeatable articulations of social relations stretching far beyond any given boundary provides the scaffolding for this argument. Wembley, on this account, is never simply Wembley. It is already a site produced by histories of postwar labour migration, by the global media economy through which Parvaiz consumes both his humiliations and his eventual radicalization, and by the transnational family history of a jihadi father whose own itinerary left its residue in a household Parvaiz never fully understood. Raqqa, in turn, is not an outside to this local history but its distorted mirror, a space that promises to resolve local injury through global belonging, only to reveal itself as another site of intensely local, embodied violence: the "sound effects of beheadings, crucifixions, whipping" (Shamsie 169) which Parvaiz is tasked with producing.

Transnationalism theory offers a complementary framework here. Where classical migration studies often assumed a linear movement from an origin society to a host society, transnationalism scholarship has long insisted that migrants and their descendants inhabit social fields spanning multiple nation-states at once, maintaining effective, economic, and ideological ties across borders that official citizenship categories struggle to capture. Parvaiz is a second-generation subject for whom Pakistan exists largely as an inherited imaginary rather than a lived geography. His own cousin underscores the fact by distinguishing "I'm a Pakistani and you're a Paki" (Shamsie 150). Even so, the social world Parvaiz inherits extends well beyond Pakistan. It is tied instead to a more diffuse idea of the global *ummah*, which Farooq's recruitment narrative presents as a source of belonging. ISIS's media apparatus draws on the same idea, eventually putting Parvaiz's skills as a sound designer to work in its effort to project that imagined community. (Shamsie 161). His radicalization, then, is not a rejection of transnational belonging in favour of a narrower loyalty, nor the reverse. It's a redirection of an already transnational subjectivity toward a violent, and the novel insists, ultimately false object.

The article therefore looks beyond Parvaiz to Karamat Lone, Eamonn's father and the British Home Secretary, whose trajectory takes him in the opposite direction. Parvaiz responds to his sense of marginality by turning towards an imagined global community; Karamat, by contrast, builds his career by distancing himself from Bradford and from the transnational and religious affiliations that might complicate his claim to British belonging. Westminster becomes the centre he seeks to inhabit, but reaching it requires him to leave much of his earlier identity behind. His story thus reveals another way in which place, belonging, and the politics of citizenship become entangled. Reading these two trajectories together shows that the local-global nexus isn't particular to Parvaiz's radicalization, it structures the novel's entire account of who is permitted to belong, and on what spatial terms, within a securitized British state.

2. Literature Review

Scholarship on *Home Fire* clusters around three concerns, and none of them has yet addressed the local-global spatial nexus that this article traces as a distinct problem. The first and largest cluster reads the novel through its structural debt to Sophocles' *Antigone*. Naomi Weiss's "Tragic Form in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*" examines how the novel reworks tragedy's formal features; its chorus, its messenger speech across multiple media, arguing that this theatricality reproduces Greek tragedy's own function of staging contested, polyphonic voices (Weiss). Lisa Lau and Ana Cristina Mendes's "Twenty-First-Century Antigones: The Postcolonial Woman Shaped by 9/11 in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*" (Lisa Lau) and Peter Krause's "Antigone in Pakistan" extend the comparison to the novel's postcolonial politics of gender and Islamophobic Westoxification. (Krause) This cluster is indispensable for understanding Aneeka's structural role as Antigone-figure. But it organizes itself around dramatic form and mythic intertext rather than spatial or geographic analysis. Place functions largely as backdrop to a transhistorical tragic structure, not as an object of analysis in its own right.

The second cluster reads the novel through securitization and necropolitics. The article "Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*: A Family Tragedy Rewritten" traces how Prevent-era surveillance criminalizes entire families by kinship association, drawing on Banerjee's account of "radicalization through religion" as the dominant post-2001 explanatory paradigm (Tekin). Amina Yaqin's "Necropolitical Trauma in Kamila Shamsie's Fiction" applies Achille Mbembe's concept of necropolitics, arguing that the Prevent duty produces a generalized "necropolitical trauma" across Shamsie's oeuvre (Yaqin). Sophia Hayat Taha's critical discourse analysis, "Refugees, Migrants and Citizens in U.K. Socio-Political Discourse", shows through parliamentary and media discourse how citizenship gets rhetorically reconstructed as a conditional privilege rather than an inherent right. Of the three clusters, this one comes closest to the present article's concerns (Taha). But its unit of analysis stays discursive and biopolitical rather than scalar. It asks how citizenship is rhetorically withdrawn, not how local and global registers of place are produced, contested, and collapsed into one another in the process of that withdrawal.

The third, and most recent cluster reads the novel transnationally. "A Diasporic Reading of Radicalization, Citizenship, and Surveillance in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*" is the most directly relevant existing work, arguing that the novel's ideological terrain is shaped by transnational, American-inflected War on Terror paradigms exceeding the United Kingdom's national borders, and that American security discourse has a global epistemological function in determining "who is considered grievable, governable, and disposable." (Afshan Naseem) This scholarship shares the present article's premise that the novel can't be read within a purely national frame. But it approaches transnationalism

through Transnational American Studies and diaspora theory asking what global power the novel exposes rather than through Massey's relational geography, asking how local place is itself constituted by, and constitutive of, that global power. It doesn't engage Wembley, Bradford, or Istanbul as specific, textured localities in productive spatial tension with the global, nor does it extend to Karamat Lone's counter-trajectory as the structural mirror of Parvaiz's radicalization.

This is the gap the present article occupies. Existing scholarship has firmly established that *Home Fire* concerns itself with tragedy and mythic form, with securitization and necropolitical discourse, and with transnational power exercised through a globalized War on Terror paradigm. What remains unexamined is how the novel's specific local geographies like Wembley's dehumanizing attitude, Westminster's centrality, Istanbul's threshold status are themselves produced through the global forces passing through them. In Massey's precise sense, it allows us to see how Parvaiz's radicalization and Karamat's assimilation might not be read as opposite outcomes, one a security failure and one a security success, but as structurally symmetrical responses to the same underlying local-global bind.

3. Theoretical Framework

The argument emerges from bringing two bodies of scholarship into connection that are often treated separately: Doreen Massey's social understanding of place and the sociological and anthropological work on migrant transnationalism. Massey's chapter "A Global Sense of Place" from her book *Space, Place and Gender* (1994) remains the foundational text for this article's spatial vocabulary. Massey developed this view partly in response to what she saw as a nostalgic return to fixed and bounded local identities in the face of globalization. Rather than treating place as a stable refuge from the uncertainties of a rapidly changing world, she describes it as "a particular articulation" of social relations, a particular moment in those networks of social relations" (Massey 5) that reach far beyond the boundaries of any single place.

A neighbourhood like Wembley then is not a self-contained unit that either resists or succumbs to external global pressures. The place is shaped by intersecting trajectories: the longer history of colonial labour migration, the present-day circulation of digital media and radicalising ideas, and policy decisions made in Westminster. What appears to be local is therefore already connected to processes unfolding elsewhere. Massey's later elaboration of this argument in *For Space* (2005) develops the concept of "throwntogetherness" (For Space 140) the idea that places are constituted by the ongoing, unplanned, coexistence of trajectories that did not choose to intersect but must nonetheless negotiate a shared here and now.

The article uses Massey's understanding of place against a more familiar idea of place as a bounded space that offers security and belonging. Karamat Lone draws on this

distinction when he separates his own social world from “South of the River” (Shamsie 105). The same logic appears in the British state’s treatment of Parvaiz after his death. His body is to be returned to a “home nation,” as though Pakistan were naturally more his home than London, where he was born and raised. (Shamsie 188). Massey’s spatial theory would recognize both Wembley and Raqqa, both London and Karachi, as places constituted through overlapping, non-exclusive relational networks. The securitized discourse examined here works from a very different assumption. It seeks to establish a subject’s true place of belonging as singular and clearly identifiable. Attachments that cross local and national boundaries are consequently treated with suspicion, even though such overlapping affiliations are a routine part of contemporary migrant life.

The second theoretical strand, transnationalism theory, supplies the sociological vocabulary for how migrant subjects actually inhabit that overlapping condition in practice. The foundational formulation, developed by Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch, and Cristina Szanton Blanc in the early 1990s, defined transnationalism as the process by which migrants build and sustain multi-stranded social relations linking their societies of origin and settlement producing a single social field spanning national borders rather than two discrete, sequentially occupied national contexts. (Linda Basch) This directly informs the reading of Parvaiz offered below, whose social field is not simply bifurcated between Britain and Pakistan but further complicated by a third, non-national orientation toward a global ummah, a religiously and ideologically defined transnational community, Farooq’s recruitment narrative claims to represent, existing crucially outside the bilateral, nation-to-nation framework classical transnationalism theory initially assumed. Arjun Appadurai’s related concept of global scapes, particularly “mediascapes” and “ideoscapes” as deterritorialized flows of image and ideology migrants access regardless of physical location, (Appadurai 33) clarifies further how Farooq’s recruitment videos and Parvaiz’s own eventual role producing ISIS media content operate within a transnational social field with no single geographic anchor at all. It shows a placeless network of circulation that nonetheless produces devastatingly local, embodied consequences.

Bringing these two traditions together also helps the article move beyond a limitation in some of the existing scholarship on *Home Fire*: the tendency to separate the local from the global and then ask which carries greater explanatory weight. In Parvaiz’s case, this often becomes a choice between trauma and ideology, or between individual psychology and transnational networks. Massey’s account of place makes that separation difficult to sustain, while transnationalism draws attention to the multiple locations and relationships through which migrant lives are lived. From this perspective, Parvaiz’s radicalization, Karamat’s assimilation, and Aneeka’s transnational testimony cannot be understood by assigning each to a single spatial scale. The novel keeps returning to this

difficulty, while the securitized state seeks to resolve it by making belonging more clearly defined and easier to police.

4. Analysis

4.1. The Pasha Household as Transnational Social Field

Long before Farooq presents Parvaiz with the promise of a global elsewhere, the Pasha family is already living within a transnational social field. Their life in London remains tied to Pakistan and, more broadly, to South Asian and Muslim histories that none of the three siblings has experienced in any simple or direct way. These connections are emotional, familial, and historical as much as they are geographical. The novel captures this inherited sense of divided belonging through the language of Asian British. The term itself holds two affiliations together without necessarily placing one above the other: British life on one side, and an inherited connection to elsewhere on the other. For the Pasha siblings, neither affiliation entirely cancels out the other.

The three siblings do not experience this inheritance in the same way, and that difference is important. Isma deals with it by carefully making herself less conspicuous. When she travels, she carries no Quran or family photographs, and nothing else that might visibly identify her as Muslim or South Asian and attract the attention of the state. In doing so, she tries to make herself easily readable as a British subject and, therefore, less threatening. Yet her family history makes that effort difficult to sustain. Her absent jihadi father had a history that stretched from Bosnia to Guantanamo and Britain, placing Isma within a transnational history from which she cannot simply distance herself. (Shamsie 48) Parvaiz inherits the same history without Isma's capacity for disciplined management. For Parvaiz, however, his father is not an absence he can simply live with; he remains a wound that has never been resolved. Isma captures the contradictions of his life when she calls him a "guitarist, salesman, gambler, con man, jihadi and an absent father" (Shamsie 47). The list refuses to reduce him to a single identity. His life moves between ordinary domestic roles and a commitment to a global ideological cause, leaving Parvaiz with a legacy that is difficult to understand in either purely local or purely transnational terms.

This second-generation condition, in which the ancestral homeland exists primarily as an inherited imagination rather than a lived geography, produces its own distinct alienation. Parvaiz's cousin's cruel distinction, "I'm a Pakistani and you're a Paki" (Shamsie 150), crystallizes it with particular force. The line performs a specifically transnational exclusion. Yet this inherited history does not necessarily give Parvaiz a secure place within the transnational field of his family. His connection to it is largely imagined and inherited rather than sustained through direct experience, and that distinction leaves him vulnerable to exclusion from both sides. His relatives can treat his Britishness as evidence that he no longer properly belongs to the Pakistani side of the family, while the British state and wider society continue to view his Muslim and transnational family history with suspicion.

Parvaiz is therefore left without a stable sense of belonging in either place: too British for one, yet not uncomplicatedly British enough for the other. This double exclusion helps explain why Farooq's offer becomes so compelling to Parvaiz. It promises to replace the uncertain and compromised belonging he has inherited with something that appears clearer, more unified, and ideologically secure.

Aneeka's relationship to this inherited field follows a third pattern, neither Isma's disciplined minimization nor Parvaiz's vulnerable susceptibility to replacement, but an active, strategic redeployment of transnational and religious markers. Her hijab, her use of Urdu words, her invocation of concepts like "*bay-takalufi*" (Shamsie 29) that resist translation into English become tools of political leverage rather than sources of vulnerability. Where the household's transnational inheritance renders Parvaiz susceptible to Farooq's recruitment and requires of Isma a strategy of careful erasure, Aneeka transforms the same inheritance into an instrument of resistance. This becomes clearest when Aneeka is prepared to give up her British passport and travel to Karachi to seek justice for her brother. What she once might have experienced as a complicated inheritance becomes, at this point, a source of authority: when her place within Britain is denied, she turns towards her Pakistani identity as the basis from which she can speak and act. The three siblings consequently respond to the same transnational inheritance in very different ways. Isma retreats into self-erasure, Parvaiz is drawn towards radicalization, while Aneeka turns to testimony and political action. Their different responses suggest that transnationalism is not a uniform condition within the Pasha family; its meaning changes with each sibling's gender, generation, and personal experience.

4.2. Producing Wembley as a Devalued Local Place

Before Farooq presents Parvaiz with a way out, the novel gives us a clear sense of what makes his life in Wembley so difficult. His alienation does not begin with religion or politics. It begins with a simple question. As a child, Parvaiz asks his teacher why planes sound louder on overcast days. His classmates laugh at him, and although the teacher later confirms that he was right, this comes too late to undo the humiliation. The episode is small, but it establishes something important about Parvaiz's relationship with his surroundings: even his curiosity becomes a source of embarrassment rather than recognition. (Shamsie 122-123) It's a small, almost incidental scene, but it establishes the emotional architecture the rest of the argument builds on. Parvaiz's earliest experience of his own neighbourhood is one in which curiosity gets punished and correctness arrives too late to undo the humiliation. The local is established, from childhood, as a site of diminishment rather than nurture. As Parvaiz grows older, the sense of exclusion deepens. The local Muslim boys who surround him have only a superficial, performative relationship with the religion they claim, yet they still mock his outdated phone and eventually assault him (Shamsie 122-23). Even among people who might seem to share

his religious background, Parvaiz finds little sense of community or belonging. Wembley, then, becomes part of the problem: it is the place where his isolation is repeatedly experienced rather than a ready-made community to which he can turn.

The novel is careful to specify that this alienation is produced by, not merely staged within, Wembley's particular socio-economic and spatial position within London's broader geography. Later, when Karamat Lone interrogates his son about Aneeka's background, his contempt is explicitly geographic. He sets his own social world, associated with places such as Cheltenham and Richmond, apart from what he calls "South of the River." The phrase turns a large and diverse part of London into a single category, one that he uses to mark distance from the people and places he does not see as belonging to his world. (Shamsie 105). Massey's account of place as a field of power-laden social relations, rather than a neutral container, is directly relevant here. Wembley's meaning within the novel isn't intrinsic to the neighbourhood itself. Its meaning comes from its place within a much larger social hierarchy. Across London, and more broadly Britain, some postcodes carry status and respectability, while others are associated with suspicion or contempt. Wembley is shaped by this unequal geography rather than existing as a fixed or self-contained place.

The deprivation Parvaiz experiences in Wembley is made more painful by a loss within the family home. During the MI5 raid on the Pasha household, Special Branch agents take several belongings, including his father's photograph album, and never return it. (Shamsie 124). The scene matters not only for what it takes (Parvaiz's sole material trace of paternal) but for what it establishes about the porousness of the domestic, local sphere to state surveillance. The Pasha home, ostensibly the most private and local of spaces, turns out to be already penetrated by a securitized state apparatus operating on a logic of suspicion transmitted from a global discourse about terrorism and radicalization. Wembley's devaluation, in this sense, was never purely local in origin, even before Farooq arrives. The neighbourhood's deprivation is itself already shaped by global security discourses treating households like the Pashas' as sites of latent threat requiring intervention. The state's willingness to search a British family's home and remove intimate, non-incriminating objects like a photograph album signals, well before any formal citizenship revocation, that the Pashas' domestic space is never granted the presumption of privacy or trust extended to households the state doesn't code as suspect.

Parvaiz's cousin's cruel distinction, "I'm a Pakistani and you're a Paki" (Shamsie 150), delivered during a visit that might otherwise have offered Parvaiz a compensatory sense of ancestral belonging, closes off this alternative source of local rootedness too. The remark excludes Parvaiz in two different ways. It questions his right to claim the Pakistani identity inherited from his family while the racial slur reminds him that, in Britain, he is still seen as an outsider. He is left caught between the two: Pakistan does not quite recognize him as its own, and Britain offers belonging only on uncertain and conditional

terms. Wembley provides little sense of security or community, while the ancestral home his family left behind is no longer fully available to him either. It is in this gap that Farooq's offer takes hold. He does not promise Parvaiz a better place within the local world he already inhabits. He offers him a way to leave that world behind altogether.

4.3. Farooq's Recruitment Rhetoric as Global Counter Place

Farooq's approach to Parvaiz is closely attuned to the specific forms of deprivation. He doesn't try to improve Parvaiz's standing within Wembley or within his family. Instead, he offers Parvaiz an alternative masculinity, constructed against the emasculating effects of a fatherless, locally humiliated childhood. Farooq accomplishes this first through a curated, mythologized image of Parvaiz's absent father, presenting him with motivational videos of Palestine and Kashmir accompanied by rhetoric of imperialism and neoliberalism (Shamsie 128-9), a discourse reframing Parvaiz's personal humiliations as symptoms of a global system of oppression rather than failures particular to Parvaiz or to Wembley. This reframing is itself a scalar move. It lifts Parvaiz's local grievances out of the specific, register of schoolyard mockery and domestic loss, relocating them within a grand, global narrative of resistance to empire.

The culmination of this strategy is Farooq's description of an idealized global elsewhere, delivered in terms that construct a deliberate inversion of every specific deprivation Wembley has inflicted on Parvaiz:

A place where migrants coming in to join are treated like kings, given more in benefits than the locals to acknowledge all they've been given to reach there. A place where skin colour doesn't matter. Where schools and hospitals are free, and rich and poor have the same facilities... where someone like you would find himself working in a state-of-the-art studio, living like a prince. Your own villa, your own car. (Shamsie 144)

Every clause here answers a specific wound established earlier in the novel. The humiliation of being treated as a burden rather than a valued arrival answers the racialized contempt Parvaiz has internalized from his cousin and from Karamat Lone's geographic hierarchy. The promise that skin colour won't matter answers the everyday racism of Wembley and the conditional Britishness the state extends to his family. The promise of a state-of-the-art studio and a life fit for a prince also speaks directly to Parvaiz's technical aptitude with sound. The novel later gives this promise a disturbing reality when he is recruited into ISIS's media apparatus as a sound designer, where his skills are put to produce "sound effects of beheadings, crucifixions, whipping" (Shamsie 169).

What matters for this article's argument is the passage's explicitly spatial, rather than purely ideological, character. Farooq doesn't primarily offer Parvaiz a theological argument, though religious rhetoric accompanies the pitch. He offers him a place, rendered in the concrete vocabulary of real estate and domestic comfort: a villa, a car, a studio. This is Massey's global sense of place inverted and weaponized. Where Massey argues that

authentic local places are always already constituted by global flows and relations, Farooq constructs a purely imaginary global place to seduce a subject exhausted by the very real, very local constraints of his actual neighbourhood. The utopian elsewhere Farooq describes could not exist anywhere, because it is defined entirely in negative relation to Wembley's deprivations rather than through any positive, verifiable geography of its own. The recruitment rhetoric functioning as a kind of anti-place, a fantasy space constructed entirely from the photographic negative of Parvaiz's local grievances.

Farooq compounds this with a direct assault on the legitimacy of Parvaiz's British local attachment, asking him, "How can you live in this place, accepting, after all that you know? How can you live in the mirage of democracy and freedom?" (Shamsie 148). This performs a crucial scalar substitution. It reframes Parvaiz's continued residence in Wembley which has already been established as a site of humiliation rather than comfort. The move is effective precisely because it doesn't ask Parvaiz to betray a place he loves, it asks him to stop accepting a place that, the novel has already shown, has never fully accepted him. Farooq's genius, and the novel's most cutting critique of recruitment ideology, is that it requires remarkably little distortion of Parvaiz's actual local experience. It requires only a global reframing of grievances that are, in their particulars, entirely real.

Farooq's position in the novel adds another dimension to this argument. Although he is a minor character, he plays a crucial role in fostering resistance to the Islamophobia he encounters in the West by associating himself with a fundamentalist group and recruiting others into it. His political marginalization therefore cannot be treated simply as an outcome of cultural and ethnic fundamentalism; it also helps produce the conditions in which such fundamentalism can take hold. His recruitment of Parvaiz thus echoes, at another level, the local-global dynamic that shapes Parvaiz's own trajectory. Farooq appears to have experienced a form of political non-acceptance in Britain, but rather than responding to it through the assimilationist renunciation represented by Karamat Lone, he turns towards a global fundamentalist network that offers a sense of identity and purpose denied to him within the forms of British belonging sanctioned by the securitized state. Seen in this light, Farooq is not merely an external force who draws an otherwise stable local subject into extremism. His own trajectory suggests that recruiters may themselves emerge from earlier experiences of exclusion, creating a chain in which unresolved marginalization at the local level feeds attachment to a wider ideological network.

4.4. Karamat Lone's Counter-Trajectory: Local Global Assimilation

If Parvaiz's trajectory takes him from a devalued local place towards an idealized but ultimately illusory global elsewhere, Karamat Lone follows a markedly different path. He moves from a marginal position of local origin into Westminster, the nation's political centre, but does so by distancing himself from the transnational and religious affiliations that connect him to that earlier place. Karamat builds his political career by rejecting his

Muslim background, a rejection so central to his public identity that it was "something he had boldly stridden away from" (Shamsie 33-4), earning him, from his former community, epithets including "Lone Wolf," "Sellout, coconut, opportunist, traitor" (Shamsie 35). Once he becomes Home Secretary, Karamat puts into practice a securitized understanding of citizenship as a conditional privilege. He announces the revocation of "the citizenship of all dual nationals who have left Britain to join [Britain's] enemies" (Shamsie 188), a policy that later becomes painfully personal when it is turned against his own family.

Read through Massey's spatial framework, Karamat's trajectory demonstrates that the local-global nexus structures assimilation as much as it structures radicalization. His rise depends on severing, publicly and repeatedly, the transnational and religious affiliations marking him as connected to a global Muslim identity, precisely because such affiliations have been coded, within the securitized discourse the novel dissects, as incompatible with loyal British localism. His statement to his secretary, "I don't have a son and I don't have a wife. I have a Great Office of State" (Shamsie 246), delivered at the height of the novel's crisis, renders this logic starkly. Karamat secures his place within the nation at the expense of the transnational and familial ties that once connected him to other forms of belonging. In this sense, the nation-state demands an exclusive loyalty, leaving little room for competing attachments, whether rooted in family, religion, or wider transnational affiliations.

Yet the novel does not present Karamat's trajectory as an uncomplicated story of successful assimilation. His decision not to intervene on his son's behalf when Eamonn travels to Pakistan to support Aneeka, despite the personal stakes involved, reveals how fragile his version of national belonging has become. His loyalty to Britain depends on a continued refusal of the attachments he associates with his earlier identity, leaving the local-global tension of his own biography unresolved. Parvaiz responds to a devalued local position by imagining that he can find a more meaningful life elsewhere; Karamat moves in the opposite direction, seeking security in an exclusive idea of national belonging that requires him to distance himself from his transnational identity. Neither offers a lasting resolution. Read through Massey's spatial thinking, both trajectories reveal the difficulty of treating place as something that can be inhabited through the abandonment of other social and geographical attachments. The significance of Karamat's nickname, "Lone Wolf," (Shamsie 35) becomes clearer in this context. Originally used by members of his former community to mark his departure, the name also captures his withdrawal from the transnational social field of family, faith, and ancestral ties. Rather than holding these affiliations alongside his British identity, Karamat attempts to establish belonging by separating himself from them.

The parallel between Parvaiz and Karamat is central to the novel's treatment of belonging. *Home Fire* presents radicalization and assimilation not as opposite responses,

but as two ways of negotiating the same securitized demand. Parvaiz responds by turning away from the local, while Karamat distances himself from the transnational. The novel's tragic ending suggests that neither strategy can provide a secure sense of belonging because both accept the premise that local and global attachments must compete rather than coexist relationally.

4.5. Citizenship as Privilege: The Local Implementation of Global Discourse

The local-global tensions evident in the parallel trajectories of Parvaiz and Karamat are shaped by a state discourse that turns citizenship from an inherent right into a conditional privilege, dependent on the subject's continued display of loyalty. Although this logic operates through local and national institutions such as parliamentary debate, Home Office policy, and the media, it reflects a wider securitization discourse that collapses migrants, refugees, and racialized minorities into a broad category of potential threat. The novel also connects this logic to older colonial patterns in which people from Britain's former colonies were treated as subjects to be monitored, managed, and controlled. Isma's interrogation at Heathrow offers the clearest instance of this global logic taking shape at the local level. Her demand to "prove her Britishness" turns citizenship into something she must repeatedly justify, rather than a settled legal status to which she already has a legitimate claim. (Shamsie 3)

This discourse operates through a careful linguistic evasion of the category of citizen itself when applied to suspect subjects. When Labour MP Afzal Khan sought clarification on how British citizens involved in armed conflicts abroad would be handled, the government's response pointedly avoided the word "citizen," referring instead to "foreign fighters" to be "brought to justice." (Taha 26) This shift in parliamentary language mirrors the broader movement the novel traces through Parvaiz's story. He is rhetorically removed from the category of the citizen and recast as a "foreign fighter," a figure defined by threat rather than by national belonging and its accompanying protections. Theresa May's language surrounding the targeted killing of Reyaad Khan, whom she describes as a British national rather than a citizen, produces a similar effect. By placing him within the category of nationality without belonging, the state can distance itself from the obligations associated with citizenship and instead frame him through a wider, threat-oriented security discourse. (Taha 26)

The novel's treatment of citizenship revocation makes clear what this discourse does in spatial terms. Citizenship ceases to function as a secure anchor of belonging and becomes a conditional status that can be withdrawn when an individual fails to demonstrate the kind of loyalty the state recognizes. This is the logic Karamat Lone puts into practice when he revokes the citizenship of dual nationals who have "left Britain to join [its] enemies" (Shamsie 188). Aneeka encounters the consequences of this logic more directly when she stands beside her brother's body in Karachi and declares that "things

happen according to the law, but not according to justice. I am here to ask for justice” (Shamsie 225) . Her distinction between law and justice exposes the central tension traced throughout this section: the British state can act within its own legal framework while simultaneously denying Parvaiz the possibility of belonging to the place he considered home. His body is therefore treated as something that must be “repatriated to his home nation, Pakistan,” rather than allowed to be buried “here,” on British soil (Shamsie 188).

The securitized understanding of citizenship in the novel is rooted in a longer colonial history in which people from Britain’s former colonies were represented as subjects to be monitored, managed, and viewed with suspicion. That history continues to shape contemporary representations of migrants and their descendants, who are often placed within a broad category of threat to national cohesion. The local-global relationship examined here is therefore central to the novel’s treatment of citizenship. The state’s ability to regard British-born and British-raised characters such as Parvaiz and Aneeka as outsiders is connected to a discourse formed through Britain’s wider imperial history and later reproduced through local institutions. In the novel, this discourse becomes visible in parliamentary statements, Home Office policies, and the interrogation of passengers at the airport.

4.6. The Persistence of the Local within the Global

Yet the novel complicates this account of radicalization as escape and citizenship as conditional belonging by showing that the local continues to surface even within Parvaiz’s strongest commitment to a global cause. As he travels towards Raqqa, a clothing shop near Istanbul’s Galata Tower catches his attention and comforts him because it reminds him of London (Shamsie 170) . The recognition comes unexpectedly, at precisely the point when he is trying to leave his British life behind. Its significance lies in this lack of intention: Parvaiz does not look for a reminder of home, yet London returns to him through an ordinary urban scene. The moment suggests that attachment to place cannot simply be discarded through ideological commitment. Even as Parvaiz attempts to detach himself from Britain, his sense of the local remains embedded in memory and experience, surfacing beyond the reach of conscious political choice.

This attachment to the local becomes more conscious when Parvaiz eventually decides to return. His disillusionment with Raqqa is shaped by the work he has been made to do there, producing the “sound effects of beheadings, crucifixions, whipping” (Shamsie 169) , as well as by Aneeka’s call urging him to come home. Home now carries the weight of a place he had deliberately rejected: “Home. A place from a past he’d turned his back on, and to which MI5 would make sure he never returned” (Shamsie 170) . He therefore makes his way to the British consulate in Istanbul, where the sight of the red and blue flag immediately evokes a familiar place: “London. Home” (Shamsie 179) . The scene is important because it complicates any understanding of radicalization as a complete break

with the local. Despite his months in Raqqa and his involvement in ISIS's media operations, Parvaiz's response to the British symbol is neither ideological nor abstract. He does not see Britain simply as a nation or political power; he sees London as home. His response suggests that attachment to place can survive even prolonged ideological estrangement and can re-emerge when the possibility of return becomes impossible.

The tragedy is that Parvaiz's recognition of London as home comes too late. By then, the state has already classified him as a foreign fighter, a category that leaves little room for the possibility that he might still regard Britain as home. After he is killed outside the British High Commission in Istanbul, Karamat announces that his body "will be repatriated to his home nation, Pakistan" (Shamsie 188). The statement produces a final form of displacement. Parvaiz is assigned to Pakistan even though the novel has established that he grew up in Wembley and does not experience Pakistan as home. In death, therefore, he is caught between two forms of belonging that neither the state nor the ideology he joined is able to accommodate.

This is central to the novel's treatment of the local and the global. Parvaiz's radicalization does not simply erase his attachment to London and replace it with a global jihadist identity. Both attachments remain present, however contradictory they may be. The tragedy lies partly in the failure of the state's national categories and, in a different way, the ideology that recruited him to recognize such layered belonging. By reducing him to categories such as foreign fighter and Pakistani national, both systems impose a single scale of identity on a subject whose experience, like Massey's conception of place, is shaped through multiple and overlapping relations.

4.7. Statelessness and the Limits of Return

The novel's final movement, with Aneeka travelling to Karachi and publicly challenging the treatment of her brother, extends the local-global tension into a meditation on statelessness. Her confiscated passport forces her to travel on Pakistani rather than British documents, echoing at the bureaucratic level the displacement already imposed on Parvaiz through the revocation of his citizenship. The Pasha family therefore finds itself without a secure national anchor. Britain has withdrawn its claim to Parvaiz as a citizen, while Pakistan remains a country the Pasha children have not experienced as home. Their transnational attachments consequently leave them suspended between places rather than securely rooted in either.

Aneeka's public grief in Karachi turns an ordinary public space into a site of political protest. Unable to secure justice through the British legal system or a British burial for her brother, she declares that "things happen according to the law, but not according to justice" (Shamsie 225). Her words resist the state's attempt to settle belonging through fixed national categories. Instead, her presence in Karachi asserts a claim that exceeds the boundaries of British citizenship and Pakistani nationality. In this final scene, the novel

returns to the relational understanding of place central to Massey's theory: belonging is not necessarily contained within a single national location but develops through continuing connections between people, histories, and places.

Yet the novel's conclusion withholds any suggestion that this final act of local-global mediation succeeds in restoring what has been lost. Aneeka's testimony draws global media attention and forces a political reckoning for Karamat Lone, but it doesn't reverse Parvaiz's death, doesn't restore the family's stability, and doesn't resolve the deeper structural condition traced throughout this article: a securitized discourse treating local and global attachments as mutually exclusive rather than mutually constitutive, and possessing, in Karamat Lone's Home Office and in the machinery of citizenship revocation, the institutional power to enforce this false exclusivity even when it produces outcomes, a stateless death, a family destroyed, an ancestral homeland offering no genuine refuge, the novel presents as a tragedy for everyone involved, Parvaiz and Karamat alike.

5. Conclusion

Read together, Parvaiz's radicalization, Karamat's assimilation, the state's treatment of citizenship as a conditional privilege, and Aneeka's final act of transnational testimony reveal *Home Fire*'s sustained concern with the difficulty of separating the local from the global in the lives of racialized British citizens. The state repeatedly attempts to place its subjects within clear and exclusive categories of belonging, yet Massey's understanding of place as relational and open-ended is evident in Wembley itself. It is a distinctly local neighbourhood, marked by Parvaiz's humiliations and Aneeka's intimate memories, but it is also shaped by colonial migration, transnational digital networks, and the longer history of British imperialism that informs contemporary securitization.

This spatial perspective also complicates readings of radicalization as an exclusively individual or psychological problem. Parvaiz's trajectory unfolds within particular conditions of local devaluation, conditional citizenship, and exclusion that help make his turn towards a global ideological network intelligible, without reducing it to a simple causal response. Karamat's trajectory is equally unsettled by the novel. His apparent success within the British state depends on distancing himself from transnational and religious attachments, yet the events surrounding Parvaiz reveal the fragility of that achievement. Ultimately, *Home Fire* places both trajectories within the same problem that is the difficulty of sustaining belonging when local and global attachments are treated as mutually exclusive. Against this logic, the novel's spatial imagination remains closer to Massey's relational conception of place, in which belonging emerges through overlapping connections that may remain unresolved and even uncomfortable rather than being contained within a single national scale.

For the wider critical discussion of radicalization in contemporary British fiction, as well as debates surrounding Prevent-era securitization, this reading points to a limitation

in approaches that separate the local from the global. Radicalization cannot be adequately understood either as a purely community-level phenomenon or as the result of transnational ideology alone when, as *Home Fire* demonstrates, these scales continually shape one another. The novel offers no simple resolution to this tension. Parvaiz's death and Karamat's survival provide no model of reconciled belonging, while Aneeka's final testimony achieves moral force without securing material justice. What remains is closer to Massey's understanding of place as unfinished and relational: belonging is neither simply given nor confined to a single scale, but continually produced through connections that may themselves be unstable and contested.

The novel also complicates more optimistic accounts of transnational belonging. The Pasha family maintains connections across Britain and Pakistan, but these connections do not function as an equally available source of security for each member. Isma, Parvaiz, and Aneeka negotiate the family's transnational inheritance differently, and their experiences show how gender, generation, visibility, and the political climate shape both the possibilities and risks of such attachments. In the context of intensified Prevent-era securitization, a transnational identity that might otherwise provide continuity can instead become a source of suspicion or vulnerability. This suggests a productive direction for further research: examining how diaspora fiction represents the uneven costs of transnational belonging within the same family, particularly where gender and generational position intersect with securitized citizenship.

The reading also draws attention to the importance of local geography in contemporary fiction about migration and radicalization. Places such as Wembley, Preston Road, and Bradford are not merely settings against which national or transnational conflicts unfold. They are the spaces in which those larger forces become part of everyday experience. Reading these specific geographies alongside broader categories such as citizen, Muslim, or migrant can therefore reveal dimensions of securitized belonging that more abstract approaches may overlook. Massey's conception of place as a global sense of place provides a useful framework for such analysis because it allows the local and the global to be understood as constitutive of one another. *Home Fire* demonstrates the value of this perspective by showing how belonging is made and sometimes unmade through the overlapping social relations that give particular places their meaning.

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