

http://www.dilemascontemporaneoseducacionpoliticayvalores.com/Año: VIINúmero: Edición EspecialArtículo no.:73Período: Abril, 2020TÍTULO: El Yo real y personajes adoptados: actuación de uno mismo en el incendio de la casa de

Kamila Shamsie.

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**RESUMEN:** Esta investigación ofrece un ejemplo de la presentación de la teoría de Erving Goffman de sí mismo y el análisis de la crisis de identidad en los personajes de Home Fire (2017). Esta investigación describe la realidad de la sociedad moderna y el problema de identidad, a través de la novela de Kamila Shamsie. Los personajes luchan en este mundo materialista por su identidad y se discute cómo adoptan diferentes personajes para sus presentaciones, cambiando de situación a situación y de audiencia a audiencia. Esta investigación analiza el proceso de adopción de personajes que luchan por tallar su verdadero yo para presentarlo perfecto en el escenario, donde tienen que complacer al público presente, olvidando y ocultando su verdadero yo en las máscaras adoptadas.

PALABRAS CLAVES: auto-presentación, identidad, escenario frente y detrás del escenario, actuación.

TITLE: Real selves and adopted personas: performance of self in Kamila Shamsie's home fire.

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**ABSTRACT:** This research offers an exemplification of Erving Goffman's theory *Presentation of Self* and analysis of identity crisis in characters of *Home Fire* (2017). This research describes the reality of modern society and problem of identity, through the novel of Kamila Shamsie. Characters are struggling in this materialistic world for their identity and it is discussed how they adopt different personas for their self-presentations before the audience, changing situation to situation and audience to audience. This research deals with their process of persona adoption and characters fight to carve their real selves to present their perfect selves on the stage where they have to please the audience present, forgetting and hiding their real selves in the adopted masks.

KEY WORDS: self-presentation, identity, front and backstage stage, performance.

# **INTRODUCTION.**

#### Background of the study.

The present research explores how the characters of *Home Fire (2017)* are in a journey to self, how they are presenting their selves on the front stage of life and how they are on backstage. *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1956)* provides a sound basis for the analysis of social interactions and identity formation.

According to Erving Goffman, people all things considered should need to make an image, which would address the overall public they are regarding. Considering that people of now coordinate with one another in normal everyday presence, development, which keeps making, outfits them with various stages where they may relate.

*Home Fire (2017)* deals with Isma, Aneeka, Pervaiz and Eaymon's presentation of self. These poor souls stand nowhere in the long run of America and London. They are performing their best but in spite of their required best presentation they are maltreated and considered as others in the scenario of above-mentioned states. They are bound to follow the set rules and patterns, but in spite of being on track they have no identity. The analysis shows how different events and happenings of *Home Fire (2017)* becomes a driving force to enact a process of self-construction that question certain social conventions concerning race, gender and religion.

Kamila Shamsie's characters suffer because of their national and parental belongings. They have to bear the critical attitudes of others. *Home Fire (2017)* deals with Post 9/11 identities and crisis of self-presentation of Pakistani immigrants. The analysis shows how the events of novel have become a driving force to enact a process of self-presentation that questions certain social conventions concerning; for example, race, gender or religion, while developing critical attitudes towards nationalistic ideas of national belonging. As Erving Goffman (1956) asserted, "We are all just actors trying to control and manage our public image, we act based on how others might see us". Exhibitions are held in the front stage which constitutes the general population and social domain. To perform is to take part in impression administration and pick up control over the articulations oozed about them in social circumstances where they are in the prompt nearness of each other. Depending whom alternate interact ants are, every individual adjusts conduct to the meaning of the

circumstance as they need to display an admired picture of them.

Impression administration is tied in with isolating backstage data and conduct from the front stageexecution. It is a data diversion where some data must remain covered up on the off chance that one effectively needs to organize a character. Goffman's dramaturgical point of view is, in that sense, especially about the qualification between the private and people in general.

#### **DEVELOPMENT.**

### Statement of problem.

This research is aimed to explore actional praxis of self-presentation in Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire (2017)*. Kamila Shamsie has highlighted the construction of self in the course of her novel. This study sheds light on the race and identity crisis of self.

The present research focuses on the image of self-perception of Kamila Shamsie to reflect upon the injustice to which self has been exposed. Additionally, the description of modern society in the light of present society is discussed to refer to difficulties and pitfalls to which the presentation of self is uncovered. This study will be the analysis of presentation of self in the proposed work.

# **Objectives of study.**

The objectives of this research are as follows:

- 1. To highlight various stages of exploration of self in Shamsie's novel Home Fire (2017).
- 2. To explore the role of identity politics in the development of self in *Home Fire (2017)*.
- 3. To trace characters' fight for social and personal construction of their selves.

# **Research Questions.**

The present research is going to answer following questions in the progression of the research:

- 1. How has Shamsie explored various stages of exploration of self in the course of *Home Fire* (2017)?
- 2. What role does identity politics play in the creation of self in Shamsie's novel?
- 3. Why do characters exercise fight for social and personal construction of their selves?

### Literature review.

This section deals with the researches that have been done on the topic under discussion.

Self is studied by different critics as Sarah Mae Sincero has studied self-concept in depth. Self is discussed as perception towards our existence. She has categorized different self-assumptions:

- Self-concept is learned.
- Self-concept is organized.
- Self-concept is dynamic.

She believes that every individual is born with a self-concept. This concept grows as individual grows. She believes that self-concepts change and shape with time. Self is perceived differently by different personas. An individual thinks about himself in a different way. His self-perception differs from people's perception. Others may think differently about the self of an individual. An individual has multiple self-views about himself. But this self-perception changes and can be organized if an individual want. He organizes his self for the sake of his public image. He organizes his self to be true to the image. As the challenges of life change with passage of time self-conception also changes. It is a process of continual development. These concepts change according to situations.

Stryker (1977) and House (1977) also pins point different social psychologies. It becomes the topic of thinking in sociology and psychology with different approaches of both behaviors. Rosenberg has also defined self-concept, "the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object" *(1986)*.

George Herbert Mead (1863-1931) established the framework to what humanist Herbert Blumer (1900-1986), later on would create and mark as emblematic interactions, which manages how people offer importance to specific parts of themselves and the social world they live in.

Fundamental to the representative interactions point of view is that significance develops through social connection. The self, for instance, is the result of social cooperation where people "decipher each other's signals and follow up based on the significance yielded by the understanding" (*Blumer*,

*1969, p. 66).* An emblematic interactions way to deal with the self includes the reflexive procedure in which individuals consider themselves to be objects, in which the persona is a protest himself. "The human being may perceive himself, have conceptions of himself, communicate with himself, and act towards himself" (p. 62). Blumer contends that Mead's idea of the self is to be viewed as a procedure as opposed to a structure or a limited unit (*p. 62*). In Mead's possess words: ""The self is something which has a development; it is not initially there, at birth, but arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process (*Mead, 1934, p. 135*).

In the past particular limits amongst backstage and front stage has broadened and formed into another center district which can be viewed as their middle of the road. A center area can be deciphered as another front stage as it "contains elements of both the former onstage and offstage behaviour, but lacks their extremes" (1986, p. 78). Meyrowitz (1986) likewise isolates the backstage into a profound backstage and the front line of the backstage. It is just the last that is noticeable in media and constitutes the new center locale; the previous is as yet hidden by Meyrowitz (1986). Meyrowitz's (1986) improvement of Goffman's back/front model features a course of behavioral change, and an adjustment in the isolating line between the private and people in general, because of expanded utilization of electronic media.

We make impressions through what Goffman calls sign vehicles which incorporates both our dialect and in addition our non-verbal communication. We make impressions by our appearances. What's more, there are two various types of articulations:

1. The articulations we give, basically the things we say, and the deliberate stances, outward appearances (grins, amaze, and so on.) and other controlled non-verbal communication we emanate.

2. The articulations we emit, which are the components of our expressiveness over which we have less control; the irregularities between what we say and what we all things considered do, the non-verbal communication which "gives us away" in a few circumstances.

Self-presentation motifs are:

- 1. Accomplish individual objectives.
- 2. Exhibit a steady and positive perspective of our self to the world.
- 3. Adjust to social standards.

Impressions are overseen inside settings: settings, for example, comedians, performers, teachers, evangelists, every one of whom works specifically settings. Likewise essential is our own front: sex, age, haircut, dress, and so forth. We may in certainty change these things to suit the circumstance. Youthful specialist endeavoring to look more seasoned for patients. The front phase of our life execution happens in circumstances in which we collaborate with others out in the open or expert settings. A server, for instance, will attempt her best to keep a happy attitude while she is managing clients, even grouchy ones, and regardless of whether she isn't feeling great, though she may backpedal to the kitchen and discuss those grumpy whiny clients. This would be fairly more backstage conduct. The most backstage conduct happens in one's home condition where you can extend and act naturally.

It has been contended that individuals encounter instability towards choices with respect to how they should introduce themselves and what sort of data that they need to uncover *(Sjöberg, 2010, p.* 15). Consequently, I trust that a dramaturgical complementing of the private/open polarity has increased new materialness, and significance, with respect to how the contemporary web is utilized as a part of customary people's regular day to day existences.

#### Methodology and theoretical framework.

### Methodology.

The research is a qualitative one in its inclination. It is exploratory in its nature. Qualitative research is used to be naturalistic in nature of its inquiry in which different social phenomena are analyzed deeply within their natural setting. Qualitative research is a type of research which gives space to openness and is flexible in its nature. In qualitative research the researcher is considered to be the key instrument which is involved in the minute study of data, its collection and its detailed analysis.

# Theoretical framework.

This research aims to investigate the proposed work under the head of presentation of self-theory. The selected theory is developed in 1956 and 1959. Erving Goffman has presented this theory in his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1956)*.

Erving Goffman has built up the idea of dramaturgy. He has given the possibility that life is like a never-ending play where individual is performing their roles artistically. Goffman is a man who used to believe that when we are thrust into world to live at that time we are pushed down onto a phase called regular day to day existence and here individuals encounter different roles and tasks. Individuals have to survive with others, how to make themselves acceptable for others.

Erving Goffman has recognized two stages, front stages and back stages. In our lives individuals live large portion of life in their front stage performance. Individuals get a chance to play their role and to perform before others on front stage. Here and there individuals are permitted to withdraw to the back stages of their lives. Back stage is the private region of their life where they do not need to act and to make others happy. Individuals are their genuine selves when they are on the backstage of their lives. But when they have to made themselves ready for the front stage performance they make themselves ready for that and rehearse for the presentations.

#### Textual analysis and discussion.

The current chapter is concerned with the textual analysis of Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire (2017)*. She has depicted the struggles of Muslims in front of others for their survival and social identity. In this chapter, various persons (masks) are brought to light which the characters of the novel are wearing for their social acceptance. They have put on different masks for different situations. In *Home Fire (2017)*, Kamila Shamsie has presented the social performance of her characters that how they are carrying their chosen masks according to situations in which they are. Furthermore, she has unveiled their staging, how and why are they performing different roles. It is also depicted how their real self and social self are dividing into different roles. What expressions they want to give and how they are being treated and accepted by the society, in which they are performing different roles. There is also reflection of their real self which has been left behind just for the social acceptance.

Every individual wants his best presentation before others. Kamila Shamsie's characters are also presenting best of their selves for their social acceptance in another state where they have to survive. Nature of self-presentations differs person to person and varies situation to situation.

In *Home Fire (2017)*, every individual is performing different role and presenting his self-according to the scenario where they have put themselves. The nature of self-presentation varies. Self-presentation is a very private phenomenon but it is connected and judged with social interaction. Self-Presentation has its roots in reflected appraisals, social comparisons, social identities and roles. In *Home Fire (2017)*, all characters have different presentations to maintain their public impressions. Self-Presentation is very important aspect of their lives. Their success is based on their front stage performance along with the selected personas. In *Home Fire (2017)*, characters' social interactions are role governed. Isma, Aneeka, Eamonn and Parvaiz Pasha have different roles to

play but all roles are enacted affectively. They are on different stages, performing their own roles but they are all united and entangled with each other so profoundly that no one could aloof them. In *Home Fire (2017)*, each character is supporting his public identities. Goffman has called these efforts as face work. Isma, Aneeka and Parvaiz's interactions are obliged to uphold other characters' public personas. In the selected piece of work most of interactions and self-presentations are to avoid social conflict and reduce tensions and anxieties of their lives.

It is the environment which has compelled characters to act differently in different situations. The distance between the performer and audience is filled by their best performances. They are found creating their new identities and putting aside their real selves to prove them the best and acceptable. In order to be socially accepted they have to adopt different personas (masks). All are performing for their face performance. Their physical roles are changing and their self is disguised in different personas no one knows where the real self is. They are on the stage before their selected audience and performing their roles. Their appearances are demonstrated according to interest of the audience. They are talking, walking and performing every act according to the demand of their audience. It is almost difficult to explore their identities because all are aware of their needs. They know what to perform on front stage and what to hide. They know that their backstage performances do not matter for the audience.

Audience is going to judge them for their front stage performances. They have learnt the art of impression management. Isma has tried to play her best in her adopted persona. It is the demand of her front stage performance that has made her not to pack any family picture and holy book at the time of departure. She has made her bold enough to answer every question in the interrogation room. Her front stage performance demands her interest in the country where she is, but it is found, that her backstage performance also playing it role, she is found worried about her sister and brother. She has put on a mask that she is going to follow the laws and norms of America where she

is with her student visa to study law. She has performed well. It is her performance that has made Eamonn Lone to believe her and to offer her a cup of coffee. Her frontstage and backstage performances collide when she does not stop thinking after meeting Eamonn. "Someone raised him the way I tried to raise Parvaiz," (P.19) She has performed well but in spite of all this her identity is questioned again and again. She is used to cover her head. She is everywhere asked about her turban. She has adopted to live in world where Islam and cancer are considered synonyms but her front stage performance has made it possible to live in a society where her religion and identity is an open question for all.

Even for the Muslims living there, they are not willing to accept Muslims to come and live with them. They are performing the role of others as Karamat Lone is found, he always have hateful and revengeful attitude for Pasha Sisters and always find blaming them that these two sisters have created these worst condition not only for themselves but for those too who have nationalities. "I hate the Muslims who make people hate Muslims" (*P.231*).

It is the demand of the front stage performance that she has to admire the queen's color palette. She performed her role successfully by answering every question. It means she is well prepared for her frontstage performance. She has made herself ready and acceptable in the eyes of others with her adopted persona hiding her identity. Eamonn is found using Urdu language just to create an impression of intimacy with Isma. It is his adopted mask that has made her to learn and to utter the words like "bay-takalufi" (P.31). These utterances are the assurances that he has performed well with his adopted mask on front stage.

Isma has decided to adopt a persona where her identity is a question. She knows this fact very well that her identity can cause a great problem for her and for her siblings. She knows the fact that she is going to live in a world where she is insecure but she wants to made it secure with her front stage performance. She has adopted different personas for her brother and sister she is a caring and concerned sister. On the other hand, she is trying to hide the fact that she is daughter of jihadi father who has been killed years ago. She is brought up in London and does not want to be known as the sibling of a terrorist father.

It is found that her best performances are not supporting her role as a sister and fatherly figure. Aneeka is always found blaming her for their present condition in fact she has sacrificed her wishes for the sake of her brother and sister. But Aneeka is not going to believe this fact. Isma's front stage performance and her adopted mask has made her to forget her likes and dislikes just to think about the likes of her siblings. But the poor soul is degraded by her sister in every step. When Aneeka wants to be with Parvaiz and want to give her safe burial and tries to bring his dead body back in London. It is the requirement of Isma's adopted persons that has made her not to stand with her sister. She does not want her sister to behave this way.

On the hand, when Aneeka's character is analyzed, it is found that her performances are made just to support her adopted person and frontstage performance. Aneeka has adopted a role to live a secret life with Eamonn for the safe return of her brother. She has done all the things according to demands of the situation. She has created the impressions which are required for her front stage performance. She has tried to hide her identity. It is her best person adoption which has made Eamonn to follow her in every step. But Isma's frontstage performances are not going to support her, because her own sister is not going to believe in her. Aneeka is found cursing her for Parvaiz Pashas present condition. "You were the one who told the police what he'd done" (P.42).

Their front and back stages have created a link between their behavior and Goffman's theory. They are always found managing their impressions. Karamat Lone, the Home Secretary is not in favour of Muslim family. He does not want to see his family having any connection with the terrorist family. It is the need of the time that is not allowing him to support his family. He has made his front stage performance acceptable but his back stages performances are not supportive for her. He

has tried to hide his identity from others and proved himself as other for his son and for Isma Pasha. All are performing their role in different situations. It is because of Karamat Lone's best front stage performance that he is known as Mr. British Values and Mr. Strong on Security. Mr. Striding away from Muslimness. These titles are not easy to be won in a world of others where no one is going to support. It is his front stage performance and his adopted mask that has made him to win. He is found to support his performance only in every situation. He has made everyone to believe his adopted persona as his real self. He is successful in creation of new identity in a new state but Pasha Sisters are failed to do so.

The most essential capacity of self-presentation is to characterize the idea of a social circumstance *(Goffman, 1959).* Most social associations are extremely job administered. Every individual has a task to carry out, and the connection continues easily when these jobs are sanctioned adequately; for instance, carrier pilots are relied upon to be balanced and noble. For whatever length of time that they persuade their travelers that they have these characteristics, their travelers keep quiet and act in an orderly manner. This function of self-presentation was first featured by Erving Goffman *(1959).* Goffman has noticed that public activity is exceptionally organized. Now and again, this structure is formalized, yet regularly it is casual and implicitly comprehended.

Individuals endeavor to make impressions of themselves in the brains of others with the end goal to increase material and social rewards (or stay away from material and social disciplines). As examined before, it is ordinarily to our greatest advantage to have others see us especially. Social rewards additionally rely upon our capacity to persuade others that we have specific characteristics. Aneeka has exercised an intimacy with Eamonn keeping in view the end benefit that he is the son of Home Secretary and can bring her brother back safe.

Difference between frontstage and backstage performance is observed. Their real selves and backstage performances remain unknown for others most of the time. Aneeka is found enjoying a

relation with Eamonn Lone but it observed, "she continued to undress until there was nothing left but the white scarf covering her head" (P.71). She does so because it is the need of that situation. She wants to create a Muslim impression where covered head matters a lot for her which is not understandable by Eamonn and his father too when he encounters with Isma. Karamat Lone offers a drink to Isma keeping in mind that she is not going to accept and is going to argue about it, but she does not do so just for her best frontstage performance.

It is Aneeka's best front stage performance that has made Eamonn to think about Aneeka for hours in her absence. She is successful in creating her desired impression that it is sometimes observed that he has strong wish to be with Aneeka, "Sometimes he thought of calling Isma, just to speak to someone who knew Aneeka, just to her name being said" (*P.75*).

When Eamonn comes to know about the facts, she openly believes that Eamonn is the only hope for her that's why she has adopted such masks to make her performances acceptable for the man who can bring her brother back.

"The world was dark and then there you were, blazing with light. How can anyone fail to love hope?... A love that's entirely contingent on what hope can do for your brothers" (*P.97*).

It clearly indicates that Aneeka' front stage performances are accepted by Eamonn and he is ready to do everything for her. Her front stage performances have made Eamonn to love her badly that even his mother, Terry Lone is found calling his love for her just like the love of a Majnu for Laila.

### CONCLUSIONS.

To conclude, the study provides an analysis of characters' changing persons. This study describes the reality of modern society and problem of identity. All the characters are performing according to their social setting. They do what their social setting has demanded from them. They have changed their priorities and appearances according to the setting. Their physical appearances are adopted according to the situation, but it is observed that there are stereotypes which are not easy to change. It is discussed that how characters adopt different personas for their self-presentations before others. Their adopted persons change situation to situation and vary audience to audience.

This research deals with their process of person adoption and characters fight to carve their real selves to present their perfect selves on the stage where they have to please the audience present, forgetting and hiding their real selves in the adopted masks. They are very keen in their interaction with others. They are observed in framing their real selves because they want to be deliberately known for the chosen identity.

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