

FRIENDSHIP TRANSFORMED AND TERMINATED IN A GLOBALISING WORLD OF DISUNITIES: KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *BEST OF FRIENDS*

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Abstract

*Kamila Shamsie's works reflect her sensitivity to and anxieties about the disunities in contemporary global context. While she focuses on the biased outlook on women in *A God in Every Stone* (2014), she deals with the imposition of religious doctrines on individuals at an early age and its adverse effects on their future lives in *Burnt Shadows* (2009). Shamsie elaborates on the ongoing biases against immigrants in the UK in *Home Fire* (2017). However, different from these works, Shamsie concentrates on the socio-economic, cultural and gender-based disunities in an intertwined way in her latest novel, *Best of Friends* (2022). In the work, the state repression against Zahra's family, her family's moderate economic status, her reaction against the British policies, in contrast to the well-to-do status of Maryam's family, her family's harmony with politics, Maryam's basis of her life on integration, her rapid elevation in the British social context due to her negative approach to immigrants and support for the UK government transform and inevitably terminate the friendship between these two characters. Thus, *Best of Friends* invites reading for its problematisation of the inevitable and adverse effects of ongoing social, cultural and economic differences on friendship within the contemporary globalising world.*

Keywords: Kamila Shamsie, *Best of Friends*, friendship, disunities, globalisation, twenty-first century

1. INTRODUCTION

In the present century, globalisation as a major phenomenon has been shaping the contemporary lifestyle all over the world. As a matter of fact, transformation in one part of the world does not take place regardless of the circumstances in different parts of the world. Thus, considering its definition as “the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections between states and societies, which makes [sic] up the modern world system” (Jovanović 2010, p. 513), globalisation represents the essence of contemporary lifestyle in global context and can hence metaphorically be described as “one walk of life” (Lane 2004, p. 507) all over the world.

Despite these supposedly unifying and harmonious traits of globalisation, it is paradoxical to observe the impact of disunities and separations on the social context. In fact, the disunities and separations tend to shape the interactions and relations in social, economic and cultural areas. In the patriarchal society, the dominant disunity is between man and woman. In the male-dominated social context, the claim of female individual identity is considered “deviant” and “unacceptable”. Nel Nodding's arguments best explain the dichotomy between men and women in the patriarchal society:

Woman has been associated in a stereotypical way with both good and evil. As an “angel in the house”, woman has been credited with natural goodness, an innate allegiance to ‘a law of kindness’. But this same description extols her as infantile, weak, and mindless - a creature in constant need of male supervision and protection. (Noddings 1989, p. 59)

So, woman's subservience to the patriarchal discourse, and hence her integration with the male-dominated system, contributes to her idealisation, whereas her efforts for expressing her female individual identity as a reaction against patriarchy is viewed “abnormal”, leading her to be an “outsider” in terms of gender differences in the social area.

While Noddings discusses the disunities in relation to gender discrimination, Aijaz Ahmad elaborates on the “Other” in cultural sense with regard to a set of binary oppositions such as “Asia’s loss, Europe’s victory; Asia’s muteness, Europe’s mastery of discourse; Asia’s inability to represent itself, Europe’s will to represent it in accordance with its own authority” (Ahmad 1992, p. 180). On the basis of these binary oppositions, the West sets out to justify its “master” position over the East. Thus, what is “normal” in cultural area is the Occidental authority and the subservience of the Orient to the Western cultural norms.

In the social area, the disunities based on a set of binary oppositions are not only observed in gender differences or in cultural sense, but they are also seen in socio-economic terms, especially with regard to differences among social strata. Particularly, in the capitalist economic system, socio-economic life is shaped by the norms of the class with the economic power. As a matter of fact, the binary oppositions on the basis of capitalist system proliferated in the 19th and 20th centuries. At this point, Bertrand Russell’s following words in his *Political Ideals* (1917) arguably establish the basis of socio-economic disunities observed even in the present century:

Economic systems are concerned essentially with the production and distribution of material goods. Our present system is wasteful on the production side, and unjust on the side of distribution. It involves a life of slavery to economic forces for the great majority of the community. (Russell 1977, p. 35)

The wealthy strata in minority determine the norms of economy. Hence, the wealthy group has an impact on the determination of socio-economic circumstances in the society. So, similar to Europe’s definition of itself as the “master” of the Orient, the consideration of lower social classes as “slaves” by the strata with the economic power embodies the disunities in socio-economic context.

2. SOCIAL, CULTURAL AND GENDER-BASED DISUNITIES IN KAMILA SHAMSIE’S WORKS OF FICTION

The separations in terms of gender differences, cultural differences and the differing lifestyles in socio-economic sense despite the supposed contribution of globalisation to the establishment of unity and harmony all over the world explain the major paradox of the twenty first century. In literary context, Kamila Shamsie reflects her anxieties about this paradox in her works of fiction, mainly set in Pakistan, her country of origin. Shamsie elaborates on the biased outlook on women and the consideration of female individuality as a deviation from the dominant patriarchal discourse in *A God in Every Stone* (2014). In the novel, Vivian Spencer’s position as an archaeologist aiming to discover prehistoric periods is not socially welcomed in Pakistan:

“When is the dig session?”

“It can start as early as November. But Miss Spencer, I should strike a note of caution. I know there have been woman archaeologists in Greece, in Turkey. Even in Egypt. But this is Peshawar. Pathan men don’t much like the idea of women ...”

“Don’t much like the idea of doing what?”

“Don’t much like the idea of women” (Shamsie 2014, p. 124)

Shamsie is not only anxious about the prejudices on the basis of gender differences, but she also deals with her critical approach to the imposition of Pakistani values on individuals in educational terms. At this point, Shamsie’s *Burnt Shadows* (2009) is arguably an epitome of the imposition of religious doctrines on individuals at an early age and its adverse effects on their future lives in relation to the

restriction in the development of their freewill and individuality. In the work, the following dialogue between Hiroko, a Japanese character moving to Pakistan for marriage, and her son, Raza, due to his failure in the exam for religion course best exemplifies the negative effects of the restriction of individuality due to the imposition of established norms and doctrines:

“I didn’t pass. I left the final paper blank.”

A small noise of shock and disappointment escaped her mouth before she stopped herself and said, ‘What happened?’

“I don’t know.”

[...]

“This was your Islamic-studies paper?”. When he nodded, she allowed herself a long, luxurious expression of disgust, though it was not directed at him.

[...]

The childhood endearment brought tears to his eyes.

“I don’t want to be the new neighbourhood Donkey:, he said.

“Tell me what you really want from your life. I know it’s not the law.”

“I want words in every language,” he said. His hands briefly left the driving wheel in a gesture of hopelessness. (Shamsie 2009, pp. 145-46)

Shamsie’s *Home Fire* (2017) best illustrates the quest for a civilised, modern life in safety and freedom in Western countries as a result of these discriminations and disunities in Pakistan. The immigration of two sisters, Irma and Aneeka, to the UK signifies their hope for a secure, civilised life offering liberties to them. However, the two sisters’ perception as “outsiders” due to the association of Parvaiz, their brother, with radical Islamist organisation, by Lone Wolf, the Home Secretary and the father to Eamonn, Aneeka’s lover, embodies the ongoing biases against the immigrants on the basis of West-East binary opposition in the twenty first century context. In particular, the dialogue between Lone Wolf and Eamonn concerning his love for Aneeka, best represents this prejudiced outlook on the Oriental people and societies:

“You will have no more contact with this girl. I’m setting it up as a security detail for you.”

“Dad! Look, just meet her. All right? I’ll bring her over. Tonight, this evening, and ...what’s so funny?”

“All this security around the house, and the nexus of [...] Islamic State is just going to waltz in on the arm of my son.”

“Don’t you ever refer to her in that way again. She’s the woman I am going to marry.”

Nothing moved in his father’s face. “Stay here.”

“Or what? Will you arrest me?” But the Home Secretary was gone before the end of the sentence, door slamming behind him. (Shamsie 2017, p. 109)

Eamonn’s decision for marriage with Aneeka despite his awareness of Parvaiz’s membership of a radical Islamist organisation exemplifies Shamsie’s reaction against the biased outlook on the immigrants. For Shamsie, an immigrant’s affiliation with a radical organisation does not necessarily mean that all the members of his family are the members of fundamentalist organisations, which pose significant threat to global peace and harmony. While Shamsie shows her humane reaction against the established

prejudices concerning the immigrants from the Eastern countries by means of Eamonn's words, she puts emphasis on the inevitability of these biases even in the present century context in the Home Secretary's negative approach to his son's demand for marriage with Aneeka.

3. FRIENDSHIP TRANSFORMED AND TERMINATED IN A CONTEMPORARY WORLD OF DISUNITIES: KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *BEST OF FRIENDS*

Shamsie elaborates on a specific issue about Pakistan and the UK with regard to a specific binary opposition in each of her works. However, different from these works of fiction, she focuses on socio-economic, gender-based and cultural disunities in an intertwined way in her latest novel entitled *Best of Friends* (2022). In the work, Shamsie problematises the inevitable transformation and termination of the friendship between two Pakistani protagonists, Zahra and Maryam, from their childhood until their mid-forties as a result of the gender-based, cultural and economic prejudices.

Early in the novel, Zahra and Maryam are described as the best friends of each other. The narrator's following description is a projection of the close friendship between the two girls:

Zahra had once looked up from a dictionary to inform Maryam that what the two of them had with each other was friendship, and what they had with the other six girls and twenty-two boys in class was merely "propinquity" - a relationship based on physical proximity. "If you moved to Alaska tomorrow, we'd still be best friends for the rest of our lives," she had told Maryam, who was the only person in the world toward whom Zahra displayed extravagant feelings. (Shamsie 2022, p. 7).

As a matter of fact, Maryam also shares similar feelings with Zahra. Particularly, during Zahra's visit to Maryam, the following dialogue between them signifies the mutuality of their friendship: "'We'll still be us when we are together, won't we?' 'We'll always be us,' Maryam said firmly. 'Even if you are living in Alaska. This is friendship, not Propane Kitty.'" (Shamsie 2022, p. 27). The two girls not only share their imaginations for the future, but they also share their fears and anxieties concerning the circumstances in Pakistan. During the teenage years of Zahra and Maryam, Pakistan is ruled by a commander named Zia-ul Haq acquiring political power after a coup d'état and governing the country until his death in a plane crash in 1988. In the novel, Zia-ul Haq's authority is described so restrictive that even the two girls in the work are worried about making jokes about him and his government, as reflected in the dialogue between them as follows:

"I learned a new Italian word this summer," Maryam said, resting her elbow on the top of Zahra's chair and leaning toward her. "Zia. It means aunt. Also slang for -" she lowered her voice, as she should have done before making light of the name of the dictator - "homosexual. Can you imagine, every time the Italian ambassador meets General Zia he must be thinking -"

"Maryam!"

Zahra glanced around to see if anyone showed signs of having heard. She didn't think that any of her classmates were from families that supported the president, but it was an unspoken matter, and assumptions were dangerous.

"Don't be paranoid." Maryam said. (Shamsie 2022, p. 10)

This conversation between Zahra and Maryam about the Pakistani President, described as a dictator, not only shows their common anxieties and fears concerning the state repression and restriction of their liberties, but it also offers an insight for readers about the separation between the two friends. Whereas

Maryam makes fun of the President's name in terms of its meaning in Italian, Zahra's reaction to her best friend is a projection of her fear about the state authority that limits the freedom of thought to a significant extent. In fact, Zahra's fear about the state authority and the governmental restriction of individual liberties derives from her family. In his visit to Zahra's family, a Brigadier, an old friend of Zahra's father Habib Ali, a broadcaster of sports program on TV, demands him to praise the President in his TV program, though Habib Ali does not support General Zia's government. So, the dialogue between the Brigadier and Zahra's father exemplifies the significant effect of the restrictive state authority on Zahra and her family, who are considered "Other" in socio-political context in Pakistan:

"[...] I was thinking that even when the series was ongoing and you used to talk about it every week and then last night again, you've never mentioned General Zia. As I said, he's a fan of the show, so he would have been watching. he's not a man who asks for praise or thanks, but even so, he's a human being. My guess is - and I'm only guessing here - that he's a little hurt."

[...]

"Next time I mention the series, I'll remember to give him credit."

"Perhaps in next week's episode," the Brigadier said. "A few words of gratitude on behalf of the nation."

[...]

"They want you to thank the President," Zahra said. "You have to thank him."

"I'm not thanking that man, jaani ..."

[...]

They [Zahra's parents] were being flippant for Zara's sake, but she could see fear in them. As long as she could remember, there had been this feeling of threat stalking her, everywhere. Say the wrong thing, turn down the wrong street, allow yourself the mildest transgression, and some creature awful and unknown would swoop down on you, talons tearing into your flesh. (Shamsie 2022, pp. 48-51)

Unlike Zahra and her family's fears concerning the state intervention on the freedom of press, arguably due to her family's opposition to the government in power, Maryam has a relatively well-to-do life. Particularly, "the Mercedes, the sleekest of sleeks, drove right up to the gate and Maryam stepped out and walked into the school grounds" (Shamsie 2022, 6) signifies her family's status of wealth in socio-economic context. This separation between the two friends is visible even in terms of their plans for university education as well as their lives after graduation from the university. In fact, both friends view their ambitions for university education in relation to the economic power of their families. Specifically,

Maryam was going to computer science; Zahra to chemistry. [...]. Zahra would have preferred computer science to chemistry, but the former was a newly introduced subject [...] Maryam [...] knew her parents' money would pave the way into some university or other [...] for Maryam, university was just an interruption before she could take over the family business. (Shamsie 2022, p. 13).

In addition to the socio-economic separations in Pakistan with regard to the friendship between Zahra and Maryam, Shamsie elaborates on the gender-based disunities despite Benazir Bhutto's liberal rule, supposed to bring liberty and democracy back to the country after the assassination of General Zia. As

a response to the supposed contribution of Bhutto's government to the re-establishment of democracy and liberties,

the enthusiasm for democracy had waned in Maryam's household for everyone but Maryam, who saw in Benazir an idol she'd not known she'd been waiting for. Even her younger sisters, eight and ten years old, were given to saying things like, 'How can that girl hope to rule?' Which they'd heard from their father. (Shamsie 2022, p. 72)

Maryam's family finds Bhutto's power as the new Prime Minister "deviant" because of her achievement to transgress the boundaries determined for women in social context, i.e. restriction of social life to household duties and subservience to men. In this period of transformation, which can be described as unconventional for Pakistan in the late 1980s, Zahra's approach to Bhutto's status as the new PM of the country in the following words epitomises her difference from Maryam's family: "'It feels amazing,' Zahra said. [...] and it feels like more things are possible in the world than I'd believed.'" (Shamsie 2022, p. 82). Zahra's hope for the future thanks to Benazir Bhutto's political power and Maryam's consideration of the new PM as her idol despite her family's unwelcoming approach to Bhutto embody the efforts of both girls for expressing their individual female selves within the still-dominant patriarchy in Pakistan. At this point, considering the new and relatively liberal democratic government offering new liberties, Maryam and Zahra's decision for a "joyride" with boys from the school named Hammad and Jimmy, and the reaction of school administration to the girls' enjoyment with boys represent the failure in the expression of female individual identity due to the hegemony of patriarchal discourse in the social area. The narrator's words in expressing the anxieties of the two friends illustrate the extent of fear they experience concerning the probability of their loss of a bright future due to patriarchal concerns:

A girl could be expelled from school for going off with a strange man, and if that happened she'd carry that stain with her forever. [...]. Disgrace and failure: the words brushed against her, feather-light and horrifying, like Jimmy's touch on her cheek. [...]. The problem, the headmistress said without preamble, was that on the face of it both girls had done the same thing - gone for a joyride late at night in a car driven by a boy they didn't know, the kind of boy who drove around with tinted windows that led to all kinds of speculation about what went on inside the car. [...]. The headmistress continued. What punishment awaited a girl must befall the other, she said. (Shamsie 2022, pp. 114-15)

Elleke Boehmer explains the causes for migration within the twentieth century context as follows: "The late twentieth century witnessed demographic shifts on an unprecedented scale, impelled by many different forces: anti-imperialist conflict, [...], economic hardship, famine, state repression, the search for new opportunities" (Boehmer 2005, p. 226). Considering Boehmer's arguments, Zahra and Maryam leave Pakistan and start their new lives in the UK due to state repression in Zahra's case, the search for new opportunities and a quest for a new life without gender-based discrimination due to the hegemony of patriarchy in Maryam's case in Pakistan in the late 1980s.

In the second part of the novel set in the UK in 2019, thirty years after the first part in Pakistan, both Maryam and Zahra, in their mid-forties, are described as characters having a status in the British society. However, the distinctions between the two friends show their effects in their lives in the UK and the status both friends acquire there reflects their past experiences in Pakistan. Zahra becomes the Director of the Centre for Civil Liberties (CCL), defends human rights and reacts against their violation in the British society. The metaphorical description of her status as "a migrant Muslim woman who has become the voice of Britain's conscience" (Shamsie 2022, p. 139) embodies Zahra's sensitivity to human rights and her opposition to any repression that restricts liberties. Arguably deriving from her family's exposure to state repression during the rule of General Zia in Pakistan in her teenage years,

Zahra's sensitivity to liberties even turns out to be reflected in her critical remarks about the practices of the new government in the UK that are likely to restrict freedom of individuals in the social area:

It is easy to see why [Zahra] Ali's childhood has made her a champion of human rights and civil liberties [...]. She talks at length about the government's escalating rhetoric regarding the "excessive" powers of the courts, the proposed bill that will limit the right of protest, the planned introduction of ID cards, and the instructions to the Home Office for officials to make wider use of their discretionary powers of rejection "if something does not feel right" about an application for citizenship or settlement. All this with the government just a few weeks in power. [...]. Westminster insiders claim that the government sees Ali as the real Leader of the Opposition with a resounding victory in last month's elections. (Shamsie 2022, pp. 141-43)

In contrast to Zahra's sensitivity to human rights and civil liberties leading her to be labeled in metaphorical sense as "the real Leader of the Opposition", Maryam prefers integration with the system in the UK, becomes a capitalist businesswoman and is interested in the investments in her company from the new government in the UK. In the novel, Maryam is described as "top venture capitalist" (Shamsie 2022, p. 143) and she is a founding partner "at Venture Further, a leading early-stage technology and internet VC firm in London [...]. Her wide range of investments includes the photo-and-video-sharing app Imij, the board of which she chairs" (Shamsie 2022, 143). Theoretically, the immigrants are considered as "outsiders" in the Western host country. Jonathon W. Moses (2006)'s arguments best explain the Western perception of immigrants as a threat, even to unity and peace in the host culture: "People in the developed world are afraid of immigrants: [...] immigration challenges their wealth, security and sense of community. [...]. People worry that their (national) cultural identity is threatened by immigrants" (Moses 2006, pp. 137-53). Despite this common view regarding the host country-immigrant dichotomy articulated by Moses, Maryam Khan's position as a founding partner of a technology company in London arguably signifies her consideration as an integral part of the British social area. As a matter of fact, Maryam's consideration as not "an outsider" arguably derives from her view of life, already formulated in her childhood in Pakistan. Maryam's following views regarding the words "belonging" and "home" represent integration with the social context as the basis of her outlook on life, an aspect pointing her distinction from her best friend, Zahra: "She was filled with the satisfaction of being with a group of people [...]. This was what was meant by *belonging* and *home*" (Shamsie 2022, 19). Hence, inclusion in and integration with a group of people and a society best summarise Maryam's view of life. However, Maryam's integration with the British society reaches an extent to which she gets alienated from her origins. This is epitomised in the novel in Maryam's words representing her approach to the immigrants, a status which she formerly had the first time she came to the UK:

I was very pleased to hear the Prime Minister talk about the need to boost skilled migration. I know there's a great deal of concern around migration numbers but there's little gained by placing every kind of immigrant in the same boat. For the sake of our economy and our global standing we need to attract entrepreneurs from around the world, and we need to retain the best of the students who come here to take advantage of the UK's educational system" (Shamsie 2022, p. 145).

In fact, Maryam's ideas for approving only skilled immigrants, her high status in her firm and her interest in investments for her company to contribute to the British economy enable her to be even fully integrated with the socio-political circumstances in the UK. The British PM's decision for including Maryam in a project, supposed to attract foreign investments to the UK, signifies Maryam's full sense of belonging to British identity and her alienation from her country of origin:

The Prime Minister had grander ideas for how a woman with the last name Khan could be used to repair the party's image internationally, frayed around the edges as it was. He was launching a "Britain's Open for Business" campaign to send a message to the world that the UK was a wonderful place to bring investments and ideas to, the doors were wide open no matter where you came from. There'd been too much scare-mongering about a future unshackled from Europe, he said; it was time to showcase the diverse potential of the nation. Someone like Maryam would be perfect as one of the faces of the campaign. [...]. She [Maryam] took a long sip. New possibilities slipped through her veins, drop by golden drop. (Shamsie 2022, pp. 220-22)

Contrary to Maryam's full integration with the British socio-political context in a degree as to working closely with the Prime Minister, Zahra deals with the injustices to which the immigrants are exposed for getting indefinite leave for residence in the UK, an issue representing her critical approach to the British socio-political context. Particularly, the inhumane circumstances to which Azam, a baker's assistant in the UK, is exposed due to the rejection of his application for indefinite leave for residence in Britain are best explained in Azam's words to Zahra: "Six of us in a cell. With a toilet. And no privacy [...]. We are animals to them, nothing better than animals" (Shamsie 2022, pp. 287-88).

Interestingly, Hammad and Jimmy, who went out for a joyride at night with Maryam and Zahra during their teenage years in Pakistan, turn out to experience the same rejection as Azam did, in the UK. However, Zahra's decision for providing support about their application for indefinite leave for residence in the UK despite their joyride, a cause of her disgrace at school, and Maryam's reaction against Zahra's help for them signify the major difference between the two characters. In particular, the following conversation between Zahra and Maryam epitomises the distinction between the two characters with regard to their views of life and approach to immigrants:

"Jimmy's residency was refused," Zahra said. she'd walked over to the glass sliding door, standing where Maryam could not see her.

"Oh?" Maryam was unwinding the loop of a cassette-tape ornament that had tangled on the pine needles.

"He ended up in the same detention centre as Azam before they flew him out. He was claiming I got the Home Office to reject him." [...] "He was rejected over an unpaid bill. A ten-pound bill" Zahra had turned toward Maryam now, was frowning a little, as if irritated by something she felt she should be able to work out, but couldn't.

[...]

That face of hers [Maryam's], all sanctimony and outrage. She leaned the ladder on to the wall, walked back to Zahra. "You haven't changed, have you? [...]"

"A man was thrown out of this country," Zahra said. "Seven weeks in a detention centre and then put on a plane and made to leave his children." [...]

"A man came to CCL asking for help with his immigration case and I gave his information to someone who had booted him out of the country. He was someone I had an old grudge against. And I gave the information to a person who shared my ill-feeling for him, and who has powerful government connections and no morals. It seems that there's a possibility I acted as I did knowing exactly what she would do. Either way, a man was torn away from his family and his life because I betrayed client confidentiality. I'm not fit to be director of CCL." [...].

"I've put the organisation's reputation at intolerable risk. My resignation is accepted. It's over," Zahra frowned. (Shamsie 2022, pp. 292-303)

As a matter of fact, the contrasting approach to immigrants between Maryam and Zahra turns out to cause the termination of their friendship. Particularly, Zahra's word to Maryam "A part of me has always hated you" (Shamsie 2022, 304) embodies how the binary oppositions in socio-economic, political and cultural senses can cause the transformation and even termination of the friendship between the two characters, as epitomised in their depiction during their walks in Primrose Hill, Regent's Park in London in 2020:

It had been months since they had last seen each other, but neither acknowledged the other. [...] farther on they went toward the bronze lions of Trafalgar Square, and beyond they would keep going beyond to the Thames itself, and perhaps they would turn, perhaps, or else not. All the while they kept looking ahead and didn't speak. There was nothing to say, and nowhere else to be. (Shamsie 2022, pp. 309-10)

4. CONCLUSION

Kamila Shamsie's *Best of Friends* is a story representing the transformation and termination of friendship on the basis of binary oppositions in socio-economic, cultural aspects as well as in terms of gender differences. In the novel, the differences in Zahra and Maryam's life, i.e. the exposure of Zahra's family to state repression, her family's moderate economic status and her opposition to status quo, her reaction against the British policies discriminating the immigrants, in direct contrast to the well-to-do status of Maryam's family, her family's harmony with politics, Maryam's basis of her life on integration, her rapid elevation in the British social context as a result of her negative approach to immigrants and support for the UK government, all shape the friendship between these two characters. Thus, considering these differences in the work, Shamsie questions the possibility for the sustainability of this old friendship and puts emphasis on the termination of friendships as a result of the significant differences between the two characters with regard to their lifestyles, view of life and approaches to social, economic and cultural issues. The significant effect of binary oppositions on the relations, friendship between people seem to be ongoing, despite the supposed contribution of globalisation to the establishment of harmony and unity among people and societies from all walks of life. Thus, whether an old friendship is sustainable considering fundamental differences in their worldview is an issue that is open to debate in the contemporary globalising world.

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