

Theme: Muslim Culture in Britain

Text: Extract from screenplay *East is East* by Ayub Khan-Din (1999)

126. INT. KHANS' HALLWAY.

5 *The door opens. MR and MRS SHAH and their two DAUGHTERS step inside. The women are dressed rather ostentatiously in very gaudy shalwar khameeze. MRS SHAH and the GIRLS are heavily made up with thick powdered faces and lipstick, they also carry gold handbags. We see ELLA's face as she sees the two girls. MR SHAH wears a loud check suit, gold rings and a big gold watch. He too wears a Jinnah cap. They will all be formally introduced in the correct manner. [.....]*

10 GEORGE Ella, this is Mr Shah.

MR SHAH Salaam-alacum.

ELLA now affects her posh voice.

ELLA Waalacum-Salaam.

15 *GEORGE introduces MRS SHAH. She is already looking about her. She can barely disguise her disdain for the house. ELLA clocks this straight away.*

ELLA Salaam-alacum Mrs Shah.

MRS SHAH Waalacum-Salaam.

ELLA Would you like to come through to the parlour?

20 **127. INT. PARLOUR.** [.....]

The SHAHS enter the room. GEORGE offers MR SHAH the barber's chair, which he sits in rather uncomfortably. The others sit on the floor or stand around. MRS SHAH is very uncomfortable, we can see she thinks this family is beneath her. The KHAN KIDS stare at the GIRLS.

25 ELLA (*posh voice*) Meenah, will you put the kettle on, luv?

MEENAH (*posh voice*) Righty-ho.

She leaves the room, there is silence.

ELLA Did you find it alright, Mr Shah?

MR SHAH Oh yes, no problem.

30 MRS SHAH All these little houses look the same to me.

ELLA knows this is a slight, but chooses to ignore it. Pause. Everyone looks about, not sure what to say.

MR SHAH You have a nice family Mrs Khan, all boys. God has blessed you.

35 ELLA Well I could have done without quite so much blessing.

MR SHAH I'm sorry?

MRS SHAH surveys the KHAN children. Her eyes rest on SAJID.

MRS SHAH (*to SAJID*) And how old are you?

SAJID Not old enough to get married, so don't ask me.

40 *Luckily MR SHAH takes this as a joke and laughs. He pats SAJID'S head, which is covered by his Parka. He then takes out his handkerchief and wipes his hands.*

ELLA Sorry about that, Mr Shah, he's erm . . . just been circumcised.

MR SHAH Indeed.

45 GEORGE (*veiled threat*) Sajid puther, go see if Saleem here yet.

SAJID goes out.

MR SHAH Ahh, yes your college student, (*to his WIFE*) studying to be an engineer.

MRS SHAH Oh, really?

50 *MEENAH comes in with the tea.*

ELLA Ahh, here's the tea.

MEENAH puts it on the coffee table and starts to pour.

MRS SHAH Where did you get this sari?

MEENAH Me Auntie Riffat in Pakistan.

55 MRS SHAH You should wear shalwar khameeze. It will look much better on you than this thing.

ELLA springs to MEENAH's defence.

ELLA Her Auntie Riffat said lots of girls wear saris in Islamabad and she's quite well to do, in't she George?

60 GEORGE Riffat bloody stupy. (*to MR SHAH*) Even in Pakistan women getting too bloody moderns.

ELLA Well I think it looks lovely.

MR SHAH It is not traditional dress in Pakistan, Mrs Khan.

Annotations: 16 clock – (informal) to notice 27 posh – typical of people belonging to a higher social class 33 slight – offensive remark

Assignments:

1. Refer to details of the extract to find out if the Khans and the Shahs will become relatives. [Contents]
2. Elaborate on dramatic and comic elements in this extract. [Analysis]
3. Write a follow-up scene that features George and (any) other member(s) of the cast. (Make sure your scene contains [Creative Writing]).