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Puzzling depiction of an alluring Saracen: The recipe sells well in Pakistani Anglophone fiction

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Abstract

This study addresses the complexities of identity and representation, by examining the enigmatic portrayal of Muslim women in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire within the framework of orientalist feminism. The authors applied Baker's corpus-based discourse analysis to examine the representation of the hijab/veil/scarf trope in Anglophone fiction. The research aims to identify recurring patterns and discursive strategies employed in portraying women who wear the hijab. Contextualizing the analysis within the ideological framework of orientalist feminism, the study explores the unintentional perpetuation of stereotypical identities by Anglophone writers, using Shamsie's works as exemplars. By merging Baker's approach to corpus analysis with Van Leeuwen's (2008) SA theory, the study delves into the linguistic nuances shaping the discourse on the hijab. Coerced by Kamila Shamsie's notion of "Muslimness," this research delves into the intricate facets of Muslim identity, encompassing religious convictions, cultural practices, political alignments, and individual experiences. The study enriches our comprehension of the complex interplay between discourse, representation, and ideology surrounding the hijab in contemporary literary contexts.

Keywords: Hijab; Muslimness; Anglophone literature; Saracen; socio-semantic inventory; representation of Muslim women

Introduction

When it comes to engaging the representation of Pakistani Muslim women and their hijab, location matters. Unlike all the contributors to Anglophone literature, we do not live and teach in the United States. We are writing this introduction from different cities of Pakistan, where we are working as educationists in different institutions. All three of us are Muslim women who have personally advocated for the right to wear either hijab or veil. We teach at local government institutions and sometimes offer a course on Postcolonial Literature and

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Pakistani literature in English[1], with a specific focus on the experiences of Pakistani Muslim women and the significance of their hijab. The course on postcolonial literature and theory is always overenrolled. During this program, most students raise questions about the problematic representation of Islam, Muslims, and Pakistan in literature written by Muslim Pakistani writers. This made it essential for us to raise and confront the issue through discussion. These writers often assume the role of ethnographers in the diaspora due to their racial connection to Pakistan. As a term, "postcolonial" remains pertinent, especially considering Pakistan's handover in 1947. Navigating the legacies of colonialism in Pakistan through the study of postcolonial literature, with a particular emphasis on the representation of Pakistani Muslim women and their hijab, has made us rethinking and revising our syllabi constantly, but never is the term "postcolonial" lost or replaced. It would be safe to say that Muslim women veiled in hijabs find themselves disheartened by the perplexing sexualized depictions of religious artefacts, particularly the hijab and veil, within the works of Anglophone writers residing in the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Eurocentric nations. The present investigation underscores this portrayal through the presentation of textual evidence extracted from the novel of Kamila Shamsie, a writer presumed to possess a heightened awareness of the intricacies surrounding this matter. This inquiry employs the ideological lens of Feminist Orientalism to scrutinize and interpret the observed phenomena.

Adopting a Feminist Orientalism is significant as it created a space for subaltern voices, particularly in this case, 'third world Muslim women,' to be heard. Spivak (1988/2023) had suggested the same for the postcolonial perspective. Moreover, Feminist Orientalism encouraged us to view the cultures and identities of Pakistani Muslim women beyond Western dichotomies like traditional-versus-modern or oppressed-versus-rebellious, and instead through the lens of fluidity, hybridity, and ambivalence introduced by Bhabha for the first S in 1994 and discussed by many after that (Fay & Haydon, 2017; Yousfi, 2014). This approach provided a deeper understanding of the complexities of the fictional lives created by Shamsie. Furthermore, adopting feminist orientalist approach necessitated a critical examination of our own positions as Pakistani, Muslim researchers studying fictional characters of Pakistani, Muslim, and immigrant youth but at the same time being acquainted by the actual Pakistani, Muslim, and immigrant youth existing in the real world. The research deconstructs whether the third generation of Anglophone writers has fallen prey to neocolonial patterns of surveillance and translation (Bhabha, 1994/2012; Spivak, 1988/2023). As a remedy to subjectivity, Leet-Otley (2019) advises ethnographers to "learn from below," encouraging them to 'speak to' rather than 'speak for' their subjects. In our research, we aimed to 'speak to' and learn from the Muslim women while continually questioning our own potential biases and Anglophone writer's role in reinforcing dominant narratives.

"Neo-Orientalist Echoism" describes how Western cultures continue to exoticize and orientalize non-Western cultures and traditions in a post-colonial world. This is evident through orientalist stereotypes, romanticization, and appropriation of non-Western cultural symbols without understanding their original meanings. For instance, Western interpretations of non-Western religious artifacts often misrepresent their significance, displaying them as art objects devoid of their cultural and religious contexts. This cultural appropriation disconnects the religious artifacts from their original meanings. To avoid perpetuating Neo-Orientalist Echoism, Western cultures must engage with non-Western cultures respectfully and

[1] Chambers (2011, 2015) favors the term "Pakistani Anglophone literature" over other competing designations for this genre of fiction.

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informedly, taking into account their original meanings and contexts. This involves listening to non-Western perspectives and experiences and appreciating their cultures without appropriating or exoticizing them. Researchers like Huggan (2020) and Kral et al. (2019) invite us to consider the development of postcolonial studies and its related field, diaspora studies. These areas of scholarship not only provide theoretical frameworks for their subjects but also reflect broader contexts and are received in various ways. Recently, the monthly publication *Revue des Deux Mondes* released a special issue titled "Intellectual Terrorism: After Sartre, Foucault, Bourdieu, Indigenous Ideology Enters the University" (Kral et al., 2019). This issue argues that postcolonial studies represent a form of intellectual terrorism and accuses the relatively small group of French scholars in this field of embracing a form of "indigenism."

Santesso (2022) has critiqued third-generation Anglophone writers for perpetuating similar issues. These writers often continue to exoticize and romanticize non-Western cultures, falling into the same patterns of misrepresentation and appropriation. They argue that despite intentions to engage with non-Western cultures, these writers often replicate the same orientalist frameworks they seek to challenge. Contemporary Muslim literature in the US and England is experiencing a surge in woman-focused fiction labeled as "halal fiction" by Farial Ghazoul. Santesso (2022) critiques this trend, noting its tendency to promote a concept of womanhood centered on submissive consent and voluntary withdrawal, rather than individual empowerment. Furthermore, he highlights a contradiction between the genre's claimed ethical stance of Islam as redemptive and its portrayal of Islam as a restrictive and authoritarian ideology, revealing a conflict with the novel's typical association with secularism and dialogue.

Narratives through the lens of feminist orientalism and orientalist feminism

Feminist orientalism refers to how Western feminist discourse has tended to essentialize and homogenize the experiences of Muslim women. This has often resulted in stereotypical representations of Muslim women as oppressed and in need of Western rescue. Feminist orientalism can also lead to a disregard for the diverse experiences of Muslim women and can perpetuate the idea that Muslim women are passive victims in need of Western feminist intervention (Abu-Lughod, 2020).

Faegheh Shirazi's *the Veil Unveiled: The Hijab in Modern Culture* (2001) sheds light on the hijab's portrayal in contemporary print erotica and media, a subject often overlooked. Shirazi argues that the capitalist use of *hijabi* Muslim women's images is steeped in racist politics, turning their 'otherness' into a vague form of evil. This commodification of the hijab echoes early colonization dynamics. However, today's states and markets rely on a new global economic framework that regulates identities and emotions to perpetuate racial projects

By highlighting how capitalist exploitation of *hijabi* Muslim women's images is rooted in racist politics, Shirazi reveals how Western societies perpetuate stereotypes and exoticize non-Western cultures. This commodification of the hijab aligns with feminist Orientalist critiques, which argue that Western feminism can sometimes inadvertently reinforce colonial power dynamics by portraying non-Western women as passive victims in need of saving. Thus, Shirazi's work underscores the need for a more nuanced understanding of cultural symbols like the hijab, one that avoids reducing complex identities to simplistic stereotypes (Sabir, 2020). It is important for Western feminist discourse to recognize the complexity and diversity of Muslim women's experiences and to avoid essentializing or exoticizing them. It is also crucial to engage with Muslim women's perspectives and to work in solidarity with them to challenge the multiple forms of oppression that they face (Alghamdi, 2020).

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The manipulative depiction of Saracen

In her intriguing comparative analysis, Shirazi (2001) explores how the meaning of the veil varies in Western and Saudi advertising, depending on the target audience. When targeting Western middle-class male consumers, advertisers depict the veil as exotic and sexualized. For instance, in a 1996 commercial for Chrysler's Jeep Cherokee shot in Morocco, a veiled woman is shown smiling and admiring the Jeep, implying that purchasing the vehicle could attract even the most mysterious women, such as those wearing a veil. Conversely, when targeting Western female consumers, advertisers resort to racist stereotypes portraying Muslim women as oppressed. For example, a 1989 Virginia Slims advertisement depicted a turbaned man sitting with three women wearing headscarves (Shirazi, 2001).

Baumbach (2020) examines the promotion of English-language literature and explores the marketability of literary genres, emphasizing themes resonating across diverse cultures. Literary festivals play a crucial role in connecting authors and readers. Baumbach (2020) scrutinizes the tension between national and global perspectives in marketing Anglophone literature. Trends in the publishing industry, such as the influence of literary prizes, are discussed, highlighting their impact on the visibility and marketability of English-language works. It can be safely said that in the past 15 years, the book marketing industry has shifted from a product-centric to a market-focused strategy. Unlike earlier practices where market research followed product creation, today's approach involves identifying market segments to tailor products according to specific customer demands. Baverstock (2020) emphasizes the essence of offering the right product to the right people at the right price, with appropriate promotional strategies, timing, and placement. Publishers, as influential figures in the literary market, determine the "right product," pricing, and timing, shaping linguistic trends and fostering the growth of "Anglophone world literature." This role establishes hegemonic force fields (Gunaratne, 2023) within the industry. Notably, publishing corporations now allocate more resources to marketing initiatives, reflecting a departure from past structures that focused solely on publishing.

The Western dominance in shaping Anglophone world literature is evident, as many prominent South Asian authors have received their education in the West. Additionally, the expectations of prize committees impact authors' narrative choices, leading to recurring themes in shortlisted and award-winning novels, often centered around history, identity, and personal or collective memory.

Echoing Venkat Mani's suggestion, world literature in the digital era has evolved into a state of being both "cosmochronic and cosmotopic" (2013, p. 248), introducing a new dimension to bibliomancy. A noteworthy illustration is the African Books Collective (ABC), born out of a self-help initiative aimed at promoting African literature internationally. The present literary landscape involves a blend of financial, cultural, and journalistic capital, collectively contributing to the generation of substantial financial resources (Chandhiramowuli & Chaudhuri, 2021).

Veiled perspectives: navigating the literary landscape of coverings

Towards the end of her work, Shirazi (2001) delves into the Literary Dynamics of the Veil, examining the diverse interpretations of the veil across Iraqi, Indian, Uzbeki, and Iranian poets and authors. Shirazi categorizes these writers based on their perspectives on the veil

Drawing inspiration from these concepts, this study delves into the portrayal of hijab in the novel authored by Kamila Shamsie. This intriguing avenue for research involves a

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comprehensive analysis of a corpus consisting of a fictional work by Muslim woman writer, facilitating an exploration of the representation of hijab, veils, and Muslim women in a broader context.

It is important to recognize the complexity of the hijab and the diversity of experiences and perspectives of women who choose to wear it. Authors must consult with members of the community they are writing about to ensure that their portrayals are accurate and respectful.

The diverse and vibrant personalities of Muslim women within our community get overshadowed by oversimplified and frequently Orientalist depictions that reduce them to one-dimensional figures of oppression. Exploring the enduring impact of these stereotypical portrayals, it is evident that even the Anglophone writers rarely feature nuanced representations of Muslim women. The prevalence of such stereotypes and tropes continues to shape the narrative surrounding Muslim women in today's media, sending negative messages not only to Muslim girls but also to women of darker skin tones in general. Considering the significant role media and literature play in shaping perceptions, it becomes crucial to address how the Muslim faith and its icons are portrayed. Religious objects such as the Quran, prayer beads, hijab and beard are often used as visual cues to identify Muslim characters.

Drawing inspiration from Shamsie's concept of "Muslimness," the study analyzes the multifaceted dimensions of Muslim identity, considering religious beliefs, cultural traditions, political affiliations, and personal experiences. Shamsie's term highlights the complexities inherent in the contemporary Muslim experience, shedding light on how Western societies often misconstrue and stigmatize Muslimness. The paper examines the challenges faced by Muslim individuals and communities as they navigate intricate and sometimes contradictory forces in asserting their identities and participating fully in society. In the context of this exploration, Shamsie's concept serves as a crucial framework for understanding the diversity and intricacy of Muslim experiences, challenging oversimplified and monolithic representations perpetuated by media and popular culture. The study emphasizes the need for a more nuanced and inclusive understanding of Islam and Muslim identity grounded in the lived experiences and perspectives of individuals. By spotlighting the multifaceted nature of Muslim identity, Shamsie's concept contributes to a more accurate comprehension of how Islam and Muslim identity are shaped by various factors, including politics, culture, and personal experiences. Against this backdrop, Shamsie, known for her concept of "Muslimness," has garnered attention for her exploration of complex Muslim identities in contemporary settings. Within SCHF, Shamsie employs the term "Muslimness" on two occasions. Interestingly, both instances involve its application to characterize Mr Karamat Lone, with each usage implying a departure from adherence to the Muslim faith.

Hijab and sexual imagery in *Home Fire*

Shirazi's analysis in *The Veil Unveiled* (2001) provides intriguing insights into the cultural connotations of the veil, contrasting its usage in Iran and India. However, the assertion regarding Indian cinema's utilization of the veil to evoke arousal warrants further empirical support. The transition to discussing Bertolucci's work feels abrupt and lacks a cohesive link to the broader argument. Nonetheless, Shirazi's exploration offers valuable perspectives on the complexities of cultural representation and censorship in film. In this literary scenario, *Home Fire* becomes a fascinating subject for analysis due to Shamsie's deliberate symbioses of the hijab /veil, an Islamic attire that is traditionally associated with modesty and religious identity, with sexual imagery.

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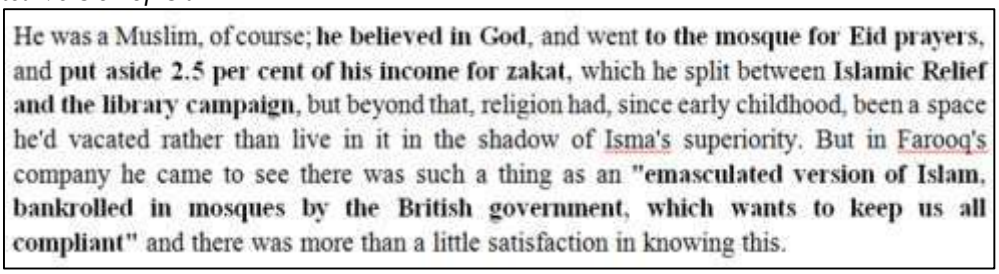
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Method

The novel is distinctive for its portrayal of the hijab in a manner that extends beyond conventional representations. Shamsie introduces an element of sexuality to the hijab, challenging established norms and inviting readers to question preconceived notions. Against the backdrop of the broader discussion on the intersection of religious and sexual symbols in literature, *Home Fire* prompts an exploration of how Shamsie's approach may contribute to or diverge from existing narratives. Employing a corpus-based methodology under the guidance of Baker et al. (2013), a distinguished scholar in corpus linguistics, presents an enriching avenue for linguistic exploration. Baker's approach to corpus linguistics involves the meticulous analysis of structured collections of texts to unveil patterns, nuances, and trends within language usage. Integrating Baker's corpus-based methodology with insights from Van Leeuwen's social Actor theory (2008), not only ensures methodological rigour but also provides a nuanced perspective on language, contributing significantly to the evolving landscape of corpus stylistics and CADS. This study focuses on the representation of the fictional character Aneeka – the *hijabi* girl of the novel - and evaluates her against the analytical categories prescribed by Van Leeuwen in the socio-semantic inventory (2008) such as *evaluation and appraisal, identification, moral justification, Legitimizing through role model authority* (p. 65).

We start exploring the baffling representation of Aneeka's *hijabi* identity, by focusing on the ideas of three of her siblings in *Study Corpus Home Fire* (henceforth, SCHF). Her elder sister Isma, who is more like a mother than a sister to her, is the most religious of the three. Despite this, Shamsie contrasts Isma's interpretation of Islam with Farooq's, labeling her version as an "emasculated form of Islam" as expressed by Farooq in paragraph 1.

Paragraph 1
Emasculated Version of Islam[2]


He was a Muslim, of course; **he believed in God**, and went **to the mosque for Eid prayers**, and **put aside 2.5 per cent of his income for zakat**, which he split between **Islamic Relief and the library campaign**, but beyond that, religion had, since early childhood, been a space he'd vacated rather than live in it in the shadow of Isma's superiority. But in Farooq's company he came to see there was such a thing as an **"emasculated version of Islam, bankrolled in mosques by the British government, which wants to keep us all compliant"** and there was more than a little satisfaction in knowing this.

Shamsie (2017) portrays *Muslimness* as a gradable quality, emphasizing the importance of monitoring semiotic indicators used by Muslims in SCHF to signify their identity. Isma, depicted as a part-time *hijabi*, engages in limited religious practices such as prayer and abstaining from pork and alcohol. Paragraph 2 provides a detailed understanding of Isma's perspectives on the hijab and pre-marital sexual conduct. In a conversation between Dr. Hira Shah and Isma, the significance of hijab is emphasized, particularly as it is left by Isma outside the room with shoes (paragraph 2). Dr. Hira Shah perceives hijab as a formidable force hindering Isma's happiness, as highlighted in bold font in paragraph 2. The distillation method abstracts the act of wearing the hijab, linking it to a monochromatic life. Dr. Hira Shah indirectly suggests the impact of the hijab on Isma's life, describing it as a potent piece of cloth

[2] All the paragraphs included in this article are retrieved through corpus paragraph retrieval feature of Sketch Engine. Hence, the page number is not added here. Secondly, it is in the form of image as is customary in the corpus based researches.

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that limits Isma's alternatives for happiness. Despite lacking clear religious connotations, the hijab appears to be specific to Isma's cultural context.

Paragraph 2

Hijab's Place in Isma's Life

Reconsider the hijab." She pointed at the turban that ***Isma*** had left near the door along with her shoes, the latter out of consideration for Hira's hardwood floors and Persian carpets, **the former out of consideration for her sensibility.** "Don't miss an opportunity with that one, do you, Dr. Shah?" **"It [Hijab] might be keeping your young man at a distance.** He'll read things into what it means." "He's not my young man and his reading won't be so wrong. And when I say I wanted anything from him in that way?" It had been so long since anything approaching "that way" that she didn't know if she knew how to want it anymore. Mo at university had been the last and–barring **some forgettable fumbling–the first man with whom she'd known any physical intimacy.** Perhaps if they'd gone further than they had she'd have a sense of missing something, but Mo worried about their **eternal damnation** and ***Isma*** thought you should at least be able **to imagine marrying someone before doing something so significant with them**. In retrospect, it was a mystery they'd stayed together almost their entire second year of university. "You know the Quran tells us to enjoy sex as one of God's blessings?" Hira said. **"Within marriage!"** "We all have our versions of selective reading when it comes to the Holy Book." Isma laughed and stood to clear the plates. From her great hearted vantage point ***Hira Shah*** saw Isma clearly–**so careworn, so blemished** by all the circumstances of her life that **certain options had simply crossed their arms and turned away from her.** But when a boy stepped into Isma's path**, his laughter trailing a promise that life could be joyful if you stayed near enough to him**, Hira turned her attention **to a piece of fabric [hijab]** and said, There, that **[Hijab] and an untold story** are the only **obstacles** between you and him.

Isma briefly touches upon the possibility of engaging in physical intimacy before marriage. Mo, Isma's lover, refrained from pursuing a physical relationship due to fear of divine consequences, while Isma faced challenges in advancing without formal marriage arrangements. Given Isma's characterization as the most religious among the three siblings, her perspectives hold significant weight. She epitomizes the last moderate form of Islam on Shamsie's depicted continuum of *Muslimness*. This suggests that Isma's views on pre-marital intimacy represent a pivotal stance within the spectrum of Muslim identity explored by Shamsie.

Evaluation through comparison between social actors

Van Leeuwen (2008) proposes that assessing social actors (SAs) involves comparing them with others and associating them with positive or negative values. This evaluative process is narrated in the case of SA Isma. Such comparisons and evaluations draw upon a complex web of cultural references and social practices. For instance, Isma's rigid demeanour (Table 1) is not presented as a virtue, and Aneeka's audacious boldness is not depicted as a flaw. Interestingly, Aneeka is positioned as a role model by the author, inverting traditional norms. This subtle moral assessment is often implicit, focusing on conveying the tangible qualities of social actions and actors within the narrative structure.

Table 1

Identification and Appraisal of Isma by Other SAs

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Reporting SA	Words or Phrases from SCHF	Comments
Authorial comments about Isma	• an extraordinary women • the 28-year-old sister of London-born • Isma had their father's wider face • After the death of their mother and grandmother she had to parent two grief-struck twelve-year-olds • Parvaiz and Isma stayed at the margins of all groups so that no one would start to ask questions about their lives ("Where is your father? Are the rumours about him true?"), • She'd made sure not to pack anything that would invite comment or questions–no Quran, no family pictures, and no books on her area of academic interest.	Represented as having a priggish and prudish nature worrying about financial matters and family's wellbeing from an early age. Unlike Aneeka who had a bright flame in her personality, she appeared plain to her age fellows. Comparison is another way of building authority and legitimizing the actions of any SA. Isma has been compared with Aneeka more than often in their physical appearance, in personality confidence and the general aura surrounding both of them.
Eamonn's opinion about Isma	• straitlaced, pious • pretty Isma • remarkable woman • She ran over to her balcony. Moments later, he stepped out onto the street, rolling back his shoulders as if released from the weight of her company. He walked away without looking up, his stride long. Isma knelt down on the snow-dusted balcony floor and wept.	As readers we come to know that contrary to Isma's desire Eamonn keeps an only friends or brother-sister relationship with exaggeratedly proper Isma. Isma is represented as a character which always had difficulty in expressing her emotions whereas Aneeka could do that naturally without offending anyone. Being in her mind too much makes her a fastidiously meticulous while doing so Shamsie has deprived her of charm and attraction.

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Karamat Lone's opinion about Isma	• Surely she was among those who could be saved, despite the wreckage of her family. • Curious woman. • She was quite clearly besotted with Eamonn, but that seemed to make no difference to her devotion to her sister.	Karamt Lone could feel that Unlike Aneeka, Isma is the docile and submissive sort of woman who can be tamed and moulded by American government.
Isma's Religious Views while talking to Aneeka	• "Do you believe in heaven and hell?" [Aneeka] "Only as parables. A god of mercy wouldn't condemn any of his creation to eternal suffering."[Isma] "So what happens after death?" [Aneeka] "I don't know. [Isma]	Isma is supposed to be the most religious of the three siblings and these views come as a surprise because of Parvaiz's comments about Isma.
Isma's Opinion about Parvaiz (after joining ISIS)	• Isma had an easier answer: his father's son; fecklessness in the gene pool. • Parvaiz was a no-go area too • "Is this me not suffering Parvaiz is gone." "He did that, not me. When they (father and Parvaiz) treat us this way the only thing we can do for our own sanity is let them go." • People in the neighbourhood knew. The police would have found out. There was nothing I could do for him, so I did what I could for you, for us." • We're in no position to let the state question our loyalties. Don't you understand that? If you cooperate, it makes a difference	Isma's intellectual side dominates her behaviour even in her relation with her brother. To protect herself and Aneeka, she informed the British police about Parvaiz joining ISIS.
Aneeka's opinion about Isma	• In times of distress, Aneeka would crawl into Isma's bed to tell the childhood story their mother had invented for her firstborn and Isma had modified for the twins. • when the burden of the universe seemed too great for Isma to bear, Aneeka would place her hands on her sister's shoulders and massage away the ache. • An infant, Aneeka was bathed and changed and fed and rocked to sleep by her grandmother and nine-year-old sister. • traitor, betrayer. (see comments) • You were the one who told the police what he'd done. • Isma, you've made our brother not able to come home."	Without consulting Aneeka, Isma informed the British police about Parvaiz to save her own and Aneeka'e career and this became the reason for break up between sisters.

Isma, the eldest sister, emerges in the narrative as a young woman facing perpetual challenges in realizing her aspirations and displaying a hesitancy to assume a leadership role. This portrayal aligns her with diverse spheres of values, as delineated in Table 1. In contrast, Aneeka's moral evaluation is safeguarded from scrutiny and dissent by the strategic fusion of "praise with realism," as advocated by Van Leeuwen (2008, p. 110). This approach shields Aneeka's character from moral ambiguities and positions her as a figure whose virtues are intricately interwoven with a realistic portrayal, insulating her from potential criticism or debate within the narrative.

Isma's role as a caregiver to her siblings, highlighted throughout the novel, is marked by considerable challenges. Despite the hardships she endured while raising her siblings, a recurring pattern emerges where other social actors (SAs) consistently rank Isma as their second or third choice. This pattern extends to Eamonn and the twins, as illustrated in Table 1. Notably, Isma's character serves a dual purpose: it acts as a foil to Aneeka, accentuating the

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latter's virtues, and simultaneously explains Aneeka's actions. This garners sympathy for her perceived mistreatment by other SAs, including Karamat Lone and the British media. This intentional contrast also serves as a justification for Aneeka's unconventional social behaviour within the narrative.The assertion made here emphasizes Isma's portrayal as the eldest among the three siblings, enduring the most severe repercussions of their tumultuous family circumstances. She was compelled to shoulder the responsibilities akin to that of the twins' parents simultaneously. The narrative consistently draws comparisons between Isma and Aneeka, casting Isma as a young woman distinguished by her gravity, simplicity, and meticulous demeanor, while contrasting these traits with Aneeka's untamed spirit, audacity, and inherent naturalness. The narrative implies that Isma's failure to captivate Eamonn is attributed to her personality traits. In contrast, Aneeka's success in her relationship with Eamonn not only positions her as a favorable counterpart but also endows her with a role model authority. The concept of *role model authority* is borrowed from the socio-semantic inventory of Van Leeuwen (2008). This dynamic adds a layer of complexity to the characterization and relationships within the narrative.

Narrative ascendancy: Shaping virtues, defying norms, and challenging perceptions

Aneeka's prominence in the selected narration is unmistakable, with her name appearing a staggering 180 times in the corpus. The narrative elevates Aneeka through frequent praise for her courageous actions and physical attributes. This intentional portrayal serves to cast Isma's reserved personality as a flaw while positioning Aneeka's audacious boldness as the virtuous attitude to adopt.

Aneeka's positive assessment is further reinforced through the lens of other social actors (SAs) within the narrative. Shamsie, the writer, acknowledges the need to rationalize Aneeka's sexual activities which might challenge conventional expectations of a *Hijabi* Muslim girl. The justification for Aneeka's perilous sexual endeavors to recover Parvaiz's body is twofold: designating her as a SA with a moral cause and granting her role model status. Shamsie strategically employs the concept of deviance, portraying Aneeka as an overly determined SA engaging in actions not conventionally expected of her. Van Leeuwen (2008) elaborates on overdetermination as a discursive strategy for the portrayal of a social actor. This tactic involves breaking societal norms or laws, and in Aneeka's case, her seemingly self-sacrificing social efforts are framed within the realm of moral principles. The narrative suggests that initiating a sexual relationship with Eamonn was the only perceived option for Aneeka to save her brother, further emphasized by the moral connotations associated with the terms used to describe the twins' bond (refer to Table 2). This intricate narrative strategy works to shape perceptions of Aneeka as a morally principled and unconventional character within the storyline.

Legitimizing through role model authority and linguistic choices

Establishing role model authority serves as the second method of legitimizing Aneeka's actions. According to Van Leeuwen's (2008) theory, a social actor's (SA) *role model authority* is designed to inspire others to replicate their behavior, and these role models need not be famous or in positions of authority. Their influence stems from specific behaviors that can be easily imitated even from a distance. By acquiring the status of a role model, individuals make it more acceptable for others to perceive their actions as legitimate. Aneeka's depiction as an idol gains momentum through endorsements from significant SAs like Eamonn and the home

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secretary, as detailed in Table 2. This portrayal encourages others to emulate the perceptive and knowledgeable Aneeka. Table 2, compiled from Aneeka's concordance lines, illustrates Shamsie's lexical decisions for the physical and relational identification of Aneeka, with the use of strong language reflecting the author's favorable assessment of her character.

Table 2
Other SAs' Recognition and Evaluation of Aneeka

Isma about Aneeka	• A woman-child, a mature-immature • Not quite nineteen, with her **law student brain**, who knew everything about **her rights and nothing about the fragility of her place in the world**.	
Karamat Lone	• Aneeka Pasha was **the kind of girl** who would do **anything.** • **His poor boy never stood a chance. [against Aneeka]**	Even the home secretary judges her as capable of making anything possible.
British Media about Aneeka	• "Slag," "terrorist spawn," "enemy of Britain. Words used by media towards the end • Take out the trash. Keep Britain clean	The aspersion by media serves the purpose of raising sympathies for Aneeka and gives a superficial look of rejection of discrimination.
Aneeka in the last scene	• Pictures of a woman in the white of mourning, sitting cross-legged on a white sheet covered in rose petals. • The 3-D models of buildings and trees collapsed into the ground as if from a powerful detonation, and what remained was **the figure of a girl facing the British Deputy High Commission**. Karamat pressed the mute button and watched **the doe-eyed girl in white, head covered, surrounded by blood red rose petals, the park railings looking like a backdrop of prison bars in close-up shots of her**. Nothing accidental in any of it, but what was all the **iconography of suffering** meant to achieve? • The girl stood up **fluidly** from her cross-legged posture and stepped off the sheet. A **single rose petal** adhered to the top of **her slim, bare foot.** • Every television channel replayed it **endlessly**	Shamsie's repetition and elaborate explanation has given Aneeka a heroin like existence. A variety of attributive and designative adjectives and a few adverbs are used for Aneeka especially in the narration of the last scene (see table 4.44).

Reporting SA	**Words or Phrases**	**Comments**
Authorial comments about her Nature	• Aneeka simply knew **how to place herself in the middle of a gathering, delineate her boundaries,** and fashion intimacies around the no go areas. • She'd always been **good at finding people** who would look out for her. • There was an **instant appeal in her contradictory characteristics: sharp-tongued and considerate, serious minded and capable of unbridled goofiness** • Aneeka always guarded that (teenage affairs) part of her life from her sister, who was, perhaps, too inclined to lecture.	From the beginning of the novel author builds a role model authority around Aneeka's character. She used to come to Isma for physical comforting in the times of distress but otherwise her discernment, self-assurance, and charisma has been repeatedly mentioned by the author and by other SA. She knew how to survive in this world and how to make people love her. A continuous comparison with Isma by using designative and attributive adjectives (bold) Shamsie has evaluated her character positively.
Aneeka's views about her family	• She was **incapable of acknowledging** the damage of having been abandoned and orphaned. **"I have you (Isma) and P. That's enough".**	This type of comment mingles praise with practicality and raises Aneeka on a pedestal far above both of her siblings in the eyes of the reader.
Aneeka and Parvaiz – **from womb to tomb**	• Parvaiz was the person Aneeka talked to about all her grief and worries. • He is my twin, he is me.	Through her special bond for her brother Shamsie legitimizes her intimate affair with the son of the home secretary. Unlike Isma Aneeka's feelings are shown unchanging before and after joining ISIS.
Eamonn	• (telling his father) An orphan at the age of twelve, raised by her sister. Preston Road. **Beautiful, and so smart**, Dad, **on a scholarship to LSE for law. Only nineteen but far more mature than that.** • Now if the **world wants to divide into Aneeka and everyone else, there's no question where I'm standing. Or kneeling,** which is really what I'd like to do right now.	The author did not limit the positive comments to herself only and found it necessary to endorse the authority of SA Aneeka through other SA. Clear contrast is visible when these comments are compared with Eamonn talking about Isma's company in table 4.44.

The comments in the third column of Table 2 provide insight into why Aneeka is portrayed as a glorified SA.

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Unveiling values: Discursive strategies, moral justifications, and symbolism in Aneeka's narrative

The author's value system acts as the underpinning for moral judgment, providing another rationale for the actions of a social actor (SA). The strategic use of attributive and designative adjectives indirectly communicates the author's underlying value system without explicitly delineating it, aligning with Van Leeuwen's (2008) notion that discourse represents the visible tip of an extensive moral principles iceberg. In Aneeka's narrative, allusions to religious discourse abound, presenting her extramarital encounters in a theoretically justified and validated light. This exaltation seeks to legitimize her actions based on a presumed natural order rather than moral justification or consequential reasoning. In the aftermath of Parvaiz's passing, Eamonn publicly praises Aneeka for her sacrifice, contributing to the naturalization and rationalization of their unlawful relationship. The discourse strategically shifts focus from Aneeka's opponents to the causes and responsible entities for her demonization in the narrative. The author utilizes linguistic strategies, including objectification and generalization, to connect Aneeka's actions as the result of limited, constrained options.

Van Leeuwen (2008) proposes that moral judgments conveyed in discourse reflect common sense values and cultural knowledge within a social setup. The narrative in paragraph 3 introduces a moral notion, exemplified by the phrase "crime of daring to love while concealing her head," transforming moral discourses into "generalized motives" to define Aneeka's stance. Considering the potential difficulty in linguistically discerning such moral assessments, a discourse historical method becomes crucial.

Paragraph 3
Glorification of Aneeka Through Moral Judgement

"The woman you've been watching on your TV screens is a woman who has **endured terrible trials, whose country, whose government, and whose fiancée turned away from her at a moment of profound personal loss**. She has been abused for the **crime of daring to love while covering her head**, vilified for believing **that she had the right to want a life with someone** whose history is at odds with hers, denounced for wanting to bury her brother beside her mother, reviled for her completely legal protests against a decision by the home secretary that suggests **personal animus**. Is Britain really a nation that turns people into figures of hate **because they love unconditionally? Unconditionally but not uncritically**.

Addressing the global discourse on Islamophobia in the subsequent section, the analysis delves into Shamsie's incorporation of global discussions in *Home Fire*. The juxtaposition of hijab and illicit sex challenges basic cultural awareness in Islamic societies, presenting a fictively complex image of Islam. Shamsie strategically weighs the significance of the hijab and examines its role in the global discourse on Islamophobia, portraying it as a symbol that fuses the sacred and the erotic. The subsequent section of this article further delves into the hijab as a visual indicator of Aneeka's identity as a Muslim girl and at the same time Shamsie's sexualized portrayal of it.

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Hijab, Muslimness and dichotomy of perception

The historical legacy of the civilizing mission is evident in nineteenth and early twentieth-century Orientalist depictions of exotic nude Muslim women wearing the hijab. For instance, Flaubert's writings about nineteenth-century Oriental women reflect a perverse sense of sensual fulfillment (Zouidi, 2021). Similarly, posed and manipulated postcards of veiled Moroccan women from this period have been studied for their role in fostering heteroerotic and homoerotic desires within the "West and the rest" dichotomy (Abujad, 2021). The hijab remains a prominent and complex symbol in the colonial imagination, defying simplistic, individualistic interpretations. Kamila Shamsie employs a similar technique in her characterization of Aneeka in *Home Fire*. Aneeka's portrayal draws on these historical patterns, presenting her as both an object of desire and a symbol of cultural and religious identity. By doing so, Shamsie highlights the ongoing complexities and misinterpretations associated with the hijab and the exoticization of Muslim women in contemporary narratives.

Aneeka's hijab functions as a tangible manifestation of her Muslim identity, situated within the complex binary of "good Muslim/bad Muslim." Bullock (2007) underscores the hijab's political significance, evident in revolutionary struggles in Algeria and Iran, as well as in Indo-Pak during the 1970s. Haddad (2007) notes the persistent politics surrounding the veil, with Muslim women facing increased violence for wearing Islamic identity markers. Fatwas, or legal opinions with religious foundations, even suggest the acceptability of hijab removal in cases of life threats (Haddad, 2007).

The global discourse on the Muslim hijab is polarized, encompassing positive perspectives that consider it a symbol of Islam, women's agency, piety, and personal choice, and negative viewpoints that perceive it as a hindrance to social interaction and a security risk. In the aftermath of 9/11, the headscarf became a conspicuous marker of militant Islam in the eyes of many Americans, contributing to stereotyping and prejudiced perceptions (Haddad, 2007).

Complex depiction of the hijab: Critiquing norms and social bias

The term "hijab" appears 15 times in the novel, coupled with two instances of "hojabi", all laden with a mocking undertone. Aneeka's more conservative Islamic practices, such as abstaining from alcohol, and pork, and observing Ramadan fasts, are contrasted with her lax approach to extramarital relationships, which Eamonn perceives as a softer indicator of her Muslim identity. Shamsie underscores a clear dichotomy between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims," categorizing them based on adherence to societal norms in private and public spheres (refer to Figure 1).

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Table 3
CT of Hijab and Ho-jabi in SCHF

1.	He knew that she was interested in the marital status of an actor from a popular TV series; that wearing a **hijab didn't stop her from buying expensive products to tame** her frizzy hair; that she had searched for "how to make small talk with Americans.
2.	Reconsider the **hijab**. She pointed **at the turban** that Isma had **left near the door along with her shoes,** the latter out of consideration for Hira's hardwood floors and Persian carpets, **the former out of consideration for her sensibility. [Dr. Hira talking to Isma]**
3.	Eamonn stood up, conscious of his greasy fingers and of the question of how **he might use them to unpin the white hijab that framed her face. [Eamonn and Aneeka]**
4.	Why are you here? didn't seem like a question he could ask, and might make her leave, which he didn't think he wanted, although it was hard to know **what to want of a silent, beautiful woman in a hijab sipping coffee in your flat. [Eamonn and Aneeka]**
5.	**She unpinned the hijab, folded it carefully,** and placed it between the two of them on the counter, then pulled off the tight-fitting cap beneath it. **[Eamonn and Aneeka]**
6.	During their first kiss, **she'd broken away and started to put her hijab back on**, before his entreaties convinced her to stay. **[Eamonn and Aneeka]**
7.	Eventually he swung himself out of bed and walked into the living room **to find her praying, a towel as her prayer mat, the hijab nothing more alien than a scarf loosely covering her head without the elaborate pinning or the tightly fitted cap beneath. [Eamonn and Aneeka]**
8.	He leaned back in his chair, looked at his friends **and tried to imagine walking into this garden with Aneeka–the hijab , the refusal of alcohol**, Wembley. **[Eamonn and Aneeka]**
9.	Now, he kept imagining a meme of his father's voice saying **"Don't set yourself apart in the way you dress"** played over a video of Aneeka standing up from her prayer mat and walking into his embrace, shedding her clothes along the way until only the **hijab** remained. **[Eamonn and Aneeka]**
10	"Does anyone give you a hard time because of the **hijab** ? **[Eamonn and Aneeka]**
11	"There's one thing I should **warn** you about. **She's a bit, well, Muslim." "How 'well, Muslim,'** exactly?" **"She prays. Not five times a day, but every morning, first thing. Doesn't drink or eat pork. She fasts during Ramzan. Wears a hijab**." "Uh-huh. But she has no problem–" He brought the palms of his hands together and then separated them. "What? Opening a book?" "Sex." "Dad! No, **she has no problem with that.**
12	"Anyway, if she's only nineteen, I suspect she can be **persuaded out of the hijab** in time. **[Eamonn's friends about Aneeka]**
13	"The beautiful one in the **hijab** , you mean?
14	She glanced at the picture, remembered then how sullenly she had accompanied her sister to the High Commission to have the card issued, hating the idea of missing a summer in London, to spend it in a country teeming with relatives who thought **blood ties gave them the right to interrogate and lecture and point to the sisters' hijabs as proof that British Pakistanis were "caught in the past" then point to their jeans to prove they were "mixed up.**
15	"Take off the **hijab** and put these on," was the only thing he'd said, passing her a pair of oversize glasses.
16	And now you've come along**, Miss Hojabi Knickers,** and I have to pull strings I don't want to pull to get you out of the airport without the whole world's press seeing you, and it turns out you're here to try some stunt I don't even know what but my family will have nothing to do with it, nothing to do with you.
17	"I'm here to find out if any of **that racist, misogynistic ho-jabi nonsense** is coming from your office, and **to fire whoever is responsible,"** she said, pulling away and beaming at her father.

The British government, as depicted in the narrative, considers someone a "good Muslim" if they engage in behaviours like consuming alcohol and pork, accepting those who wear the hijab with some reluctance if they are lenient in matters of sexual intimacy. However, individuals who abstain from integrating into British society, refraining from pork, alcohol, and sexual freedom, and additionally wear a veil, face questioning of their loyalty and bear the consequences. Initially perceived as a critique of British prejudice, a closer look at the book reveals Shamsie's exclusion of socially active individuals adhering to Islam nonviolently (see

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Table 3). This exclusionary element adds layers of complexity to the narrative's exploration of bias and societal norms.

Kamila Shamsie, in her works, often delves into themes of identity, belonging, and the diasporic experience, which resonate with Kral et al.'s (2019) concept of naturalization. Naturalization, as discussed by Kral et al., involves assimilating the "other" into the dominant national narrative, often at the cost of erasing their distinct cultural markers. Shamsie's narratives frequently explore the complexities faced by immigrants who must navigate their identities within new national contexts, highlighting how their stories and identities are reshaped or suppressed to conform to the dominant culture. Through her characters and their experiences, Shamsie effectively illustrates the process of naturalization and the resultant loss of cultural identity, aligning with Kral's theoretical framework.

The word hijab/hojabi carries a semantic weight with negative connotations, evident in its collocations as highlighted in bold in Table 3. For a comprehensive discourse analysis using corpus tools, Baker et al. (2013) argue for a dynamic approach, emphasizing the need to navigate between concordance lines and broader contextual considerations. Shamsie, in Table 3, assesses the hijab, positioning it in contrast to various other Muslim social customs. Let us categorize the various meanings associated with the word hijab/hojabi in Table 3.

- The hijab is employed as a strategy for embracing simplicity (line 1).
- The hijab is deliberately set aside at the entrance as a gesture of decency and to avoid censure from Dr. Hira (line 2).
- The hijab is perceived as a constraint on sexual freedom (lines 3–7).
- The hijab is utilized as a method to amalgamate the sacred and the sexual (lines 6 and 7).
- The hijab serves as both a symbol of Islam and a source of social awkwardness simultaneously (lines 8–12, 14–17).
- The term "hijab" is employed to evoke a heated impact within sexually intimate scenes (line 9).
- In line 10, the expression "hijab" is characterized as something that may pose challenges for Muslim girls.
- It is presented as something to be discarded or removed (line 12).
- Line 14 uses the term "hijab" to signify a past conviction.
- Lines 16 and 17 encapsulate the strong disdain expressed by the Home Minister, signalling a highly critical stance against the use of hijab.
- Line 7, depicting Aneeka praying on a towel after bathing in her boyfriend's apartment, portrays her as an overly determined social actor as explained by Van Leeuwen (2008), acting contrary to reader and Eamonn's expectations. Overdetermination involves portraying a social actor engaging in two contradictory

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actions typically performed by different social actors. It is unconventional for a Muslim girl spending the night with her boyfriend in his apartment to pray early the next morning and engage in another sexual act right after the prayer.

Shamsie's problematic portrayal of Aneeka and the hijab raises several issues, including:

1. Can the sexual encounter with Eamonn serve as ample justification for Aneeka's choice to wear the hijab, or is it the other way around?
2. Is the hijab depicted in *Home Fire* as a symbol reflecting American pride in the cherished values of free speech and religion?
3. If a Muslim woman, adorned in a hijab, demonstrates other indications of assimilation into British culture, does this sway figures like Home Secretary Karamat Lone to begrudgingly tolerate the hijab?
4. How would individuals react if Muslim women, donning hijabs, refrain from displaying any other signs of assimilation and integration into the Western societal fabric?

The final inquiry holds particular significance given the home secretary's reaction upon discovering Aneeka's acceptance of extramarital sex (Table 3, lines 11, 16, 17). Karamat Lone immediately expresses relief that she is not a "halibut," leaving the reader to contemplate the potential outcome had Aneeka chosen to abstain from a sexual relationship with his son while also donning a veil. Shamsie's portrayal of the hijab undoubtedly presents challenges, yet it pales in comparison to the troubling depiction of the veil. Shamsie's portrayal of the hijab in tranquil Britain appears absent, and young Muslim women in the country seem to adopt the hijab as a symbol of asserting authenticity and Muslim pride, while the veil does not achieve the same status. Shamsie continues to depict the veil as a symbol linked to the demonization of Islam, associated with terrorism and the denigration of Muslim women in Western culture. Despite Aneeka and Isma both wearing the hijab as an iconic symbol of Islam and resisting Western propaganda, Shamsie refrains from granting the veil the same status, leaving its representation at the mercy of Western media. Moreover, she strengthens allegations against the veil by associating it with the social setup of ISIS. Shamsie delves into the century-long debate between Muslims and the West on whether the veil and hijab signify oppression or dignity and piety. She chooses to support the hijab as long as it accompanies evident signs of cultural assimilation into Western society, as exemplified by the SA Aneeka. However, she declines to defend the veil and leaves its representation subject to the biases of Western media, further linking it to the social structure of ISIS.

Within the recontextualization process, discourse producers often employ the technique of selectively deleting some Social Actors (borrowing the concept of radical exclusion from Van Leeuwen, 2008). Unfortunately, readers may find it challenging to reconstruct the significantly excluded SAs. Notably, in Shamsie's novel, we encountered a conspicuous absence of devout Muslims who adhere to nonviolence, peacefully coexist, and uphold the principles of law-abiding citizenship—a demographic representing the vast majority of

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Muslims globally. This omission raises questions about the nuanced portrayals within the narrative.

The absence of any such character within the selected novel implies an overlooking of a significant segment of the Muslim population. Those who align themselves with the prevailing global Muslim identity, characterized by a commitment to peace and lawful conduct, may find it difficult to identify with the diverse Muslim subgroups depicted in Shamsie's work. If one were to visually represent the Social Actors within *Home Fire* on a spectrum, varying ideological stances would be evident. This spectrum would encompass a range from radicalization at one extreme to cultural assimilation into Western lifestyles at the other (refer to Figure 1). The reader is left to infer the potential implications of this selective representation, prompting contemplation on the broader implications of such narrative choices within the intricate tapestry of Shamsie's storytelling.

Table 4
The Word/Concept of Muslim-ness as Used by Shamsie in Home Fire

Textual Evidence	Comment
• I don't distinguish between one **Muslim** and another **[Isma]** • Assuming women who wore turbans as "a **Muslim** thing" couldn't possibly shake hands with men. **[Eamon about Aneeka]**	Division **between good and bad Muslims** on the basis of visual identity markers is introduced by Shamsie. She is measuring **the *Muslimness*** with the yard stick of outward behaviour. Too many signs of *Muslim-ness* can make anyone a target of suspicion.
• "Well, if it's love you'd better bring her around. Next Sunday?" "There's one thing I should **warn you about.** She's **a bit, well, Muslim**." "How **'well, Muslim,' exactly?"** "She **prays.** Not five times a day, but every morning, first thing. Doesn't **drink or eat pork.** She **fasts during Ramzan. Wears a hijab.**" "Uh-huh. But she has no problem—" He brought the palms of his hands together and then separated them. "What? Opening a book?" "Sex." "Dad! No, **she has no problem with that.** There is no problem with that at all. ..... So, **she's no halibut. Glad to hear it.**" (Eamonn describing Aneeka to his Father-Karamat Lone) • The accompanying article described the newly elevated minister as a man **"from a Muslim background,"** which is what they always said about him, as **though Muslim-ness** was something he had boldly stridden away from.	
• "I don't know," Max said. **"Twenty-something unemployed male from Muslim background exhibits rapidly altered pattern of behavior,** cuts himself off from old friends, moves under the radar. Also, are we sure **that's an evening shadow rather than an incipient beard?** I think we may need to alert the authorities." "Take it straight to the home secretary," Hari said. "At least **he's drinking Pimm's,** so we know we haven't lost him completely."	

My interpretation is that Shamsie introduces the concept of Muslim-ness for several purposes. Initially, it transforms Islam into a quantifiable and measurable attribute, subject to gradation. Secondly, based on outward behaviours, Muslim Social Actors (SAs) are classified within the narrative. Shamsie delineates three distinct types of Muslims in the story. The first group includes entities like ISIS, Farooq, and Parvaiz-after-radicalization, representing extremist and terrorist Muslim organizations. The second group, comprising individuals such as Isma, Aneeka, and Eamonn, embodies the portrayal of virtuous and upright Muslims. Meanwhile, the third group consists of characters like Karamat Lone, his wife, and daughter,

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who are depicted renouncing their faith. Shamsie's narrative positions the first and third groups at opposite extremes, evident in Figure 1, expressing her disapproval and condemnation. Her sympathies and endorsement align with the second group, highlighting a clear bias towards portraying certain Muslims as virtuous.

This narrative choice reflects a broader discourse on Islamophobia, echoing Mamdani's (2002, 2004) argument that categorizing Muslims into "good" and "bad" was perpetuated by President George W. Bush post-9/11. Mamdani contends that such categorization racialized the political identity of Muslims, creating a dichotomy based on loyalty to the U.S. Shamsie's narrative resonates with historical discussions on the politics of Muslim identity, as Orientalists like Lewis (1990) and Huntington (1997) have also propagated the notion of an irreconcilable clash between Islamic and Western civilizations. According to Mamdani (2004), Lewis even suggests a form of civil war within the Muslim community.

By weaving these complex threads into her narrative, Shamsie contributes to an ongoing international dialogue, perpetuating established Orientalist perspectives. Karamat Lone's viewpoint in the story adds another layer, emphasizing the limited options for immigrant Muslims in the West – either full assimilation for acceptance as "good Muslims" or resistance, facing the label of "bad Muslims." Ironically, Karamat Lone, despite belonging to the third group of "good Muslims," symbolizes Western generosity and freedom of choice while advocating for the transformation of the majority of Muslims into a submissive entity, adding a nuanced layer to the intricate tapestry of Shamsie's narrative.

The assertion put forth here posits that Shamsie, in delineating the categories of Muslims represented by ISIS, Pashas, and Lones, has completely neglected the possibility of a fourth group. This excluded group might embody practices such as abstaining from pork and alcohol like Pashas, wearing a hijab like Aneeka and Isma, and adhering to Islamic norms similar to ISIS. Despite outward similarities, this group may remain non-violent and peaceful, contradicting Shamsie's portrayal. Whether this exclusion is intentional or not is a separate discussion, but the overarching concern lies in the potential perpetuation of risk subjectification. In an era dominated by heightened security concerns, Shamsie's omission may contribute to the stigmatization of young Muslim individuals who outwardly display Islamic markers, fostering suspicion and increased surveillance on a global scale. In the same context, of particular concern is the radical exclusion of a practising Muslim woman in a burqa from the depiction of peaceful Britain, limiting her presence only to the ISIS environment. This exclusion prompts questions about Shamsie's portrayal of Muslim-ness in Islam, raising issues of representation and potential stereotyping.

Sexualizing Aneeka's *hijab* and other icons of religion

During the concordance analysis of Social Actor (SA) representation, we stumbled upon an intriguing revelation. Despite the prevalence of words associated with the sacred domain, what caught my attention was their unintentional juxtaposition with words from the sexual domain. This unexpected pairing prompted a deeper dive into the concordance lines of specific words, guided by intuition. As we delved further, a meticulous examination of the nine-word collocational window uncovered a distinctive pattern: Shamsie consistently interweaves religious imagery into sexual contexts, with a noteworthy instance being the illicit encounter between Aneeka and Eamonn, as highlighted in Table 3 and Table 5. This discovery prompts reflection on Shamsie's deliberate choice to blend sacred and intimate themes, suggesting a deliberate intertwining of religious and sensual elements within the narrative. Such juxtaposition could potentially serve thematic or symbolic purposes, inviting readers to

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contemplate the nuanced connections between spirituality and human desires in the broader context of the story.

Table 5

Concordance Lines of Words From the Domain of Religion

1.	**– love and prayer, the covered head and the naked**	body	. He heard the door open–Aneeka entered and
2.	"You know the **Quran** tells us to **enjoy sex** as one of	God's	blessings?" Hira said. "Within marriage!""We
3.	of how he might use them to **unpin the white**	hijab	that framed her face. She greeted him with a
4.	what to want of a silent**, beautiful woman in** a	hijab	**sipping coffee in your flat.** "Isma prefers
5.	**Shedding her clothes along** the way **until only the**	hijab	**remained.** The video wouldn't reveal the things
6.	to **undress until there was nothing** left but the	white	scarf covering her head, one end of the soft
7.	enough as she **touched her nipple through the**	white	**cotton, colors contrasting.** He reached a hand
8.	living room to **find her praying,** a towel as her	prayer	mat, the hijab nothing more alien than a scarf
9.	did– **love and prayer, the covered head and the**	naked	body. He heard the door open–Aneeka entered and
10.	been **hesitant, tentative.** During their first	kiss	, she'd broken away **and started to put her hijab**
11.	to his face, breathing in. **His personal act of**	prayer	. To start with she'd been **hesitant, tentative.**
12.	living room to find her praying, **a towel as her**	prayer	mat, **the hijab nothing more alien** than a scarf
13.	started **to unbutton her long-sleeved shirt,** starting at the base **of her neck."**	Prayer	isn't about **transaction, Mr. Capitalist**. It's
14.	over a video of Aneeka **standing up from her**	prayer	**mat and walking into his embrace, shedding her clothes**
15.	in everything she did– love and	prayer	**, the covered head and the naked body.** He heard
16.	**Ayat al-Kursi** as a kind of reflex. "Is that a	prayer	?""Yes. Ask **your girlfriend** about it. Actually
17.	. "You know **the Quran tells** us to enjoy	sex	as one of **God's blessings?"** Hira said. "Within
18.	**hijab!** PERVY PASHA'S TWIN SISTER **ENGINEERED**	SEX	**TRYSTS** WITH HOME SECRETARY'S SON Aneeka
19.	OF **MUSLIM** TERRORISTS, WITH HISTORY **OF SECRET**	SEX	LIFE–THE EXCLUSIVE STORY OF "**KNICKERS**" PASHA
20.	of terrorism. And now you've come along, Miss	Hojabi	Knickers, and I have to pull strings I don't want
21.	She has been abused for the **crime of daring to**	love	while **covering her head,** vilified for
22.	woman, this stranger, **prostrating herself** to	God	in the room where she'd been down on **her knees for a very** different reason
23.	the day right. "You had to put **on a bra** for	God	?" he said, as she **unbuttoned further**, needing

Examining the broader context, Shamsie intricately weaves the experiences of two Social Actors (SAs), Aneeka and Eamonn, highlighting the convergence of sexual gratification and spiritual fulfilment. Aneeka, in particular, is crafted as an SA that introduces the notion that sexual union carries spiritual implications. The deliberate inclusion of details such as her donning a hijab, wearing a scarf, and engaging in prayer before or after illegitimate intimate moments with Eamonn in his apartment appears to be a deliberate attempt to confound expectations and challenge conventional perceptions. Shamsie subtly invites readers to contemplate the coexistence of physical and spiritual dimensions in the characters' lives.

Noteworthy is the exploration of Dr. Shah's religious affiliation, revealing her advocacy for sexual freedom outside of marriage and her suggestion to reinterpret the Quran in support of her stance. This adds complexity to the narrative, highlighting diverse perspectives within the Muslim community and sparking reflections on the intersection of faith and personal beliefs.

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Paragraph 4

Quran and Selective Reading

> "You know the Quran tells us to enjoy sex as one of God's blessings?" Hira said. "Within marriage!"[Says Isma] "We all have our versions of selective reading when it comes to the Holy Book." [Replies Hira.]

In the context of *Home Fire*, a Muslim woman wearing a hijab is a common occurrence, but a veiled Muslim woman is relegated to the background as a silent actor. Women who wear veils are depicted four times as uncovered and once as veiled women. The veiled woman gets representation only in two ways: as a salacious volunteer supporting ISIS or as an oppressed woman confined within the ISIS world, similar to Parvaiz.

Paragraph 5

Tweet by a Salacious Female Volunteer Supporting ISIS

> @gladysinraqqa
> Tweets 2 Following 0 Followers 2,452
> Ooh such beautiful boys, let me lift my veil to see them better—oh, I'm being gently #crucified.
> Come on boys, look at me, I can do things those 72 virgins don't know about.
> #MaybeThisIsntHeaven

Paragraph 5 shows a tweet that gained viral attention on social media following Parvaiz's death. It refers to the veiled Muslim woman in the fictional world created by Shamsie. The tweet suggests a perception of the veiled woman as morally loose, reinforcing a sensualized image associated with the concept of the 72 virgins (paragraph 5). As suggested earlier, the veiled woman is represented as an oppressor linked to ISIS, an oppressed woman in an ISIS-controlled environment, and, in certain instances, a lecherous Muslim woman conveying explicit messages through social media.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Kamila Shamsie intricately examines the *hijabi* identity through Aneeka's character, shedding light on the gradable nature of Muslimness. Aneeka's audacious choices, in contrast to Isma's part-time *hijabi* portrayal, position her as a narrative role model, challenging conventional expectations. The evaluative processes, shaped by cultural references, emphasize Aneeka's virtues, while Isma's character serves as a foil, accentuating Aneeka's perceived strengths. The legitimization of Aneeka's actions relies on role model authority and nuanced linguistic choices, presenting her as an idol within the narrative. Shamsie subtly communicates an underlying value system, justifying Aneeka's moral choices through generalized motives, contributing to a complex character portrayal.

Beyond individual character analysis, the narrative engages with global discussions on Islamophobia. The juxtaposition of hijab and illicit sex challenges cultural norms, presenting a nuanced image of Islam. Aneeka's hijab becomes a visual indicator of her Muslim identity, contributing to the broader exploration of Muslimness in the novel.

The discussion on the representation of the hijab reveals intricate layers of complexity. Shamsie's narrative critiques societal norms and biases, particularly in categorizing Muslims as "good" or "bad" based on their adherence to cultural assimilation. The exclusion of socially active, nonviolent Muslims raises questions about nuanced portrayals within the narrative.

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Shamsie's introduction of "Muslim-ness" further delves into categorizations, resonating with historical discussions on Islamophobia.

The juxtaposition of sacred and sexual domains in the narrative, especially concerning Aneeka and Eamonn, prompts reflection on the deliberate intertwining of religious and sensual elements. Shamsie challenges conventional perceptions, inviting readers to contemplate the coexistence of physical and spiritual dimensions.

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