

In the Name of the Muslim: Identity Politics and the Tragic State in Kamila Shamsie's Home Fire



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Abstract: *Muslim identity and research on narratives representing Muslims is a subject of unprecedented significance, especially after the fall of the Twin Towers in 2001. This research aims to analyze the change in Muslim identity on a global level as a result of terrorism. Post-9/11 fiction is abundant with examples in which humanity is victimized by terrorism. A new, suspicious identity was assigned to the followers of Islam; being Muslim, the individual was blamed for terrorist attacks. The legacy of terrorism continues to haunt new generations. The corporeal and monstrous transformations in the lives of immigrants are demonstrated by most South Asian writers. Kamila Shamsie articulates this alarming chaos through her characters. This research presents policies and agendas intended to counter identity politics framed in the name of Muslims. In the novel, Isma's interrogation and her brother's assassination are a powerful depiction of the terrorized world at large. A qualitative method of research based on close reading is used for the analysis of the primary text. Works by Hannah Arendt, Edward Said, and Vamik D. Volkan are used as theoretical resources to interpret the primary text.*

Keywords: Kamila Shamsie, depiction, Hannah Arendt, Vamik D. Volkan, terrorism

Introduction

The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center in 2001 and the 7/7 London bombings in 2005 have affected British as well as global Muslim identity. European media has had a tendency to depict Muslims in highly derogatory ways. By failing to distinguish and recognize mainstream Muslims from extremist groups (Allen, 2016), as Edward Said explores in his *Orientalism*, the Occidental unconscious perceives the Orient as an anonymous mass rather than as individuals (1978). This has significantly contributed to rising Islamophobia and an expansion of hostile attacks on Muslims in Britain and America (Sheridan, 2006). Due to

these conditions, the global Muslim community feels alienated from Western societies on both spiritual and cultural fronts. Islamophobia and the discourse of the Muslim as terrorist are not new; they extend back to the early modern period of English literature, in which English authors, historians, and travellers misrepresented Muslims as assassins, brutal warriors, and heretics. The Islamophobia discourse anchored in Western literature constitutes a site of epistemic violence and identity politics. This paper's analysis expands upon the objective of establishing a site within literary studies, such as Muslim Literature, to counter this discourse. Due to Islamophobia and identity politics framed in the name of Muslims,

a developing pattern has emerged, specifically among the youth of global Muslim communities, to feel that they have little in common with non-Muslim members of their societies. Consequently, they voice opposition to Western values, favoring Sharia law by rejecting Western norms of democracy. Changes in Western foreign policy, particularly in relation to terrorism, the Iraq War, and counterterrorism measures, have fueled alienation, disorientation, and discontent among young Muslims in the West by disproportionately targeting the global Muslim community (Mythen et al., 2009). The BBC reports that there is much political and public debate on the subject and threat of “home-grown terrorism” (Mullins, 2007), causing anxiety among the Western community, especially the British public. Following the 7/7 London bombings, a large survey was conducted to assess British Muslim views on current terrorist activities. A minority of respondents justified those attacks, which added to rising anxiety and affected Muslim identity. This raised questions about whether British Muslims stand loyal to Britain rather than to transnational Muslim leaders and associations, and about how Muslims might be more fully integrated into British society with their political convictions (Modood & Ahmad, 2007). British society’s treatment of Muslims “has discovered discrimination as the great social weapon by which one [they] may kill men without any bloodshed” (Arendt, 1943).

Kamila Shamsie’s *Home Fire* explores the consequences of immigration, global Muslim identity, and its crises in the wave of terrorism. Muslims are considered terrorists and a threat to Western centrality regardless of whether they are citizens of Britain, America, or any European country, and regardless of whether they have ever visited a Muslim-majority state. Throughout the globe, especially in European countries, Muslims have been perceived primarily through the lens of religious identity (in relation to Jihadist identity); all other identities are considered secondary or simply unimportant. Muslims and immigrants to the West are most affected by the post-terrorism global condition. There are narrow and negative

representations of Muslims in the wider world. Muslim communities in Western countries experience misunderstanding based on what they look like, how they dress, where they come from, and confusion about their religion.

Human identity as an idea is an extremely fluid subject. There is nothing fixed about it. It changes with circumstances, conditions, and the prevailing discourses of the social or global sphere. It is also based upon one’s relation to a group, culture, religion, and ethnic background, and their perception in the wider world. In this sense, identity is not generally an autonomous element; rather, it relies upon outside forces for its existence. One’s belonging to a specific religion does not only reflect recognition within that group, it also constitutes a global human identity. This demonstrates the dual significance of religious identity: as religion provides one with a sense of identity and cohesion among members of a faith, it can likewise be an explanation for one’s alienation from a community on account of out-group discourses related to one’s religion.

What Shamsie and most postcolonial authors have written reveals the chaos within oneself. Diasporic literature emerges from the concept of one’s belonging and unbelonging based on one’s relationship to small and large groups. Diasporic writing is laden with mobile identities. “However, what is particularly striking in this current period of globalization is the increasing pace at which people, ideas and cultures move from one nation and culture to another” (Appadurai, 1996). *Home Fire* is a depiction of Muslim identity in times of the “war on terror.” Violence against Muslims is a threat to Western identity. Vamik D. Volkan holds the view that “where there is threat to large-group’s identity, massive violence may be initiated and this violence in turn, has an obvious impact on public health” (2006). Here, “large group” refers to the West and “small group” to the Muslim community in Europe. Identity politics is one of the Megali ideas that are defining features of current political ideologies. Traumatic experiences of a nation mark the identity of a small group. Volkan refers to these markers as “chosen trauma.” He defines it as “the shared

mental representation of an event in a large group's history in which the group suffered a catastrophic loss, humiliation and helplessness at the hands of enemies. When members of a victim group are unable to mourn such losses and reverse their humiliation and helplessness, they pass on to their offspring the images of their injured selves and psychological tasks that need to be completed. This process is known as the transgenerational transmission of trauma" (2001), which has now become a defining pattern of Western identity. This chapter reads Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* through Vamik D. Volkan's Tree Model, which consists of three basic components: "(1) psychopolitical diagnosis of the situation," "(2) psychopolitical dialogues between the members of opposing groups," and "(3) collaborative actions and institutions that grow out of the dialogue process" (2006).

Kamila Shamsie has been a steady presence in scholarship on contemporary Anglophone Pakistani fiction since *Burnt Shadows* (2009), *Home Fire* (2017) has generated its own rapidly expanding critical archive because of its uncomfortable proximity to the British state's intensifying use of citizenship-deprivation powers. The existing scholarship clusters around four interlinked concerns: the novel's intertextual relationship to Sophocles' *Antigone*; its intervention in post-9/11 representations of British Muslims; its anticipation of the legal-political logic surrounding the Shamima Begum case; and its formal experimentation with sound, surveillance, and the ethics of reading across difference. The present study locates itself within these conversations and extends them by reading the novel through Vamik Volkan's psychopolitical vocabulary of large-group identity, chosen trauma, and regression. The existing scholarship has gestured toward this frame but lacks the its systematic development.

The earliest critical responses foregrounded the novel's debt to Sophocles. Lau and Mendes (2021) read Aneeka as a "twenty-first-century Antigone" shaped by the rise of far-right populist movements and anti-Muslim politics after 9/11, arguing that the novel inherits and inverts the tragic structure of Sophocles' play to

interrogate the Orientalist binary of East and West. Krause (2020) frames *Home Fire* as a "counternarrative to the Homeric tradition of war stories," pointing to the way Western war narratives — descending from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* — have historically excluded the perspectives Shamsie centres. Chambers (2018) reads the novel as a multimedia work of tragic form, in which the dramatic structures of dialogue, chorus, and messenger speech are reworked through television, social media, and online encounters, giving Sophoclean tragedy a digital afterlife. Sarkowsky (2021) extends this political reading by treating Karamat Lone's refusal to repatriate Parvaiz's body as a contemporary enactment of Creon's denial of burial, anchoring Aneeka's defiance in the urgency of citizenship rather than in classical piety alone.

A second strand of scholarship reads *Home Fire* through the lens of post-9/11 British Muslim experience and racialization. Banerjee (2020) argues that the novel traces the shifting legibility of British Muslim subjects "from cheap labor to overlooked citizens," exposing how they are alternately incorporated and discarded by the state, and reading the Pasha siblings through Mbembe's necropolitics and Agamben's *homo sacer*. Ahmed (2020) places the novel within debates about Islamophobia and the ethics of reading across difference in a secular literary marketplace, contending that Shamsie's overt theatricality — far from rendering Muslim subjects available for easy consumption — opens space for what Iris Marion Young calls "differentiated solidarity," a connection across difference that nevertheless retains the distinction of that difference. Safdar (2025) extends this work by reading Parvaiz's trajectory as a study in "unbearable" British-born Muslim masculinity, derecognized by both Western state apparatuses and reactive Islamist counter-politics, while Cherry (2022) situates Parvaiz within a longer arc of transcultural Muslim masculinities across British literature and film.

A third strand has emerged around the novel's striking anticipation of the Shamima Begum case. Rutkowska (2022) argues that *Home Fire*

operates as a “political novel in our still-evolving reality,” foreseeing with uncomfortable precision the 2019 stripping of Begum’s British citizenship and the ensuing public debate over loyalty, belonging, and the limits of national membership. Sarkowsky’s (2021) reading complements this argument by locating the contested return of Parvaiz’s body within the trajectory of British citizenship-deprivation law and the 2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act, drawing on Judith Butler’s framework of grievability to ask which lives the British state will allow to be mourned. Together, these readings have made the novel into a central reference point for literary engagements with biopolitical exclusion and post-9/11 citizenship law.

A fourth and more formally inclined strand attends to the novel’s media ecology. Chambers (2018) names sound and listening as the novel’s central leitmotifs, arguing that *Home Fire* asks whether the West can “listen to” — without condoning — the radicalized subjects its foreign and domestic policies have produced, and that the novel’s misalignment between who speaks and who is heard ultimately fuels the cultural violence it represents. Ahmed (2020) carries this argument into the ethics of the reading encounter itself, examining how the novel’s saturation with screens, Skype calls, and Twitter fragments resists the surveillance-style consumption of Muslim subjects that has come to characterize a significant body of post-9/11 Anglophone fiction.

What the present paper adds to this conversation is a sustained engagement with *Home Fire* through Vamik Volkan’s psychopolitical framework — particularly his concepts of chosen trauma, transgenerational transmission, large-group regression, and the Tree Model — alongside Hannah Arendt’s reflections on statelessness and Edward Said’s account of Orientalist epistemic violence. Existing scholarship has identified the novel’s preoccupation with identity politics, Islamophobia, biopolitical exclusion, and the politics of mourning, but the question of how massive group-level trauma is transmitted across generations and weaponized to delineate “us”

and “them” has not yet been treated as the organizing problem of the text. Reading the Heathrow interrogation, Parvaiz’s recruitment, and Karamat Lone’s tragic intransigence through this frame, the paper argues that *Home Fire* is best understood as a literary record of what Volkan calls the “second garment” of identity — the moment when religious and ethnic markers, ordinarily latent, become unbearably visible under conditions of large-group threat — and that this condition warrants the institutional consolidation of Muslim Literature as a distinct site within literary studies.

Becoming the Enemy

Terrorist attacks by al-Qaeda and other organizations divided the world in two. Following the events of 9/11, the West further divided the world into binaries of “Us” and “Them.” Volkan addresses this situation: “I am not speaking of individuals here but referring to a general large-group process, and ideas such as the ‘clash of civilizations or religions—directly or indirectly—was supported within the society. Dividing the world into a clear-cut ‘us’ and ‘them’ is a sign of large-group regression. Responding to an enemy in a non-regressed fashion is a very difficult task. Realistic and logical actions are easily contaminated with emotions that support the human wish to do to the enemy what it did to us. I do not think that humans (as large groups) have ever entertained the idea or developed the ability to refrain from acting like their enemies once they feel threatened or hurt” (2006).

Muslims: Objects of Interrogation

The opening section of the novel begins with Isma Pasha nearly missing her flight and recounting her treatment at the hands of immigration officials at Heathrow Airport. This exchange represents psychopolitical dialogue between individuals belonging to opposing groups, each questioning the other’s identity on behalf of the psychodynamics defined by identity politics. In this regard, Volkan holds the view that “political leaders [...] initiate the reactivation of chosen traumas to fuel entitlement ideologies” (2006). Being the

daughter of the diaspora, Shamsie draws on first-hand experience of the deterioration that modern individuals undergo. “The acoustics of ice on ice, a thing unimaginable until experienced” (Shamsie, 2017).

A Muslim who travels anywhere in the world is often interrogated to confirm whether they are a terrorist. Muslims carry an expelling image. At Heathrow Airport, Isma is detained and questioned by security because she is a Muslim travelling to America. Moreover, the events of 9/11 have brutalized the public image of Muslims. She is perceived as an alien capable only of harm. While being interrogated, Isma is perplexed by the nature of the questioning. The state’s xenophobic practices are established at the outset of the novel through Isma’s treatment at the airport as she attempts to fly to America. She is detained, questioned for hours, and her belongings are thoroughly inspected. The questions shatter her identity when the official asks:

“Do you consider yourself British?” the man said.

“I am British.”

“But do you consider yourself British?”

“I’ve lived here all my life.” She meant there was no other country of which she could feel herself a part, but the words came out sounding evasive. (Shamsie, 2017)

The interrogation is no joke. It lasts hours. Isma’s clothes are searched so thoroughly that the security personnel seem “not so much searching for hidden pockets as judging the quality of the material” (Shamsie, 2017). Not only her belongings but also her laptop are checked in minute detail. Her browser history is audited. This novel expands upon what Shamsie calls “GWM”—“Googling While Muslim” (2017).

Effects of Hegemony

Hegemony has been a prevalent trend in colonial states. With the advent of Tri-Continentalism, Muslim identity has been driven into crisis. A powerful state occupies a less powerful one under the mission of exploiting its resources.

The East India Company was established ostensibly for trade within the subcontinent but proved a blessing in disguise for colonial interests. It not only seized natural resources but also stripped the colonized of the norms and identity they once possessed. It is a long phenomenon that cannot be adequately summarized in limited words, though through the voice of Isma, Shamsie offers an account of this spirit: “Occupying other people’s territory generally causes more problems than it solves” (Shamsie, 2017). The blazing effect of colonialism compels the invader to consider only his own benefit, disregarding whatever atrocities others are made to face. “It’s good to save your own skin but a pity, to have to see another get into trouble, whom you’ve no grudge against” (Sophocles, 1999). *Home Fire* is a bold retelling of Sophocles’ *Antigone*, beginning with an airport interrogation—a scene that sets the tone for this ingenious and emotionally charged novel.

South Asian Antigone

Sophocles portrays in *Antigone* a bold character who defies King Creon. Shamsie depicts in Isma’s character the kind of deference to authority that surrounds us. People like Isma, when given a chance to question authority, often become submissive before higher powers. Isma, unlike Antigone, continues to praise the Queen rather than respond with appropriate resistance. Isma’s voice is one of compromise and accommodation:

“As an Asian I have to admire her color palette.” It’s important to show at least a tiny bit of contempt for the whole process. Instead, Isma had responded, “I greatly admire Her Majesty’s commitment to her role.” (Shamsie, 2017)

Aneeka is a different sort of girl. She speaks frankly while discussing with her cousin the treatment Muslims receive today: “those of us with passports that look like toilet paper to the rest of the world, who spend our whole lives being so careful we don’t give anyone a reason to reject our visa applications. Don’t stand next to this guy, don’t follow that guy on Twitter, don’t download that Noam Chomsky book” (Shamsie, 2017).

Islamophobia and 9/11

The tensions between Muslims and Westerners in the post-9/11 era form the basis for *Home Fire*, Shamsie's urgent and explosive novel. The ancient Theban civil war depicted in *Antigone* is given a contemporary parallel in the battle against Islamic fundamentalism in *Home Fire*. Terrorist attacks in London have affected global Muslim identity. The British media has tended to depict Muslims in highly derogatory ways, by failing to distinguish mainstream Muslims from extremist groups (Allen, 2016). This has significantly contributed to rising Islamophobia and an expansion of hostile attacks on Muslims in Britain and America (Sheridan, 2006). Due to these conditions, the global Muslim community feels alienated from Western societies on both spiritual and cultural levels. A developing pattern has emerged, specifically among the youth of global Muslim communities, to feel that they have little in common with non-Muslim members of their societies. Consequently, they voice opposition to Western values, favoring Sharia law by rejecting Western norms of democracy. Changes in Western foreign policy, particularly in relation to terrorism, the Iraq War, and counterterrorism measures, have fueled alienation, disorientation, and discontent among young Muslims in the West by disproportionately targeting the global Muslim community (Mirza et al., 2007). The BBC reports that there is much political and public debate on the subject and threat of "home-grown terrorism" (2006), causing anxiety among the Western community, especially the British public. Following the 7/7 London bombings, a large survey was conducted to assess British Muslim views on current terrorist activities. A minority of respondents justified those attacks, which added to rising anxiety and affected Muslim identity. This raised questions about whether British Muslims stand loyal to Britain rather than to transnational Muslim leaders and associations, and about how Muslims might be more fully integrated into British society with their political convictions (Modood & Ahmad, 2007). British society's treatment of Muslims "has discovered discrimination as the great social weapon by which one [they] may kill men

without any bloodshed" (Arendt, 1943).

Global Muslim Identity

In Europe, Muslims have been perceived primarily on the basis of their religious identity (in relation to Jihadist identity); all other identities are considered secondary or simply unimportant. Muslims and immigrants to the West are most affected by the post-terrorism global condition. Volkan illustrates this second identity, defined by identity politics and the war on terror, through the following metaphor: "in our routine lives we are not keenly aware of our shared second garment (newly defined identity), just as we are not usually aware of our constant breathing. If we develop pneumonia or if we are in a burning building, we quickly notice each breath we take. Likewise, if our huge tent's canvas shakes or parts of it are torn apart, we become obsessed with our second garment, and our individual identity becomes secondary" (2006). These narrow and negative representations of Muslims in the wider world are the result of a shaken tent that requires a "psychopolitical diagnosis of the situation." Muslim communities in Western countries experience misunderstanding based on what they look like, how they dress, where they come from, and confusion about their religion.

"Accomplished...emotionally compelling...lucid storytelling. [The author] digs into complex issues with confidence.... As this deftly constructed page-turner moves swiftly toward its inevitable conclusion, it forces questions about what sacrifice you would make for family, for love" (Bufferd, 2017).

For Volkan, identity is based upon one's relation to a group, culture, religion, and ethnic background, and their perception in the wider world. In this sense, it is not generally an autonomous element; rather, it relies upon outside forces for its existence. One's belonging to a specific religion does not only reflect recognition within that group—it also constitutes a global human identity. This demonstrates the dual significance of religious identity: religion provides one with a sense of identity and cohesion among members of a faith, yet it can likewise explain one's alienation from

a community on account of out-group discourses related to one's religion. The non-religious son of an aristocrat, Eammon, questions the hijab that Aneeka wears. "Is that a style thing or a Muslim thing?" he asks. "You know," she replies, "the only two people in Massachusetts who have ever asked me about it both wanted to know if it's a style thing or a chemo thing" (Shamsie, 2017).

Fractured Family

War unleashes too many horrors. It not only destroys dwellings but also ruptures family bonds. The most impressive aspect of Shamsie's art is that she writes with gusto. Her timely fiction evokes the sense of belonging one has to one's place. The family unit plays a vital part in one's life. Isma has left behind in London her younger siblings, Aneeka and Parvaiz, 19-year-old twins. Isma raised them after their mother's death, becoming their de facto mother. They barely knew their father—a jihadist who died after being tortured at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan. His infamy has tainted their lives in the West. Parvaiz is adrift and haunted by his father's legacy. He is recruited by ISIS and joins its media division in Syria, quickly discovering that he has made a terrible mistake. *Home Fire* is largely about Aneeka's attempts to help her twin return home. Parvez is bewildered by his own being, not knowing his father even by name. The sound enthusiast has gone astray in search of a father he never knew. Isma, in America, keeps an eye on her sister Aneeka back in London. After the interrogation scene, when Isma moves to a coffee shop, she opens her laptop to see if her sister is online. Though she monitors her siblings' Skype accounts, Aneeka replies only: "Stop worrying about me. Go live your life—I really want you to" (Shamsie, 2017). Unlike Antigone, who was the young rebel and not the dutiful older sister, Isma is much older: "She's my sister," she says of Aneeka. "Almost my child" (2017). This blurring of roles is a neat modern echo of the troubled bloodline of Antigone and Ismene, whose parents were Oedipus—also their half-brother—and Jocasta, who was both their mother and grandmother.

When Isma becomes unable to retrieve the body,

Aneeka perseveres. Her frustration boils over: "He's my twin. He's me. But you, you're not our sister anymore" (Shamsie, 2017).

Forbidden Romance

Eammon Lone is the son of a white mother and a Pakistani father, Karamat—a Muslim-raised atheist politician who has just been appointed as the United Kingdom's Home Secretary. Eammon walks outside with Aneeka and tells her she is beautiful. She is unimpressed but asks him to take her to his place anyway. Eammon is surprised to discover Aneeka praying in the morning. Aneeka tells Eammon that she and Isma are not speaking, and then asks him not to tell anyone about their encounter. She does not want her sister to learn of this affair. Eammon's father is an anti-terrorism crusader, while Aneeka's brother, Parvez, has fled home and joined an ISIS-like militant group known for their gruesome videotaped executions. This story carries no happy ending and no promise of reunion. That is why Shamsie delivers a moving meditation on grief: "grief was bad-tempered; grief was kind; grief saw nothing but itself; grief saw every speck of pain in the world; grief spread its wings large like an eagle, grief huddled small like a porcupine; grief needed company, grief craved solitude; grief wanted to remember, wanted to forget; grief raged, grief whimpered" (Shamsie, 2017).

The State vs. Individual

"The ones we love ... are enemies of the state" (Sophocles, 1999).

In *Antigone*, a tragedy by Sophocles, two brothers fight to claim the throne and kill each other in the process. By order of King Creon, one brother (Eteocles) is given an honorable burial while Polynices' body is left in the open for animals to feed upon. "No man shall bury, none should wait for him" (Sophocles, 1999). Antigone, the bold character, steps forward and saves her brother's body from being consumed by scavengers. She digs the grave against the king's orders and grants Polynices his burial rights. Her defiance is clearly expressed in her powerful speech: "He has no right to stay me" (1999). Antigone's central conflict is between herself and Creon. Creon has declared that

Polynices may not receive a proper burial because he led the forces that invaded Thebes; Antigone wishes to bury her brother nonetheless. Her sister Ismene tries hard to dissuade her, arguing that she has no power against the state and the king's declaration. But Antigone performs this difficult task fearlessly: "Well, when I find I have no power to stir, I will cease trying" (1999).

The novel oscillates between matters of the heart and of the state. The state is the initiator of injustice and xenophobia. In *Home Fire*, the British Home Secretary is the most dominant representative of this state. Karamat Lone pits himself against Aneeka Pasha in her battle to have her brother Parvez's body returned to England. Sophocles' lawmaking King Creon becomes Karamat Lone, a British Muslim Home Secretary calling on his brothers and sisters to reject what he describes as their "outdated codes of behavior" and instead embrace conformity within a "multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous United Kingdom" (Shamsie, 2017).

Lone—Today's Creon

Lone is unaware that Parvez was fleeing ISIS when he was killed, and he likely would not care; therefore, he revokes Parvez's British citizenship and sends his body to Pakistan. Aneeka struggles like Antigone. She flies to Karachi to intercept the body and stage a protest against the state on the lawn of the British Embassy. As Antigone was condemned by the king, Aneeka too becomes a victim of a terrorist bomb that was actually intended for Lone's son, Eammon. As Haemon stabs himself in *Antigone*, Karamat Lone similarly fails to save his son—a consequence of his own excessive pride. He assumes: "The dead clay makes no protest" (Sophocles, 1999). He is a narcissistic ruler unwilling to send back Parvez's body or to make a political concession to bring both the body and Aneeka back to England. The novel offers a poignant portrait of Aneeka through Isma's recollection of helping her prepare for potential interrogations by authorities: "Isma's sister, 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"

(Shamsie, 2017). Aneeka knows intellectually about the hardships faced by Muslims, but she has not yet experienced them personally. This foreshadows the terrible ordeal she will undergo after Parvez's death, when authorities refuse to allow his body to return to England.

Shamsie humanizes Lone. She writes about his "extravagant snort, which his children were always amazed he could restrain from in public life" (Shamsie, 2017). He has had to thread many needles while rising in British politics. He is mocked by some for becoming "Mr. British Values. Mr. Strong on Security. Mr. Striding Away from Muslim-ness" (Shamsie, 2017). Like Creon, he has dug his own tragic grave. The destruction to his family is brought not by others but by himself. It is too late to recognize his tragic flaw: "Of ruin unwrought by the hands of others, but fore-caused by his own self-will" (Sophocles, 1999).

This paper explains the identity politics enacted by the West against Muslims regardless of their citizenship, along with Western regression when its sense of "us" is threatened. This regression results in the death of Parvez Pasha. It also kills many others—physically and psychologically—dividing communities and families and resulting in "serious public health problems" (Volkan, 2006). This analysis suggests the urgent need for Muslim Literature as a discipline and course in literary studies departments. Such a discipline would establish both literary theory and fiction as part of its curriculum. In order to meet and counter representation and misrepresentation in narrative, it is important to have a site of representation capable of addressing the issues related to a specific group or identity. By stating the need for Muslim Literature as an established discipline, this research does not undermine the work of researchers and authors around the globe who are already working on Muslim representation, but suggests the formal institutionalization of such work—a discipline defined by the re-canonization of Muslim literature, the reevaluation of power relations and religious difference, the arrangement of conferences, and the publication of journals and books under this heading.

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