

KAMILA SHAMSIE'S *HOME FIRE*: NEO-RACISM AND THE 'HOUSE MUSLIM'



KAMILA SHAMSIE'NİN *HOME FIRE* ADLI ROMANI: NEO-IRKÇILIK VE 'EV MÜSLÜMANLARI'

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ABSTRACT: *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamsie fictionally reveals the security concerns and identity crises of British Muslims through the represented experiences of its minor and major characters from a Muslim background and literalises the process in which the 'otherised' struggle to be recognised, acknowledged and included through the reconstitution of the 'self' in relation to the discursively 'legitimate' narratives of the mainstream 'white' society. In the novel, the Muslim characters who perform the requirements of a 'proper' Muslim image are accepted into the neo-colonial centre, while those who do not fit into the 'proper' Muslim image are demonised and criminalised. Considering the conditional inclusion of the 'otherised', this article will, in this context, attempt to investigate the operation of neo-racism in postmodern capitalism and focus on the construction of acceptable otherness within the context of the discursive hegemony of orientalist epistemological formations. The article will also attempt to contribute to and develop Hamid Dabashi's concept of the 'house Muslim' in order to articulate the cultural and ideological interpellation of the Muslim colonial subject into the dominant logic of the metropolitan culture.

Keywords: *Home Fire*, The Muslim colonial subject, Neo-racism, The 'house Muslim', Interpellation.

ÖZ: Kamila Shamsie'nin *Home Fire* (2017) adlı romanı Britanyalı Müslümanların güvenlik kaygılarını ve kimlik krizlerini Müslüman kökenli minör ve majör karakterlerinin deneyimleri ve etkileşimleri aracılığıyla gözler önüne serer ve ötekileştirilenlerin ana akım 'beyaz' toplumun söylemsel anlamda meşru olan anlatıları çerçevesinde benliğini yeniden inşa ederek tanınma, onaylanma ve dâhil olma çabası içerisinde olduğu süreci kurgulaştırır. Romanda, 'düzgün' Müslüman imajının gerekliliklerini yerine getiren Müslüman karakterler neo-kolonyal merkezin bir parçası olurken, 'düzgün' Müslüman imajına uygun davranmayan Müslüman karakterler ise şeytanlaştırılır ve kriminalize edilir. Ötekileştirilenlerin şarhî dâhil edilme durumu göz önünde bulundurularak, bu çalışmada postmodern kapitalist dönemde neo-ırkçılığın işleyişi incelenecek ve oryantalist epistemolojik formasyonların söylemsel hegemonyası çerçevesinde 'kabul edilebilir ötekiliğin' inşası üzerine odaklanılacaktır. Bu çalışmada, Müslüman kolonyal öznelere metropoliten kültürün egemen mantık dizgelerine kültürel ve ideolojik olarak eklenme durumunun kavranabilmesi için, Hamid Dabashi'nin 'ev Müslümanları' kavramsallaştırmasına katkı sunularak bu kavramsallaştırmayı geliştirme de amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Home Fire*, Müslüman kolonyal öznelere, Neo-ırkçılık, 'Ev Müslümanları', Eklenme.

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Introduction

Home Fire (2017), which won the 2018 Women's Prize for Fiction and was longlisted for the 2018 Man Booker Prize, is the seventh novel by Kamila Shamsie. The novel explores the clash between family, society, politics and religion through the narration of the complicated experiences and vulnerabilities of two British families of Pakistani descent and addresses a mix of contemporary issues such as immigration, religious indoctrination, systematic marginalisation and humiliation, cultural assimilation, Islamophobia, and radicalism. The novel is divided into five chapters, each of which is connected to each other and narrated from the perspective of one major character through free indirect discourse, and, in doing so, fictionally gives insight into the security concerns and identity crises of Muslims in contemporary Britain. The novel also literalises the attempt of Muslims in Britain to maintain their traditional relations and cultural identity within the dominant society while struggling to be part of it, which actually creates ambivalence and partly leads to a sociocultural impasse for them.

Considering the argument that literary texts aesthetically manifest one dimension of material social processes shaping the lives of individuals in a definite time period and aesthetically fictionalise individual experiences within the social relations of production in relation to the totality, *Home Fire* might help articulate the operation of neo-racism in postmodern capitalism through the social, political and intellectual interactions of its Muslim characters with those in the centre. In the novel, the Muslim characters who fit into the 'proper' Muslim image are recognised and acknowledged by the mainstream 'white' society, while those who do not fit into the 'proper' Muslim image are marginalised and criminalised. Such a sort of *conditional inclusion* tacitly locates those in the centre to a superior position in terms of culture and intellectual capability. It, therefore, seems to be a manifestation of the discursive hegemony of orientalist epistemological formations because the 'real' Muslim identity is discursively formed by the neo-colonial centre, Britain, and the Muslim colonial subject are expected to internalise and perform that identity in return for acceptance and visibility. This *conditional inclusion* actually challenges the fundamental arguments of traditional racism, which is based on the superiority of one race over another, and reveals the changing dynamics of racist discourses and practices in postmodern capitalism. This study will, in this context, attempt to investigate the discursive formation of *acceptable otherness* in relation to the operation of neo-racism in the twenty-first century through a close reading of the novel, and contribute to and develop Hamid Dabashi's concept of 'the House Muslim' in order to account for the desire of the Muslim colonial subject to reconstitute and reshape their identity in accordance with the 'proper' identity ascribed by the neo-colonial centre.

Neo-Racism

In his "Message to the Grass Roots" (1963) speech delivered at the Northern Negro Grass Roots Leadership Conference in Detroit, Michigan, Malcolm X points out that there were two types of slaves: the 'house Negro' and the 'field Negro'. He describes the differences between the two and emphasises that the 'house Negro' aligned himself/herself with the master, felt more superior and privileged compared to the 'field Negro' and showed off his/her rank since s/he lived in the house of the master, got dressed in a 'proper' way, ate good food, and had relatively 'better' living conditions:

If the master's house caught on fire, the house Negro would fight harder to put the blaze out than the master would. If the master got sick, the house Negro would say, "What's the matter, boss, we sick?" ... if you came to the house Negro and said, "Let's run away, let's escape, let's separate," the house Negro would look at you and say, "Man, you crazy. What you mean, separate? Where is there a better house than this? Where can I wear better clothes than these? Where can I eat better food than this?" That was the house Negro. In those days he was called a "house nigger." And that's what we call them today, because we've still got some house niggers running around here.

Such a struggle to resemble the master might help the 'house Negro' assume that s/he will get 'whiter' and become more recognisable; however, this delusional social mobility, which makes the 'house Negro' feel impressed with his/her new status, creates an overt enmity between the 'house Negro' and the 'field Negro'. It also leads to a new form of violence in which the 'house Negro' enthusiastically directs the 'field Negro' to adopt the language, culture, and customs of the master and thus actively legitimises the physical conditions of colonisation. In other words, the 'house Negro' informs the master about the 'field Negro' and serves his/her interest in order to 'domesticate' the 'field Negro' and to make him/her more useful and functional; s/he, in return, *conditionally* gets accepted into the world of the master.

The fact that the 'house Negro' is simultaneously an insider and outsider for the master might be relevant to understand the operation of *conditional acceptance* in postmodern capitalism since the sociocultural acceptance of the colonial subject into contemporary Western societies seems to be no longer about race, ethnicity, or religion but about whether they are an 'ideal' person for the dominant society or not. Being an 'ideal' person points directly to internalising and performing the personality which is discursively formed by the neo-colonial centre as the 'proper'. This, in a way, contributes to the formation of the preferences, attitudes and perceptions of the colonial subject in a politically correct way and reveals how 'proper' behaviours and tendencies are instilled through control rather than interdiction and how the colonial subject in the neo-colonial centre are civilised and 'domesticated' for the sake of the perpetuation of the existing socioeconomic order of the 'them' world. Unlike the traditional mission civilisatrice, the postmodern version of the 'civilising mission' welcomes the

colonial subject as long as they act and think in a 'proper' way and therefore become functional for the mainstream 'white' society, which consequently secures visibility and acknowledgement for the colonial subject as in the case of the 'house Negro'.

These arguments actually deconstruct the arguments of traditional racism, which is fundamentally based on the inherent/natural superiority of one race over another in terms of values, attitudes, intellectuality and physical appearance, and its justification through different apparatuses including pseudoscientific empirical evidences and literary texts. However, this is, of course, not to suggest that there is no racism based on racial discrimination as its main driving force in contemporary Western societies; instead, this is an attempt to theoretically underline the evolution of racism which has resulted in "racism without race" (Balibar, 1991: 21). This new form of racism – neo-racism, cultural racism, or differential racism – might be said to have emerged after the era of 'decolonisation' and the subsequent migration from former colonies to colonial centres, particularly Britain and France, and to have led to insurmountable differences between the insider and the outsider. Although the dominant theme of those differences was, at first, related to racial prejudices and aversion, it has gradually taken on a new dimension within the framework of the superiority of Western culture and values, and marginalised and otherised the outsider in relation to their traditions, lifestyles, values and so on.

The fact that the term racism was negatively associated with the anti-Semitic policies of Nazi Germany after the Second World War and that civil rights movements against institutionalised racism and segregation became popular and started to mobilise the masses in the 1950s might be among the factors which forced the Western powers to *strategically* move away from the delegitimised arguments of the old form of racism. The changing nature of racism might also be articulated through the consideration of economic, political and sociocultural circumstances in major colonial and imperial centres since the Second World War. For instance, Britain granted British citizenship and rights of entry to the citizens of the Commonwealth countries after the legislation of the Nationality Act of 1948 in order to solve the labour shortage and to use the colonial subject as cheap labour force for the reconstruction of the British economy. The prediction that a radically racialized society in its homeland would prevent Britain from sustaining post-war economic growth and accumulation of capital directed it to partly soften the degree of the colonial discourse and its institutionalised arguments based on racialized superiority, to internationalise the labour market mainly through 'black' migrant labour from the West Indies and the Indian sub-continent, and to embrace the theoretical arguments of multiculturalism towards the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century. The Race Relations Acts were, in this context, enacted in order to legally address racial discrimination and to criminalise the refusal of employment, housing and services on the grounds of colour, race, ethnicity,

and nationality in 1965, 1968 and 1976 (Ramdin, 2017: 180-185). Despite not eradicating racism at the social level, this led the colonial subject to be employed in low-paid and dirty jobs, which enabled Britain to have an opportunity for the interpellation of both the colonial subject and the British working class into the dominant economic system. To comment, local workers – the majority – illusorily felt significant, powerful and lucky and perceived themselves as part of the ruling class, offering an imaginary compensation for exploitation, estrangement and dispossession in real life and preventing them from politicising and questioning poverty, instability and similar problems (Callinicos, 1993; Memmi, 2000). The colonial subject, on the other hand, became subsumed into the colonial discourse, internalised the civilizational superiority of the West and felt obliged to be grateful since Britain generously ‘allowed’ them to work and enjoy ‘equal’ citizenship, which constantly emphasised the central role of Britain as well as its benevolence, power and responsiveness in practice.

The desire to secure a sustainable economic and political system through the interpellation of the colonial subject and local workers into the dominant order of the Establishment might be suggested to have laid the basic theoretical foundations of neo-racism. This new and indirect form of racism posits that ethnicities, races and cultures are equal but different from each other, and ironically encourages the preservation of unique sociocultural and ethnic differences. This seems to promote and celebrate ethnocultural diversity in a multi-ethnic multicultural society; however, such a tactical transformation in the nature of racism actually a) proliferates binarisms, deepens cultural differences and hostilities between the insider and the outsider, makes it difficult for the ‘two’ groups to get unified against a common enemy, and therefore subordinates them into the operation of the money-oriented world; b) eschews the questions of inequality and injustice; c) commodifies and homogenises discrete cultural practices and diversities; and d) implicitly displays that minority groups have static and fixed identities and personalities (Alibhai-Brown, 2000; Bağlama, 2018; Kymlicka, 2018). Despite tacitly embracing the ‘inclusive’ arguments of multiculturalism, neo-racism also supplements the old form of racism within a different framework (Ben-eliezer, 2004: 249; Siebers and Dennissen, 2015). Unlike traditional racism based on the myth of racial superiority, exclusion and marginalisation are entwined with a set of superior social, cultural and ideological markers, and those, who resemble the insider in the neo-colonial centre, are included and welcomed, while those, who are ‘different’ and unable to adopt the social and cultural traits of the insider such as language, manners and customs, are ostracised from the mainstream ‘white’ society.

The ‘House Muslim’ in *Home Fire*

In *Brown Skin, White Masks* (2011), Hamid Dabashi draws on the arguments of Malcolm X regarding the differences between the ‘house

Negro' and the 'field Negro' and makes use of the concept of the 'house Muslim' in order to articulate the tendency of an anonymous Muslim writer to attribute the sociocultural and contemporary polyvocality of Muslims with culturally essentialist, unchanging and negative characteristics and to legitimise the existing ontological antagonisms through the sacred icons of Islam. Dabashi points out that there are two fundamental reasons for this intentional vilification process: The first is to be recognised and approved intellectually, whereas the second is to sell his books to the white audience (84-86).

Dabashi employs the concept of the 'house Muslim' in a partially different context; however, it might be functional in terms of understanding how neo-racism operates since those, who were once inferiorised and dehumanised, can be acknowledged in direct proportion to their usefulness for the neo-colonial centre. In other words, despite the fact that Islam is manipulatively identified with violence, ignorance, barbarism, and narrowmindedness and represented as a threat to the West, those Muslims, who act, speak and think in a 'proper' way, can become part of the mainstream 'white' society. Similar to the case of the 'house Negro', the house Muslim – those 'proper' Muslims – might be said to assume a sort of civilising mission and to appeal to the civilizational superiority of the West. Internalising and adopting the 'realities' of the neo-colonial centre, in return, assure acceptance and recognition as well as the systematic reproduction of the narratives of the postmodern version of the orientalist discourse.

The conditional inclusion of the 'house Muslim' reveals that the colour, faith, ethnicity or identity of an individual is not important any more as long as s/he is 'proper'. The properness in such a context actually stands for a sociocultural identity which is discursively constructed and shaped, as well as manipulated and transformed, and creates new social, cultural and political realities and practices. As in the process of the construction of national identities, the 'proper' identity for the otherised – colonial subjects, immigrants, refugees, and those who are 'different' – is identified with particular qualities and characteristics, including the manners, habits, perceptions, and moral values of the neo-colonial centre, and implicitly presented as the requirements of inclusion and integration through different control mechanisms such as education, media, and politics. Considering the argument that late modern societies are split by different types of diversities and antagonisms, the 'proper' identity might help unify various differences on the basis of the narratives of a supranational identity, remould and reconstitute different subjectivities within the framework of a supranational reality, and integrate individuals and communities into a common spatial and temporal relationship (Laclau, 1990; Wodak et al., 1999). Although the promotion of the 'proper' identity seems to respect pluralistic coexistence, personal characteristics, and sociocultural identities, it is actually homogenising since diverse identities are domesticated and civilised by the

non-coercively permeated structures of power and the 'outsider' are interpellated into the dominant logic of the neo-colonial centre.

To put it simply, being a Muslim is no longer a problem in the neo-colonial centre as long as that individual is comfortable with and performs the requirements of being a 'proper' Muslim, the boundaries of which are formed by the metropolitan culture, because the traditional form of racism based on genetic hierarchies has disguised its real nature, embraced a culture-based discourse and presented anything Western as the superior. This has subsequently led to conditional inclusion or inclusionary racism. To exemplify, a 'proper' Muslim woman can wear a hijab; however, the brand and style of her hijab¹ – an example of postmodern consumerism – or the appealingness of her personality would determine whether she would overcome her sense of otherness/alienation and ensure 'Muslim visibility'. A 'proper' Muslim man can *theoretically* have sectarian ideas; however, his manners, actions and educational background would help him find a job. A Muslim individual, of course, has the freedom of not conforming to the requirements of having the 'ideal' personality; s/he – the improper one – would then be marginalised, criminalised and excluded from the dominant society. In order not to run through such a process, the otherised tend to voluntarily 'normalise' their own sociocultural and intellectual practices in relation to the 'proper' Muslim, immigrant or refugee identity, which consolidates the ideological, intellectual and discursive hegemony of the narratives of the orientalist discourse in postmodern capitalism.

The 'house Muslim' might, in this context, be defined as useful 'Muslim' individuals who engage in an extensive delegitimation of their own values as a consequence of the internalisation of what is construed as the 'real', serve the neo-colonial centre mostly out of pure careerism and consciously or unconsciously help it smoothly exert its political, ideological and cultural domination in the neo-colonial stage of globalisation. The 'house' Muslim also idealise and imitate the assumed requirements of a collective Muslim identity, which is relatively fluid and sets itself up as the proper, and attempt to confirm their properness *performatively* in order to be the acceptable other.

In *Home Fire*, Karamat Lone, the Home secretary from a Muslim background, can be seen as the fictional embodiment and representative of the characteristics of the 'house Muslim'. His desire to prove that he is also one of 'them' helps him get to the right place and build a career on his rejection and degradation of his own faith and identity, leading to his social and cultural mobility. Karamat constantly emphasises the significance of

¹ In *Home Fire*, Aneeka, who is from a Muslim background, gets dressed in a 'proper' way, which Eamonn, the son of Karamat Lone, finds very attractive: "[B]lack knee-high boots, black leggings and long white tunic, a black bonnet cap accentuating the angles of her face, a scarf of black and white gauze wrapped loosely over it" (46).

being a 'good' Muslim citizen on different platforms and willingly specifies and re-establishes the boundaries of it on behalf of the neo-colonial centre:

There is nothing this country won't allow you to achieve – Olympic medals, captaincy of the cricket team, pop stardom, reality TV crowns. And if none of that works out, you can settle for being Home Secretary. You are, we are, British. Britain accepts this ... let me say this: don't set yourselves apart in the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behaviour you cling to, the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you will be treated differently ... because you insist on your difference from everyone else in [the] United Kingdom of ours. (87-88).²

For Karamat, the more the 'strange' normalise their actions, manners and ideas, the better they will be treated in the dominant society. Such a conditional acceptance might be functional to articulate the sociocultural and political tendencies of Karamat whose self-worth and political existence predominantly depend on the acknowledgement of the 'white' mainstream society. To exemplify, Karamat thinks about persuading Aneeka, his son's girlfriend who is also from a Muslim background, not to wear a hijab (107), makes fun of her because she does not drink, and stereotypically assumes that she is probably a virgin (234). He also expresses a preference for the conventions of a church over those of a mosque and underlines the need for British Muslims to get out of the Dark Ages in order to be treated with respect (59). On another occasion, he is accused of entering a mosque which has been on news for its hate preacher; however, rather than undermining the association of Islam with terrorism, he, as the Home Secretary, simply states that he has been there only for his uncle's funeral and would never enter a gender-segregated space, which is followed by pictures of him and his wife walking hand in hand into a church (35). He is, for that reason, referred to as "Mr. British Values", "Mr. Strong on Security", "Mr. Striding Away from Muslimness" (52)³.

The direct proportional relationship between Karamat's personal attempt to 'civilise' the beliefs and practices of Islam and the consequent inclusion and visibility fictionally manifests that the attitude towards the otherised has shifted to a new phase, that racial origin is no more in the foreground since it now intersects with the axes of different social categories

² Karamat's speech reminds me of the arguments of Musa Okwonga, a poet and journalist, shared by Nikesh Shukla in *The Good Immigrant* (2016): "[T]he biggest burden facing people of colour in this country is that society deems us bad immigrants – until we cross over in their consciousness, through popular culture, winning races, baking good cakes, being conscientious doctors, and to become good immigrants" (2).

³ Karamat Lone has a son, Eamonn. Although his real name is Ayman, a Muslim name, his parents have disguised it with an Irish spelling in order to show that they have completely integrated. Before encountering Aneeka and starting an emotion relationship with her, Eamonn, like his father, looks down on Muslims and makes fun of those women who wear a hijab. For instance, in a conversation with Isma, Eamonn asks whether the turban Isma wears is a style thing or a Muslim thing and states that he is unable to decide whether Islam or cancer is the greater affliction (21).

and hierarchies including class, gender, and ethnicity, and that the otherised struggle to “come into representation” through imageries constructed as positive within the discursive space of “white aesthetic and cultural discourses” (Hall, 1996: 442). Differences based on ethnicity, race, religion, culture and so on are, therefore, tolerated as long as they are properly domesticated – an example of neo-racism. This results in a situation in which the otherised distance themselves from the stereotypical and undesirable aspects of their own communities, promote the behavioural decorum and moral values of the neo-colonial centre in order not to be disrespected and police their fellow group members (Harris, 2003).

Some incidents in the novel justify these arguments of the politics of respectability because the major Muslim characters, except for the jihadi ones, Adil Pasha and Parvaiz Pasha, tend to reclassify their identities and present the positive Muslim-led and Muslim-owned representation of Muslimism, which is of course an example of mimicry. To give an example, in one episode, Adil Pasha, the jihadi father of Parvaiz, Aneeka and Isma, is captured and imprisoned in Bagram, Afghanistan and dies when he is put on a plane for transport to Guantanamo. The family of Adil Pasha would like to know where his dead body is; however, the local Muslim community, including the Imam and the local MP, Karamat Lone, discourages them from demanding any information in order not to be stigmatised by the authorities. The family members, then, do so because they assume that they would be harassed by the Special Branch and that the British government would withdraw all the benefits of the welfare state if they are suspected of siding with the terrorists (49). In another episode, Isma reports Parvaiz, her brother who follows his father’s footsteps and joins a terrorist organisation in Syria, to the police in order to cooperate and show loyalty (42). After Parvaiz is killed in İstanbul, Isma gives an interview and underlines that her brother has joined people whom “we” regard as the enemies of Britain (197). In a similar way, the local mosque issues a statement to clarify that it does not intend to hold funeral prayers for the dead person and condemns the campaign against law-abiding British Muslims (197).

The categorisation of Karamat as a ‘house Muslim’ should not mean that the real Muslim identity⁴ is represented by Parvaiz since the journey of Parvaiz from London to Syria is motivated not by the core beliefs and practices of Islam but by his directionless anger and personal and instinctual impulses. In the novel, Parvaiz is unable to actualise himself in the neo-colonial centre economically and culturally, and this leads to his state of powerlessness, meaninglessness, unbelongingness and ostracization: “How

⁴ *Home Fire* wittily literalises the fact that anything positive concerning Muslims in the UK is associated with Britishness by the media while anything negative is rhetorically made ‘unBritish’ and associated with the roots of the victimiser in order to interpose a symbolic distance between terrorism and Britishness: “Even when the word “British” was used it was always ‘British of Pakistani descent’ or ‘British Muslim’ or, my favourite, ‘British passport-holders’” (38).

he hated his life, this neighbourhood, the inevitability of everything” (123). In order to overcome this process of double alienation, which he undergoes both as part of the working class and as the Muslim colonial subject, he unknowingly attempts to exert his existential being by means of escape mechanisms and to justify and sustain his political existence. He, for example, listens to the heroic stories of his father, Adil Pasha, whom Farooq – a jihadi recruiter – describes as a “man of courage” fighting injustice, seeing beyond the lie of national boundaries and keeping his comrades’ spirits up (128), and identifies himself with him. He is also constantly reminded of the torture of his father in prison jumpsuit, which leads him to think about the falseness of his life and to become more radicalised. After joining the Islamic State, he feels more masculine, manly and proud:

He strode onward to the SUV. Once inside he rolled up the windows, which he’d left open knowing that no one would dare touch what belonged to a man like him. These were the kinds of things he’d learnt to take for granted, the small privileges he enjoyed. (174)

Parvaiz tendency to get rid of the perceived unpleasantness of his life by means of group identification formed through the sacred symbols of a common identity and religion – an escape mechanism – does not, however, help him nullify inferiority, demonization, invisibility or double alienation and results in a vicious circle which perpetually reproduces his own victimisation.

Although the case of Parvaiz cannot, of course, legitimise terrorism and the arguments of a terrorist organisation, it might make it clear that the question of the Muslim colonial subject cannot be articulated without the consideration of class relations because both Karamat’s sociocultural mobility and Parvaiz’s participation in the Islamic State are, in the final analysis, related to high levels of inequality of opportunity caused by the deep sources of economic and social disparities. Karamat has been able to move forward, climb the social ladder and have a life similar to that of his affluent relatives, whom he has aspired to, through education (60), which has helped him construct a ‘proper’ personality and resulted in his conditional inclusion. Parvaiz, on the other hand, has been unable to earn enough as a greengrocer’s assistant and to get respect even from his sisters (119), which has led him to compensate for his emasculation and uselessness through jihadi narratives and a particular jihadi identity. The examples of Karamat and Parvaiz, therefore, stand for the fact that the acceptability of the otherised depends on their relationship with those in the neo-colonial centre, that inclusion is positional and conjunctural, and that racism is no longer about the perceived biological differences but primarily pertains to antagonisms on the basis of cultural characteristics.

Conclusion

The dichotomous representation of Muslims in *Home Fire* might seem to consolidate the narratives of the monologic discourse of orientalism

because the mainstream 'white' audience reading the novel would probably assume that there are only two options for Muslims: to be a 'civilised' Muslim and to become part of the centre *or* to be a fundamentalist or a terrorist and to die in a remote part of the world. However, through its minor and major characters from a Muslim background, the novel actually reveals that there is not a single Muslim identity, that Muslims should be seen as individuals with different social and cultural tendencies rather than as the metonymical representative of a certain religious group, and that the actions of individuals from a Muslim background should be contextualised through the consideration of social, historical, economic and cultural circumstances. The novel also literalises the process in which the otherised ensure acceptability, tolerance and visibility through the voluntary reconstitution of the 'self' in relation to the discursively legitimate narratives of the neo-colonial centre.

It is no wonder that the formation of an 'authentic' national identity is usually based on a socially cohesive culture and that the inclusion/belonging/citizenship of the 'outsider' is a consequence of the ability to adopt the normative notions and values of sovereignty in a certain country. Britain is, of course, not an exception, and the 'outsider' are expected to assimilate into an existing 'superior' national framework consisting of social, cultural and ideological narratives which *epistemologically* debase the experiences, positions and identities of the 'outsider'. The 'new' personality of Karamat, in this context, manifests the indirect reproduction of the coloniality of power through the 'house Muslim' and helps articulate the operation of neo-racism – inclusionary racism – in the twenty-first century which embraces a politically correct discourse and promotes the pre-eminence of Europe and *anything* European. As in the case of Karamat, this exemplifies a postmodern revamp of Orientalism and a newer form of colonisation and domination since the colonial Muslim subject become subsumed into the colonial discourse in which Europe is presented as benevolent, responsive, powerful and generous.

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