



Keep the Home Fires Burning: Citizenship, Affect and Acting Muslim in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017)

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Received: 31-8-2023 Revised: 3-10-2023 Accepted: 19-2-2024
Published: 29-1-2024

DOI: 10.21608/jssa.2024.233273.1542

Volume 25 Issue 1 (2024) Pp.69-95

Abstract

This study investigates the representation of the growth and influence of an affective notion of citizenship in Anglophone fiction, with a critical focus on Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* (2017). Informed by post 9/11 Orientalist and Islamophobic notions of Islam, citizenship is perceived as an affective practice which relies on the intersection of anti-Muslim cultural economies and forms of acting Islam. Following an interdisciplinary approach, the study relies primarily on Sara Ahmed's affect theory (2004, 2014) and Khaled Beydoun's notion of 'Acting Muslim' (2018, 2023). It seeks to provide an in-depth analysis of the relationship between anti-Muslim emotions and forms of acting Muslim in Shamsie's novel and the influence of this affinity on the citizenship status of the Muslims living in post 9/11 British affective culture. Employing Ahmed's concept of 'affective economies', it investigates how emotions of hate and suspicion get stuck to Muslim bodies in a way that vilifies their capacities of acting their Muslim identities, revoke their citizenship and push some of them to radicalization. The study ultimately concludes that in the post 9/11 world represented by Shamsie, emotions are crucial not only in understanding how Muslim citizens and immigrants are profiled as objects of hate and suspicion, but also in revealing the ways through which the cultural politics of citizenship, affect and acting Muslim intersect.

Keywords citizenship, affect, acting Muslim, Shamsie, Sara Ahmed, Khaled Beydoun

1. Introduction: New Crusades. New Methodology

“All the children of the Republic have a right to justice,” the French Socialist Party leader told the BBC after the incident of shooting the 17-year-old boy of Algerian descent, Nahel Marzouk, on 27 June 2023 by the French police (Kirby, 2023). Commenting on her only son’s murder, Nahel’s mother also told France 5 TV that the police officer who fired him “saw an Arab face, a little kid, and wanted to take his life” (Kirby, 2023). As is evident, the incident of shooting Nahel reflects the critical insight that feelings of hate and suspicion are always stuck to Muslim citizens and immigrants. It also represents the depressing realities of citizenship and belonging in the present era in which violence against Muslim immigrants has been just as constant as it was in the instant wake of 9/11. Of course, the murder of Nahel is “inexplicable and inexcusable,” as the French President Emmanuel Macron came out quickly to declare in order to appease the anger of the public (Kirby, 2023). Yet, the bitter truth remains: the feelings of fear and suspicion of the Muslims living in western democracies are rising at a new frightening pace. In response to these new crusades of Islamophobia, new forms of expressing Muslim identity emerge. These modes of acting Muslim, consequently, problematize the perception of the concepts of citizenship and belonging in post 9/11 Anglophone literature.

The complexity of citizenship in the post 9/11 world emerge from a narrow perception of the concept as the individual’s legal status linked to particular rights and obligations within and towards the state (Sarkowsky, 2022, p. 29). The narrow perception of citizenship as the individual’s legal status neglects the concept’s cultural political manifestations, particularly in today’s highly-connected and multi-centered world, where the legal, political, social and cultural facets of the concept have become more intrinsically interlinked. Although this multifarious insight of the concept has been of special interest for Anglophone literature since 9/11, citizenship is mostly perceived as a metaphor of belonging: “Even more strongly than in political debates, the different facets of membership, belonging, and practice tend to overlap in literary negotiations of citizenship, particularly when they pertain to the often-precarious situation of minority groups” (p. 30). As Sarkowsky further notes, literary discussions of citizenship are more thorough and comprehensive than its legal considerations as while in the legal framework the two basic components of

citizenship - belonging and membership - are detached as separate ideas, literary texts:

tend to present the questions of membership and belonging that citizenship poses as entangled and intersectional issues and hence complicate the seeming detachment of citizenship's legal framework; they pose interventions not only on the level of content but also on the level of form, making the concepts culturally iterable in ways legal and political concepts of citizenship cannot and are not meant to do. (p. 30)

Although the literary discussions of citizenship provide a more elaborate approach to the concept than the legal ones, the literary tendency of conflating citizenship with belonging still overlooks the cultural political framework in which it operates in the post 9/11 world. Therefore, this study adds value to the literature examining the crisis of citizenship and belonging by filling the gap within the body of research exploring the dialectic between affect, identity and politics in post 9/11 Anglophone literature. Proliferated after 9/11, almost the whole of this work has addressed the issue of citizenship as a legal status complicated in response to counterterror policies or a metaphor of belonging. It focuses on the other side of the argument, investigating the cultural politics of citizenship both as an affective practice and identity performance strategy. In that sense, the ramification of the literary and legal perspectives of citizenship into one melting pot can be a productive starting point that opens up avenues to think about the questions and crises of belonging and citizenship that are almost absent in recent post 9/11 Anglophone literature and criticism: what does citizenship mean, especially for Muslim citizens and immigrants? Should it be conditional or unconditional? Is it a right or privilege? In what way does it relate to affective practice and acting Muslim?

1.1. Acting Muslim and Citizenship

In his examination of what he calls the 'new crusades' of Islamophobia, the American law scholar Khaled Beydoun (2023) notes a close connection between citizenship and forms of 'Acting Muslim'. The new crusades that Beydoun studies refer to the awake of an age of extreme state and popular hate and suspicion of Muslim citizens and immigrants living under a world-wide War on Terror culture since 9/11. The upsurge of the new crusades has resurrected an Islamophobic culture

that validates the assumption that Islam is associated with terrorism and acting Muslim is a deviant performance of identity. Therefore, he (2018a) used the term 'Acting Muslim' to refer to the process through which Muslims choose to embody, or perform, their religious identity in post 9/11 Islamophobic cultures and contexts (p. 9). Often perceived as a strategy of appearing less susceptible to the suspicion of the state and the fear of the public, it designates the ways through which Muslim citizens and immigrants negotiate their religious identity as a result of their everyday experiences of hate and enmity.

Moreover, Beydoun (2018a) identifies four forms of the process of acting Muslim. The first form is "Confirming Islam" which is a strategy of affirming one's Muslim identity and traits through outward expressions, such as wearing hijab or having a beard, despite the risk of being exposed to state suspicion and public hate (p. 45). Second, there is "Conforming Islam" which is a reconciliatory practice that integrates Muslim identity markers with those that are acknowledged or endorsed by the dominant affective culture with the purpose of mitigating a stereotyped Muslim trait or expression in order to eliminate state suspicion and gain personal benefits (p. 50). The third form of acting Muslim is "Covering Islam" which is a performance that partially downplays or hides a stigmatized Muslim identity trait or feature. Examples of covering Islam include a Muslim man cutting his beard before taking a flight or a Muslim woman avoiding wearing hijab for fear of being framed as a radical or extremist (p. 55). Lastly, the most extreme form of acting Muslim, "Concealing Islam" (p. 59), refers to the tactic of entirely hiding one's Muslim identity or pretending of being a non-Muslim at all in specific situations or publically at large.

What is especially interesting about Beydoun's analysis of the forms of acting Muslim, in their various modes and expressions, is their intersection with the emotions of hate and suspicion developed toward Muslims citizens and immigrants. Social actors that insist on confirming their Muslim identity are more vulnerable to state suspicion and public hate which intensifies the likelihood of their citizenship being denied and human rights violated. Conversely, actors that choose to negotiate their Muslim identity – either by conforming, covering, or concealing it – may experience a less degree of human rights violations for surrendering their preferred

modes of identity performance to avoid state suspicion and public hatred. Therefore, the argument developed here is not concerned mainly with the question of what types of emotions 'are' developed against Muslim immigrants in the post 9/11 British culture represented by Shamsie in *Home Fire* because the answer, in most cases, is clear: hate, disdain and suspicion. But the problem is what can these emotions 'do' especially in the sociopolitical domain? That is, how can these emotions shape and frame the cultural politics that affect the status of Muslims as British citizens and how does this frame influence their strategies of negotiating identity? Thus, the following section investigates Sara Ahmed's contribution to affect theory as a new methodology of investigating the cultural politics of emotions that affect the dialectic citizenship, affect and acting Muslim.

1.2. Affect: Understanding the Rise of Hate

In *The Cultural Politics of Emotions*, Sara Ahmed (2014) rejects the inside-outside model of emotional discharge and instead stresses the sociality of emotions. For her, emotions saturate the sociopolitical fabric of society and, through circulation, gain value and power over the individual and the political. Affect, which she defines as a synonym of emotion (p. 10), is not a personal property or an intrinsic trait that begins and ends with the individual. Rather, the individual's identity "becomes implicated in the circulation of affect" (Marinelli, 2019, p. 23). In that sense, the circulation of an affect shapes the individual's potential to act and being acted upon within a particular discourse. Thus, emotions are not to be understood simply as what one feels but as the modes through which "we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made: the 'I' and the 'we' are shaped by, and even take the shape of, contact with others" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 10). Rather than being perceived as personal experiences, emotions are the first point of contact that creates "the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place" (p. 10). The value of Ahmed's approach to affect lies in its ability to situate "emotion in our everyday lives and consider the way in which affect works to inform and inspire action" (Gorton, 2007, p. 345). Turning away from the mainstream academic emphasis on discussing what emotions 'are', Ahmed's work focuses more on what emotions can 'do' or, more precisely, the ways through which emotions can shape the cultural politics of identity and difference.

In that sense, emotions do not have a static value. They rather acquire value and power through circulation, like capital. Relying on Marx's concept of capital, Ahmed (2004) argues that emotions, like capital, gain value within society through movement between social bodies and actors, leading some bodies to stick together and slide off others: "emotions work as a form of capital: affect does not reside positively in the sign or commodity, but is produced as an effect of its circulation" (p. 118). More importantly, the value and authority of emotions grow over time through circulation: "The more they are circulated, the more affective value they can (potentially) accumulate" (Johanssen, 2019, p. 139). This affective power of emotions creates what Ahmed (2014) has called "affective economies" which, according to the value they acquire through circulation, assign social roles and mediate power relations between the individual and the political:

In such affective economies, emotions do things, and they align individuals with communities—or bodily space with social space—through the very intensity of their attachments. Rather than seeing emotions as psychological dispositions, we need to consider how they work, in concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective. (p. 119)

In addition to providing ways of feeling out the world, affective economies are responsible for shaping the atmosphere, moods, impressions and feelings developed and felt within a particular cultural space. They demarcate social boundaries and power relations between different social groups involved within these spaces, and in so doing, ultimately determine how each group feels towards themselves and others. In that sense, affects have a life of their own "shaped by histories, including histories of production (labor and labor time), as well as circulation or exchange" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 121). These affects, which are saturated with histories, values and ideas, manifest as impressions and feelings towards those who are perceived as different:

To be affected by something, such that we move toward or away from that thing, is an orientation toward something ... It is in the intensity of bodily responses to worlds that we make judgements about worlds; and

those judgements are directive even if they do not follow narrative rules of sequence, or cause and effect. Those judgements are enacted: they do not lead to actions; they are actions. For instance, to feel hate towards another (to be affected by that other with hate such that the other is given the quality of being hateful) is to be moved in such a way that one moves away from that other, establishing corporeal distance ... This is what I mean when I describe emotions as doing things. Emotions involve different movements towards and away from others, such that they shape the contours of social as well as bodily space. (p. 208)

What particularly renders Ahmed's theory of affective economies a productive starting point for studying the issues of citizenship and belonging is its stress on the cultural politics of emotions. For Ahmed, one's belonging to or exclusion from a social group is a cultural affect—that is, when an object saturated with specific affects and signifying messages penetrate public space, the affective culture assimilates these effects of the object and its signifying message. Through the assimilation of these cultural economies and their signification, the affective culture negotiates the subject's position within society. For example, as will be discussed later in the analysis of *Home Fire*, negating or confirming the citizenship and belonging of British Muslims is the cultural affect of the circulation of anti-Muslim rhetoric, its signification, stickiness and engagement with other objects. These cultural affects, then, frame Muslim citizens and immigrants as the nation's "others" by inclusion (as citizens) and exclusion (as foreigners). Thus, because "we truly encounter the political only when we *feel*," as Staiger et al. (2010, p. 4) argue, affects are crucial in understanding how the political is mobilized and performed through emotions, especially in the post 9/11 contexts.

Therefore, Ahmed's approach to affect theory is helpful in examining the dialectic of citizenship as an affective practice and identity performance. The question then is: What are the anti-Muslim affective economies that still shape the social, political and cultural contours of the post 9/11 world today? Why are Muslim immigrants still seen as objects of hate and sources of suspicion? And why do such affective economies still have their value and currency in such a multicultural post 9/11 world? Thinking through Beydoun's concept of Acting Muslim and Ahmed's

affective economies, it will be argued then that the post 9/11 British affective culture is forged over time by the integration of Orientalist ideologies and the circulation of Islamophobic economies that shape both the nation's domestic mechanisms of control and the public's attitude towards British Muslims which principally affect the capacity of Muslim immigrants to act as British citizens.

2. Home Fire and the Cultural Politics of Citizenship

Home Fire cogently investigates one of the most critical issues that is central to recent citizenship debates, i.e., the discrepancy between one's feeling of belonging and the cultural politics of belonging. This inconsistency is a cultural effect of the configuration of citizenship as an affective practice mediated by the cultural politics of emotions at play within a particular context. As Yuval-Davis et al. (2018) helpfully illustrate, there is a distinction between belonging as a feeling of attachment and belonging as an affective practice:

Belonging relates to emotional (or even ontological) attachment, about *feeling* 'at home'. [. . .] Belonging tends to be naturalised and to be part of everyday practices. It becomes articulated, formally structured and politicised only when it is perceived to be threatened. The politics of belonging comprises specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivity/ies, which are themselves being assembled in these projects, within specified boundaries. (*emphasis added*, p. 230)

Home Fire creatively explores this conflict between belonging as a personal feeling and belonging as an affective practice in post 9/11 Britain where British Muslims' citizenship is often negated and suspected. Citizenship is understood in the context of affective cultures as the disputed and precarious interaction between feeling oneself to be a member of a community and the response of the community to this feeling—that is, the intersection between citizenship as an affective practice (i.e. shaped by emotions) and identity performance (i.e. mediated through forms of acting identity). The tension that arises between citizenship as an affective practice and as an identity performance drives the dynamics of the novel and sheds light on the discrepancy between the Muslim characters' feelings of belonging and the cultural politics of belonging that renders their feelings precarious. It does so through

a critical representation of Sophocles' *Antigone* in post 9/11 Britain where Aneeka (Antigone) insists on burying her brother Parvaiz (Polynices), who has left his home country of Britain (Thebes) to join ISIS, on a British soil. By reimagining Sophocles' much adapted-motif, *Home Fire* investigates the crisis of conflictual affiliations – or affiliations that the state perceives to be a threat on the basis of fear and suspicion. It grounds *Antigone*'s themes of belonging and citizenship in contemporary Britain in order to illuminate not only the crisis of citizenship for Muslim citizens but also to scrutinize the counterterror policies adopted by the state to combat it.

Shamsie uses Sophocles' play as a narrative medium to explore the contemporary affective crisis of Muslim immigrants in post 9/11 Britain through the representation of two British families of Muslim-Pakistani lineage. The first family is the Pasha family whose members—Isma, Aneeka and Parvaiz—suffer from a citizenship crisis due to their Muslim origins and their father's heritage as a jihadist. Although their legal citizenship status is never contested, the Pasha family is embroiled in a constant struggle throughout the novel to assert their belonging to the nation. Second, there is Karamat Lone's family, the new British Home Secretary, whose affective conformity and repulsion of his mother community render him and his son Emmon a more privileged position within this affective culture. At the center of the narrative is Parvaiz Pasha, a young Muslim man, who out of despair decides to join the media wing of ISIS. Yet, he realizes towards the end of the narrative that he has been disillusioned by the Islamic state's promises of freedom and equality. He then decides to return home but his proposal is denied by the British government and is shot when he attempts to surrender at the British embassy in Istanbul. Parvaiz is officially stripped of his citizenship and the government, represented in the novel by the Home Secretary Karamat Lone, refuses to allow his body to be buried on the British soil. However, his twin sister, Aneeka, insists on bringing him home to be buried, in a futile attempt to defy the commands that deny her brother citizenship in its legal and metaphorical senses.

The crucial issue raised by Shamsie in *Home Fire* is the perception of citizenship as an affective practice—that is, the manifestation of an individual's citizenship as not a human right but as a set of imposed cultural values and affects. It does so by raising the question of what forms of acting Muslim does the affective

practice of citizenship legitimize, disturb and reinforce? Who is emotionally privileged in the text, who is emotionally marginalized? On what basis are the Muslim characters considered British citizens and who are not? Therefore, following an interdisciplinary approach that is based on Ahmed's approach to affect and Beydoun's theory of Acting Muslim, the following section attempts to provide an answer to these questions by analyzing Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*, a novel that creatively investigates citizenship's intricate engagement with current anti-Muslim affective economies.

3. Affective Economies and The Britishness Test

The society represented by Shamsie in *Home Fire* is framed by two ideological systems that serve as the bedrock of its cultural politics and overlap together to legitimize the prevailing anti-Muslim affective economies: Orientalism and Islamophobia. Orientalism, as Edward Said (1979) famously argued, is a system of thought that sets the East and the West as two irreconcilable opposites. It configures the ideological misrepresentation and stereotyping of the whole Islamic population of 2.0 billion followers, in spite of its diversity, as the West's Other (Lipka, 2017). Despite its centuries-long history, orientalism today is redeployed by post 9/11 counterterror policies and strategies and converges with contemporary distortions of Islam and Muslims generated by its descendant system, Islamophobia. Based on the assumption that Islam is an inherently violent religion, Islamophobia, which has gained significant popularity after 9/11, links fear of terrorism with Muslim identity. According to Beydoun (2018b), it is one of the major reasons of intensifying feelings of fear and hostility against Islam and Muslim immigrants in the West today. Islamophobia takes many forms, most notably are the counterterror strategies implemented by the state, which "legitimize prevailing misconceptions, misrepresentations, and stereotypes of Islam" (p. 40). This section examines how these cultural economies of Orientalism and Islamophobia – which are institutionalized and enforced at all levels: legal, political and cultural – constitute the contours of an affective culture that systematically profiles British Muslim characters as foreigners, subversives, and terrorists, and consequently, worthy of hate and suspicion.

One of the most affective cultural economies that drive the process of acting Muslim in *Home Fire* is the framing of Muslim characters as foreigners. The Orientalist enmity and the Islamophobic fear that have gained high significance after 9/11 continue to position Islam as the antithesis of the West, legitimizing the accompanying stereotype of the Muslim as the perpetual outsider (Beydoun, 2018a, p. 20). Since Islam is characterized as a foreign faith, Muslims are thus seen as a hostile class to be expelled out of the nation. At the very beginning of the novel, this affective economy of foreignness is incarnated in a 'Britishness test' through which Isma's citizenship and belonging are assessed and evaluated by the security officers at Heathrow Airport:

"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.

The interrogation continued for nearly two hours. He wanted to know her thoughts on Shias, Homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, the Great British Bake off, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, Suicide Bombers, dating websites. (Shamsie, 2017, p. 5)

The test of Isma's belonging and loyalty highlights the discrepancy between citizenship as a legal status and as an affective economy. It suggests that Isma's citizenship is not established by a British passport but that it requires a specific form of acting identity as further proof: "Isma's legal status (her nationality, documented by her passport) is – at this early point in the novel at least – undisputed, but 'belonging' is" (Sarkowsky, 2022, p. 35). The framing of Isma as a foreigner, despite her undisputed legal Britishness, can be interpreted as a cultural affect of the politics of un/belonging in post 9/11 Britain where expressions of Muslim identity are not only presumptive of difference, but also considered to be in blatant enmity with British identity. Even before communicating with the interrogators, Isma is placed as an object of hate and suspicion. Thus, she is not imagined to be part of the British

polity, but an outsider who subscribes to a foreign faith. It implicitly indicates that acting Muslim disqualifies one from being British, and the stereotypical representation of Britishness preempts devotion to Islam.

In the same vein, the permanent foreignness that gets stuck to Muslim identity generates the view that Muslim citizens are potentially seen as subversives. The cultural economy of subversion is based on the assumption that if Islam is profiled as an opponent faith, and Muslims are believed to be alien and inassimilable, then Muslims who are committed to Islam are thought of as being probably plotting against the well-being of the nation (Beydoun, 2018a, p. 23). The circulation of this cultural economy intensifies the assumption that according to their faith, Muslim immigrants prioritize their commitment to Islam over their country. Isma's interrogation at the Airport provides an illustrative example of this stereotypical profiling of Muslim citizens as subversives. Although Isma is a bona fide citizen, her religious identity induces suspicion of her citizenship and belonging. As a result of being identified as foreigner and subversive, Isma's affective capacity is restricted within cultural space. As Ahmed (2006) argues, bodies that are welcomed in public spaces are "extended" because they can move freely, without suspicion or challenge to their identities. On the other hand, "For bodies that are not extended by the skin of the social, bodily movement is not so easy. Such bodies are stopped, where the stopping is an action that creates its own impress. Who are you? Why are you here? What are you doing?" (p. 139). Questioning the belonging of Muslim immigrants and suspecting their loyalty are the logical and horrifying developments of the anti-Muslim rhetoric that Moustafa Bayoumi (2015) identifies as a characteristic feature of the "War on Terror culture":

War on Terror culture has meant that we [Muslims] are now regularly seen as dangerous outsiders, that our daily actions are constantly viewed with suspicion, that our complex histories in this country are neglected or occluded, and that our very presence and our houses of worship have become issues of local, regional, and national politics. (p. 254)

The threat that looms from Isma and her siblings as foreigners and subversives is augmented by their positioning as potential terrorists. According to Beydoun

(2018b), terrorism has become the most effective impetus of social fear and suspicion of Muslim immigrants after 9/11 because, being institutionalized by the state, it invokes the prejudice and hostility of the public that convene with the permanent inspection of the state. Though the cultural economy of terrorism was proliferating before, its value has notably boomed since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent counterterror policies, framing Muslims as a perpetual threat to the state and its people. The wide circulation of the terrorist stereotype makes an unresolvable divide between Muslim and British, where a 'British Muslim' becomes a contradictory or impossible identity. In that sense, the cultural economy of terrorism places Isma in the most perilous position within such affective culture with her citizenship is always at risk of being undone. As her detention at the Airport reveals, she is perpetually suspected of being conspiring against the U.K. and its people.

In addition to the role it plays in framing her as a foreigner, subversive and terrorist, the "Britishness test" is significant in revealing the feelings of hate and suspicion not only against Isma but her wider identity group: British Muslims. According to Ahmed (2014), "hate cannot be found in one figure, but works to create the outline of different figures or objects of hate" (p. 440). Isma's detention does not frame her alone as an outsider, but sends a message to all those who share her identity group characteristics. The movement of hate, through circulation and stickiness, serves to solidify Isma and her wider identity group as a collective 'them,' predicated upon their 'unlikeness' from 'us' (p. 440). In this way, while this specific incident may seem to target Isma directly, its cultural affect works to marginalize her group as a collective other.

This affective culture of hatred and suspicion has a direct influence on Isma's potential for acting identity. Being aware that she is stereotyped, she is keen throughout the novel to cover her Islam—an identity performance which Beydoun (2018a) identifies as a strategy whereby a Muslim immigrant "voluntarily tones down or hides a disfavored Muslim identity trait in order to mitigate or eliminate the stigma associated with that specific mode of expression" (p. 55). She, therefore, avoids carrying objects that may alert the authorities at the Airport, "she made sure not to pack anything that would invite comment or question – no Quran, no family

pictures, no books on her areas of academic interest” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 3). By covering her Islam, Isma attempts to comfort the suspicion of the state authorities and allay the anxieties of the public who ascribe suspicion of terrorism to Islam and its followers. However, her tactic does not work, as Bordas (2019) argues: “she has no records (outside her father) that should flag her for an extra selective search; instead, her appearance, versus suspicious behaviour, subjects her to biased screening. She is categorized by a system outside her control” (p. 127). Thus, Isma’s interrogation reinforces the conditionality of citizenship ascribed by the Britishness test: performance of Britishness requires downplaying Muslim identity.

In spite of that conditionality, Isma still hopes for secure attachment relations to the nation. She realizes the only way to keep the home fires burning is to cover her Islam and display her patriotism. Thus, she reports her brother Parvaiz when he leaves to Syria to join ISIS in order to shun any further doubts or inspection. Confronting her sister’s indignation, she maintains that “we are in no position to let the state question our loyalties. Don’t you understand that? If you co-operate, it makes a difference. I was not going to let him make you suffer for the choices he’d made” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 42). Isma is fully aware that she and her sister can be suspected of being accomplice with Parvaiz, which summons further surveillance and control by the authorities, that which they already endure due to the burden that their father has left as a former jihadi and an enemy of the state.

However, it is worth arguing that Isma’s choice of covering her Islam cannot be ascribed only to her family’s burden but is also motivated by an affective culture of hate that invokes general and far-reaching suspicion towards those who are perceived as cultural aliens. Whether she covers her Islam or confirms it, Isma is positioned as an ‘accidental’ citizen, one whose “participation in and belonging to the political community remains debatable” as opposed to “the ‘essential’ citizens whose membership is never called into question” (Fargues and Winter, 2019, p. 301). Although she attempts throughout the novel to be ‘a good citizen’ by forsaking her citizenship rights and covering her Islam she remains profiled as foreigner and subversive. This fact is confirmed by the interrogators at the Airport who adjudicate her on the basis of the ‘scars’ that get stuck to her: her family history, her hijab, her religion, her passport, etc. Ahmed’s approach to affect is thus helpful in revealing

how the emotions of hate and suspicion drive Isma to cover her Muslim identity. While the cultural politics of these emotions force Isma to partially cover her Islam, it nudges Karamat to entirely conceal it.

4. Super-Citizens and Affect Aliens

In spite of being of Pakistani origins like the Pasha family, Karamat Lone's affective capacity operates differently than the other Muslim characters of the novel. Karamat's political position and societal status indicates that his citizenship is undisputed. His uncontested citizenship draws attention to the question of why does he, despite sharing the same origins and background of the Pasha family, succeed in gaining recognition in the same affective culture which used to frame them as foreigners, subversive and potential terrorists? In other words, why do not the cultural economies of hate and suspicion get stuck to him? Shamsie's contrasting characterization of Karamat as a British citizen of Islamic origins who succeeds in making his way through such an affective culture sheds light on the contradictions inherent within the cultural politics of citizenship and difference in post 9/11 Britain.

Karamat's way of confirming his citizenship and winning recognition is to conceal his Muslim identity and to show emotional conformity to the dominant culture's values, norms, and perceptions. Unlike the other Muslim characters of the novel, he decides to completely conceal his Islam and presents instead "a façade of atheism to the public" (Sarkowsky, 2022, p. 37). Being known as 'Mr. British values,' 'Mr. Strong on Security,' and 'Mr. Striding Away from Muslimness' (Shamsie, 2017, p. 52), he believes that the obstacle that hinders the integration of Muslims in the British society is the Islamic principles and traditions *per se* which he views as backward and outdated (p. 59). Thus, he follows every possible means to identify himself "as more British than Muslim" (Pishotti, 2022, p. 352) – more similar than different. As Aneeka remarks, Karamat throughout the novel attempts to prove that he's one of them...not one of us" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 35). For example, he insists on getting married to an Irish girl of a pure British lineage to confirm his assimilation and changes his son's name into Emmon, instead of Ayman, to conceal any traces of his Muslim identity, as Isma explains, "an Irish spelling to disguise a Muslim name – Ayman became Emmon so that people would know that the father had integrated" (p. 16). Like Isma, he becomes aware of the conditionality of

citizenship which demands concealing Islam to be identified as British. Yet, unlike Isma, his approach to concealing Islam is extremist. Addressing a group of British Muslim students at his former school after two of its alumni joined ISIS, he declares:

There is nothing this country won't allow you to achieve--Olympic Medals, captaincy of the cricket team, pop stardom and 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. So do most of you. But for those of you who are in some doubt about it, let me say this: don't set yourselves apart in the way you dress, the way you think, the outdated codes of behaviors you cling to, the ideologies to which you attach your loyalties. Because if you do, you'll be treated differently not because of racism though that does still exist, but because you insist on your difference from everyone else in this multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous United Kingdom of ours. And look at all you miss out on because of it (p. 87)

Like Isma's detention at the Airport, Karamat's address embodies the Islamophobic face of UK cultural politics which offers space for only those who are able to conceal their difference. In this passage, Karamat overplays an affective economy in which the concepts of citizenship and belonging are constructed on the premise that Britishness is linked to cultural conformity, and acting Islam is aligned with deviance, subversion, and, terrorism. Acting Muslim for Karamat is "defined against an implied but never explicated norm of Britishness understood as symbolically 'white' and 'English'" (Sarkowsky, 2022, p. 36). He adopts an extreme rhetoric about citizenship which he views as 'a privilege' bestowed upon those who conform rather than 'a right', as he reflects: "one has to determine someone's fitness for citizenship based on their actions, not on accidents of birth" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 214). His understanding of citizenship is one of 'super-citizenship' that holds immigrants "to much higher standards than natives" (O'Brien, 2016, p. 101). In that sense, Karamat serves as the state's spokesperson of assimilation and its advocate of citizenship as a performance of super or extra duties on the part of Muslim citizens rather than a fundamental human right.

As a representative of the government, Karamat's speech is crucial in understanding the role of the state's counterterror policies in the circulation and stickiness of anti-Muslim affective economies. In his analysis of the influence of the anti-Muslim rhetoric adopted by state and governmental policies on Muslim immigrants, Bayoumi (2015) observes: "Under the guise of common sense, the vilification of Muslims is normalized and naturalized by a broad swath of the population, including leading politicians, law enforcement officials, petty bureaucrats, and the media... It's part of our mainstream" (p. 151). Karamat's address, which takes the form of speech (not a conversation) directed to a silent listener (Sulter, 2020, p. 150), is thus an affect-forming cultural object which is connected to other objects – his own body, history and position – to disseminate a rhetoric for the general public that reinforces already existing cultural economies about Muslim immigrants – i.e. foreignness, subversion and terrorism – in order to impact a specific cultural effect: legitimizing his country's Islamophobia. It regulates the stereotype that defines British Muslims as potential threats and the natives as "the injured party; the one that is 'hurt' or damaged by the 'invasion' of others" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 49). The circulation of hate through official governmental policies and procedures, which is represented here by Karamat's address, problematizes the lives of Muslims in Britain as possible enemies, as Bayoumi (2015) further remarks, "the quasi-official provenance of such ideas, and the frequency with which they *circulate*, is troubling indeed" (p. 84). Thus, in addition to indicating his emotional assimilation, Karamat's speech underpins the circulation and stickiness of a culture of hate and suspicion against Muslim citizens and immigrants.

Karamat's speech reveals also the contradictory approach of counterterror policies adopted by the state towards those who are defined as different. The most obvious of these contradictions is his assertion that while the UK is proud to be a "multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multitudinous" country, as he declares, its citizens ought to nevertheless preserve homogeneity. Karamat's approach to citizenship is therefore based on Orientalist and Islamophobic ideologies that are "free from the signifiers of non-British influence" (Sulter, 2020, p.150). Therefore, his speech should be considered not only as a warning to those who dare deviating the norm by celebrating their difference, but also a reemphasis of the conditionality of

citizenship: submit to the state's model of Britishness, or risk segregation and discrimination. It attends to the discrepancy discussed earlier between belonging and the politics of belonging, as his speech demonstrates, 'being' a British citizen, by virtue of the law, is not the same as being 'considered' British by the community. For Muslim citizens, in his eyes, one must perform super-citizenship in order to truly belong. Through Karamat's address, Shamsie points to the British state's discriminatory approach against Muslim citizens. His speech challenges the basic cultural structure of Britain as a multicultural society that accepts diversity and difference as he foregrounds the state's intention of stripping citizenship rights from those who are profiled as affect aliens.

The contrasting images of Karamat and Isma accentuate a feature vital to the novel's negotiation of citizenship: the politics of affect and difference is inseparable as it contributes significantly to the inclusion or exclusion of social bodies. Although the novel's two major families share the same origin and background, the cultural political impact of emotions on their identity performance is affectively different. On the one hand, Muslim characters who insist on acting their religious identity obviously attract affective economies of hate and suspicion, and therefore, are more likely to experience human rights transgressions. Therefore, Isma is profiled as an affect alien, one whose emotional responses are inconsistent with the emotional norms of her society (Ahmed, 2010, p. 30). Thus, the interrogators at the Airport seek to verify her belonging by making sure she shares the dominant and normative emotional attitudes towards "Shias, Homosexuals, the Queen, democracy, the Great British Bake off, the invasion of Iraq, Israel, Suicide Bombers, dating websites" (Shamsie, 2017, p. 5). On the other hand, actors who willingly choose to completely conceal their Muslim identity gain acceptance and visibility in such affective culture, though they relinquish their basic human rights in exchange for allaying state suspicion and public fear. In short, conflicts in emotional responses assign British Muslims either as super citizens, like Karamat whose emotional responses fall in line with the mainstream, and affect aliens, such as Isma, whose emotional orientations are perceived to deviate the norm. Yet, for those who are not able to act as super citizens or affect aliens, they reluctantly drift towards radicalization, like Parvaiz Pasha.

5. The Reluctant Terrorist

Home Fire offers a significant and creative perspective through which to explore the issues of citizenship and belonging by engaging with one of the central affective economies in the post 9/11 British culture: Islam and terrorism. Shamsie remarks in an interview with Major (2018) that “the novel is talked about as if it is about the radicalisation of a young boy, which was never my starting point. My starting point was how the British state is responding to radicalization”. This section carries Shamsie’s claim a step further by examining the intersection of affect, acting Muslim and citizenship and how this interaction affects both Parvaiz’s radicalization and the state’s response to it. It will be argued that Parvaiz’s radicalization is not invoked by any religious, cultural or national convictions. Rather, it is essentially linked to his everyday experience of hate and suspicion, which gets stuck to him, resulting in his inability to act Muslim (or British) in any meaningful way.

Ahmed’s notion of ‘stickiness’ is remarkably significant in understanding Parvaiz’s drift toward radicalization and the state’s response to it. Ahmed’s concept of stickiness is based on the major premise that all bodies have a history, and the value and configuration of this history within a cultural discourse rely on its affective relation with time, space and context. Thus, rather than viewing stickiness as one object sticks to another, Ahmed (2014) perceives stickiness as “an effect of surfacing, as an effect of the histories of contact between bodies, objects, and signs” (p. 90). In Parvaiz’s case, the cultural effect that frames him as Other is not just his family burden (as the son of a jihadi father) or background (as being of Islamic roots), but the contact of this family history with many other social and political bodies: the contemporary global terrorist attacks such as 9/11, 7/7, and Manchester Arena; the economic effects of the 2015 migration crisis on young Muslim males living in western nations, and the awake of new waves of Islamophobia after Trump’s 2017 Muslim Travel Ban – to mention but a few.

The interaction of Parvaiz’s family history with these sociopolitical bodies produces cultural effects of hate and fear that frame him as a potential threat to the nation. The problem in Parvaiz’s case particularly is that his framing as a potential threat has a sociopolitical agenda. This agenda is often motivated, especially in times of crisis, by the public fear that “they’re coming for our jobs, our houses, our schools,

our NHS systems” (Hardy and Chakraborti, 2020, p. 101). In other words, the framing of Parvaiz as an object of hate and suspicion is a way of creating difference, not a result of it. That is, it is a means of protecting the self or the collective body – protecting ‘our’ life opportunities – by marginalizing the Other. Thus, being identified as different is not the major reason of Parvaiz’s drift towards radicalization, but the crisis is the problematization of this difference by the state and the public as a threat—a threat to employment, housing, education and health care. These ‘sticky’ signs, which are inherent within everyday cultural narratives, mark Parvaiz as a subject of perpetual hate and suspicion. The cultural effect of this process of stickiness is what frames Parvaiz as an object of hate, an attribute that is cultivated by a sticky history.

The stickiness of these circulated economies and the state’s legitimization of their circulation are effective in expelling Parvaiz to the margin. For example, Parvaiz is constantly subjected to surveillance and policing with no sound reasons, as Chambers (2018) notes: “He has been stopped and searched twice for purely Islamophobic reasons by British police officers, and is regularly treated with suspicion as a young Muslim man in Britain” (p. 207). These recurring experiences of hate and suspicion make him more vulnerable to radicalization, as revealed later in the novel when Farook, the man who is responsible for recruiting him for ISIS, promises him “a place where skin color doesn’t matter” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 147). Based on his sticky history and problematized present, Parvaiz becomes infatuated with the idea of ‘exiting the West’ – to allude to Mohsin Hamid’s famous trope (2017) – for the ISIS Caliphate in Syria as he does not feel at home in England. He is not able to act as either Muslim or British. He is not able to partially cover his Islam like Isma or entirely conceal it like Karamat. He is caught up by these feelings of badness and worthlessness that he has never been able to forget or let go, as Ahmed (2014) explains, “the subject in turning away from another and back into itself, is consumed by a feeling of badness that cannot simply be given away or attributed to another” (p. 104). Thus, it is not his religious convictions that motivates Parviaz to exit Britain and head to join ISIS in Syria, but his perpetual feeling of alienation and the burdens he carries as a young Muslim man living in such affective culture—including, unemployment, discrimination, and surveillance:

What they want most is what the majority of young adults desire: opportunity, marriage, happiness, and the chance to fulfill their potential. But what they have now are extra loads to carry, burdens that often include workplace discrimination, warfare in their countries of origin, government surveillance, the disappearance of friends or family, threats of vigilante violence, a host of cultural misunderstandings, and all kinds of other problems that thrive in the age of terror. (Bayoumi, 2008, p. 12)

While some might argue that the construction of such Islamophobic affective culture is strategically crucial in the protection of the British society against possible threats (Brigida, 2019, p. 156), Shamsie's central claim is that the formation of this affective culture is the main cause of radicalization and terrorism as it frames Muslim immigrants into a space of radical difference and enmity to the West. Supporting Shamsie's claim, Lau and Mendes (2021) argue that "The banalization of a populist, anti-immigrant discourse positions Muslim communities, and particularly the Muslim male youth, in a space of Orientalist, radical difference to the West" (p. 56). In this space of radical difference, Parvaiz feels that he belongs to nowhere and "when the place is nowhere, the person has been expelled not just from a nation but in a sense from humanity itself" (Bayoumi, 2015, p.87). Parvaiz loses his citizenship even before joining ISIS, and, as such, is denied access to the very mechanism through which he "can claim being grounded in the world" (p. 87). Therefore, being out of place remarkably attends to Parvaiz's affective capacity and acting Muslim.

Parvaiz's failure to act his identity becomes clearer when juxtaposed to the other protagonists of the novel who identify in diverse forms and to different degrees: from concealing Islam, like Karamat and Eamonn, to covering Islam, such as Aneeka and Isma. For Parvaiz, he has fallen prey to the feelings of hostility and enmity he finds himself caught up in. He does not possess an infinite capacity for hate of the world around him as it might seem. Rather, to use Ahmed's formula, hate functions in Parvaiz's case as a mediated pattern of feeling through which he becomes "primed with an open wound, a sensitivity, a willing trigger, for new opportunities to hate—until, finally, it genuinely feels like it 'comes from inside'" (Ahmed, 2014, p. 50). At the beginning of the narrative, he appears as an enthusiastic

young man who strives for being involved in his community. For instance, he volunteers to keep the local library open and keeps a large portion of his income “for zakat, which he split between Islamic relief and the library campaign” (Shamsie, 2017, p. 130). But soon he realizes that he is constantly at risk of being rendered silent, invisible, and alien, and must grapple with these burdens and engage with the risks of acting Muslim in such Islamophobic affective culture. He is eaten up by these feelings of hatred and enmity which substantially unmake his world. What is common between Parvaiz and his sisters is the fact that while their legal citizenship is uncontested, their belonging remains equivocal and precarious throughout the novel. Yet, while Isma and Aneeka are able to act their Islam in different ways, Parvaiz is not able to get rid of his burden and its stickiness.

To sum up, Parvaiz is neither a terrorist nor a martyr: he is a victim of a merciless affective culture framed by hatred and enmity against those who are identified as different. Parvaiz’s identity as a violent, cultural, and ideological threat is imposed upon him as a cultural effect, not an innate trait, by both the state and the public as a defense mechanism. As argued earlier, Shamsie condemns the state’s counterterror policies especially towards families of jihadists, as she told Major (2018): “In the beginning, there are two sisters saying, our brother’s been a traitor and the state is responding in a way that doesn’t make sense. He’s dead, they’re punishing us”. Supporting Shamsie’s claim, Shaheen et al. (2018) argue: “the children of the jihadis need to be dealt with compassion: not through othering surveillance but through an integrating Islamophilic social sentiment to keep them tied to the warmth of home fire in the first place” (p. 163). Thus, Shamsie contends that Parvaiz’s burden as a young Muslim unemployed man and his lack of the warmth of home fire is what actually pushes him toward radicalization.

Conclusion

This paper has examined an affective notion citizenship in Shamsie’s *Home Fire*, one that gains its value according to its interaction with the cultural politics of emotions at play and the forms of acting Muslim performed. Following an interdisciplinary approach that brings Ahmed’s notion of affect and Beydoun’s legal perspective on identity, it has examined the circulation and stickiness of some anti-Muslim affective economies, such as foreignness, subversion and terrorism, in both

public and official discourses portrayed by Shamsie. It has been revealed that some Muslim citizens, such as the Pasha family, are profiled as objects of hate and suspicion and their citizenship are negated due to their capacities, or the lack thereof, of acting Muslim they perform. It has been also shown that those Muslim citizens who conceal their Muslim identity and show emotional conformity to the mainstream values and traditions, like Karamat and Emmon, are perceived as proper British citizens. The main argument developed here is that there is a close connection between the emotions of hate experienced by Muslim immigrants, their citizenship status and forms of acting their Muslim identity. The paper has investigated the influence of this tripartite relationship between affect, citizenship and acting Muslim on Muslim immigrants and how it can stir individuals to embrace violence against the state as a way of reclaiming their affective capacities. Finally, while this paper highlights *Home Fire's* critique of the violation of Muslim immigrants' civil rights, it also calls for further research on the other issues related to global Islamophobia and terrorism today: gendered Islamophobia, AI's anti-Muslim prejudice and Islamophobia in the time of COVID-19 pandemic.

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كيف يستوعب الوطن أبناءه: مفاهيم المواطنة والوجدان وتمثيل الشخصية المسلمة في رواية
«نار الوطن» لكامبلا شمسي (٢٠١٧)

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المستخلص:

يهدف البحث إلى سبر أغوار الأدب الأنغلو فوني لاستجلاء العلاقة بين الوجدان وأنماط تمثيل الهوية الإسلامية وتأثير تلك العلاقة على مفهوم المواطنة في رواية «نار الوطن» لكامبلا شمسي (٢٠١٧)، متوسلاً بالمنهج البيني بدمج نظرية الوجدان لسارة أحمد (٢٠١٤) بتمثيل الشخصية المسلمة لخالد بيدون (٢٠١٨)، في محاولة لفهم العلاقة بين المشاعر المناهضة للإسلام وأنماط تجسيد الهوية المسلمة التي تنعكس على إثرها، وبيان أثر تلك العلاقة على المواطنين البريطانيين ذوي الأصول الإسلامية المقيمين في بريطانيا بعد حادثة ١١ سبتمبر/أيلول. وتطبيق مفهوم «محركات العاطفة» لسارة أحمد، يناقش البحث كيف أن مشاعر الكراهية والشك الملازمة للشخصيات المسلمة تؤثر على قدرتهم على التعبير عن هويتهم المسلمة وموقفهم بصفتهم مواطنين بريطانيين، بل وتلقي ببعضهم في أحضان التطرف. وخلصت الدراسة إلى أن للمشاعر دور محوري في مجتمع ما بعد ١١ سبتمبر/أيلول الذي صورته شمسي بعدستها الروائية، إذ تُعرِّفنا على كيفية وضع قوالب نمطية للشخصية المسلمة تجعلها شخصية باعثة على الكراهية والشك. كما تشابكت محددات الهوية الوطنية مع تلك المشاعر التي تسيطر عليها الأهواء السياسية وتحركها النزعات الثقافية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المواطنة، الوجدان، تمثيل الشخصية المسلمة، كامبلا شامسي، سارة أحمد، خالد بيدون