Subversion of Islamophobia in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

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Abstract
This paper aims at examining the changes in the Western narrative of Islamophobia from the end of Cold War era to the present times and its representation in contemporary Pakistani Anglophone fiction. It reads two selected Pakistani Anglophone novels, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) by Mohsin Hamid and *Home Fire* (2017) by Kamila Shamise, against the backdrop of Stephen Greenblatt's critique of subversion and containment. Both novels have been examined in the context of the politics of 'war on terror' and 'populism' respectively. However, the examination of the selected novels (Texts) alongside the actual political narratives (co-texts) reveals the role of anti-Muslim narratives in the development and construction of Islamophobia and, at the same time, highlights literature's ability to offer a sight of subversion. The study also finds that the novels record the implications of Islamophobia in various forms such as racial violence, expression of religious values, discursive and physical marginalisation of Muslims living in the West as well as the immigration and citizenship issues.

Keywords
Islamophobia and populism, war on terror, cultural politics, subversion and containment

Introduction: An ever-changing narrative of Islamophobia

The massive migrations to Europe in the 1970s and the 1973 oil crisis, followed by a surge in race riots and the subsequent marginalization of Muslims as the 'other', marks the first phase of Islamophobia. However, the second phase of

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Islamophobia began after 9/11 (Afzal et al., *Islamization vs. Islamophobia* & *Pre-9/11 Politics of Islamophobia*). The fire of anti-Muslim sentiments that was enflamed by the end of the Cold War, yielded another shade after the incident of 9/11. Muslims who were called, according to the Runnymede Trust report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for US All* (1997), the "other," "manipulative," "enemies," and "inferior" during the first phase (after Cold War), during the second phase (after 9/11) they started being viewed as terrorists and Islam as a threat to humanity and democracy in the West. Margaret Thatcher's essay, "Islamism is the New Bolshevism" (2002) should be viewed as one of its examples. On the pretext of 9/11, she denounces Islam while equating it to communism. She calls upon all the Western powers to assemble against "terrorism," which according to her was triggered by Muslims. She asserts, "Islamic extremism today, like Bolshevism in the past, is an armed doctrine. It is an aggressive ideology promoted by fanatical, well-armed devotees. And, like communism, it requires an all-embracing long-term strategy to defeat it" (Thatcher 4). She can also be seen consternating "America and its allies" about the said threat to the "Western world and its values" (Thatcher 3). This essay by Thacher is a classic example of anti-Muslim political rhetoric. It also substantiates Stephen Greenblatt's notion of "co-text" (political) that appears in his article "Invisible bullets: Renaissance authority and its subversion" (1981), which had all the potential to fan the fire of Islamophobia and, thus, to serve the interest of power (Western political regimes) in the development of linguistically and ideologically constructed "Islamophobic" selves.

In the same vein, the comparison between the political discourse of the pre-9/11 and post-9/11 era indicates a change in the anti-Muslim sentiments in the West. In the pre-9/11 context, as rendered by the Runnymede Trust's report, Muslims in the West were portrayed as inferior, manipulative, the other, and enemies. But in the post-9/11 context, writings like Thatcher's "Islamism is the new Bolshevism" narrow down the scope of anti-Muslim sentiments to terrorism and declaims Islam as a threat to the West and Western values. She does not stop here. She goes further and demands an overt operation against Muslims in the West as well as Muslim lands such as Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Iran, and Iraq. The cross-examination of these two eras (pre-9/11 and post-9/11) rendered that anti-Muslim sentiments which had been developing in the West since the end of the Cold War obtained a new political outlook in the form of the war on terror which ultimately provided the West with an excuse for the persecution of Muslims. The capitalist West that was already trying to replace its communist enemy with a new one after the end of Soviet Union and the Cold war, finally found another one after the 9/11 event. Thatcher's comparison between Islam

and communism reflects the same mindset that substitutes one ideological enemy with another by rendering both ideologies as threats to Western liberal democracy, the capitalist world order as well as to Western socio-economic and moral systems. Moreover, the 9/11 attacks associated with Al-Qaida had more harmful discursive consequences for the whole Muslim community living in politically charged Western societies. The incident was interpreted as an example of Islamic terrorism which, in turn, constructed a collective imagination about Muslims as "collective threats" which can also be evidenced in Thatcher's aforementioned essay. Interestingly, this shift in the political outlook of anti-Muslim sentiments also faded away over time. The recent debates about Islamophobia have revealed that anti-Muslim hatred in the present day has become a handy tool for populist politicians (Azhar; Cervi; Paracha; Klaas; Saad).

This chronological survey of the political narrative of Islamophobia suggests a shift in its outlook from the "immigration crisis" to the "war on terror," and from the "war on terror" to the "populist politics" of today's world. Cas Mudde defines populism as "an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus 'the corrupt elite,' and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people" (543). Similarly, Laura Cervi places populism parallel to nativism and describes it as a combined form of xenophobia and nationalism. According to her, "It is an exclusionist, ethnonational notion of the nation, based on the assumption that a nation is founded on a particular historical trajectory…which must be preserved and defended" (2). She maintains that "far-right populists embrace nativism, proposing a more exclusive and nativist conception of the people or nation" (Cervi 3). In this regard, some critics have doubled the importance of rhetoric in the study of populism. For these critics, rhetoric shapes and rejuvenates populist movements. In addition to this, some critics hold that the populist rhetoric relies on polarisation, and stereotyping (Martin; Norocel). Hellstrom, on the other hand, accords an antagonistic position to populist politics and suggests that it polarises people into "us" and "other" based on their social, religious, or ethnic identity. The notion of nation-states in modern-day global politics and the rise of insular politics is also a case in point (the Brexit of the UK can be taken as an example of this polarisation).

In this context, the obvious tension between "nativism" and "immigrant other" (Cervi and Tejedor) provides enough space to understand the victimisation of Muslims in the hands of populist politicians of the West. Salman Sayyid views Islamophobia as a consequence of this terrain of nativism that bloomed out of the anxieties to protect native cultural identities and the

protection of—in the terminology of Mudde—the "pure people" (543). Oztig, Gurkan, and Aydin also hold that anti-Muslim sentiments are being spread by populist politicians as the most promising political strategy to achieve leverage and political might. For example, Biran Klaas in his article published in *The Washington Post* enlists Donald Trump's anti-Muslim rhetoric and terms it as "Trump's anti-Muslim bigotry." In his article, Trump is criticised for spreading anti-Muslim hatred by calling Muslims "rapefugees" as well as associating terrorism with Muslims as "an expression of mainstream Muslim values" (1). In another article, Arslan Iftikhar while quoting Trump's anti- Muslim tweets notes that Trump's whole political career was built on Islamophobia. Apart from his tweets, the 2017 executive order by Trump barring Muslim refugees (from Iraq, Syria, Iran, Sudan, Libya, Somalia, and Yemen) from entering the US is also an evidence of Trump's exclusionary populism. The same ray of populism can be seen in France. Emmanuel Macron, the French president also attracted so much of the attention of the World due to his anti-Muslim approach. Ali Saad, a French sociologist and media critic, asserts in this regard that "it seems the head of state is particularly intent on fanning the flames of Islamophobia. President Emmanuel Macron feels his electorate is abandoning him and thinks that the only thing that can save his political career is taking a page out of the far right's playbook" (3).

In this paper, I aim to maintain that this shift in the outlook of anti-Muslim sentiments during both post-9/11 era and the contemporary era is also very prominent in contemporary Pakistani Anglophone fiction. Afzal, et al. highlight the treatment of Islamophobia in the selected Pakistani Anglophone fiction, particularly that of Mohammed Hanif and Hanif Kureishi, and fore-front the way it textualises Cold War politics in the pre-9/11 context. They base their scholarship on Greenblatt's assertion that "texts" and "co-texts" serve power to promulgate and propagate narratives of its interest. For example, they read Kureishi's *The Black Album* (1995) simultaneously with the political imagination about Muslims in the West as highlighted by the Runnymede Trust's report *Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us All* (1997). Their findings revealed that the political discourse portrayed Muslims as "inferior," "manipulative," and the "other" and so does *The Black Album* (1995). In the novel, the characters of Riaz and Chad can be seen as complying with the Western political imagination of Muslims as "inferior," "manipulative," and the "other". However, Kureishi creates other characters such as Shahid and Hat, who, in some ways, subvert this imagination by showing a tendency for adaptability and tolerance. Nevertheless, regarding the post 9/11 political narrative of Islamophobia, in the context of Pakistani Anglophone literature, the question "what comes next?" still remains unanswered. This paper will fill this research gap by placing the selected Pakistani

Anglophone fiction in the post-9/11 context of Islamophobia till the present time. For this purpose, it will include in its corpus Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017).

Subversion and containment in the context of Islamophobia

Michel Foucault's idea of power that it "is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere" (93) is very relevant to understand the working of the narrative of Islamophobia within the context of subversion and containment. It becomes more relevant when Greenblatt extends that power's autonomy and pervasiveness depends upon its ability to contain any kind of subversion it comes across. He uses different words for subversiveness. Sometimes, he considers them "other voices"; and other times subversiveness appears to be "alien voices" for him ("Invisible Bullets" 43-45). Interestingly, whatever word or expression he uses to define subversiveness, it has one common characteristic and that is "its opposition with power." This confrontation between power and subversion puts both into a binary relationship in which power tends to "control" whereas subversion strives to "escape." According to Greenblatt, subversiveness is always attacked to be contained and destroyed, and to be tamed in accordance with "our own sense of truth and reality" ("Invisible Bullets" 52). On the other hand, subversion is a confrontation to the normative structure that is driven by power.

Secondly, despite being confrontation, subversion can also get manipulated by the power. For example, in 1998 John Brannigan accords the role of power to society and suggests that it is society's ability to check and regulate the deviation that makes the containment possible by appropriating it according to the normative reality. He goes further and maintains that "power depends upon subversive beliefs in order to reinforce its constructions of reality and normality," and that it "can only define itself in relation to subversion, to what is alien or other, and at the heart of power is therefore the production and subsequent containment of subversion" (64). Interestingly, in the context of Islamophobia, the proposition that power "depends upon subversive beliefs in order to reinforce its constructions of reality and normality" also proves to be correct. The historical examination of the different waves of Islamophobia reveals that power relied heavily on the subversions to further solidify its political narrative that Muslims are "other," "alien," and "fundamentalists." For example, the protests of Muslims after the publication of Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988) were appropriated by the West as a manifestation of fundamentalist and radical voices, which ultimately endorsed the Anti-Muslim narrative.

The third important aspect of Stephen Greenblatt's critique is the notion of "fashioned selves" (*Renaissance Self Fashioning*). These "fashioned selves," according to Greenblatt, are also "linguistically and ideologically constructed selves" which serve the interest of power and relieve it of its coercive role. In the present case of Islamophobia, it is suggested that the Islamophobic selves are actually these "linguistically and ideologically" constructed selves which have been constructed with the anti-Muslim Western political rhetoric. In his foundational book *Renaissance Self Fashioning: From More to Spencer* (1980), Greenblatt says that the ideological self, once created, controls and directs its own social and political behaviour by complying to the dominant ideology as well as by keeping a watch on its flow. By doing so ideologically, it excludes the role of coercive force. In other words, the containment of the "threatening Other" or the "alien other" is made possible with the help of language that helps power promulgate a particular narrative which in turn produces the linguistically and ideologically constructed selves: "Self-fashioning is always, though not exclusively, in language" (*Renaissance Self Fashioning* 9). In the light of this discussion, I suggest that the narrative of Islamophobia should also be seen as one of the tools of power (West) which has its roots in language and discourse. I suggest that the narrative of Islamophobia intermingled with terrorism was solely inculcated by the West to hegemonise Muslims and Muslim countries, and to counter the rise of Muslim influence and identity in the West. Power's (the West's) utilisation of the narrative of Islamophobia, therefore, can be considered one of its containment strategies to establish Western dominance and to contain the Muslim influence/identity in the West. Power, in this case, can be seen as, in Greenblatt's terminology, using a certain "narrative/ideology" to form "culturally and linguistically constructed Islamophobic selves" who would abide by the normative of anti-Islamic sentiments. In the past few years, incidents such as Christchurch Mosque shooting in New Zealand in which 51 Muslims were killed during Friday prayers by an anti-Muslim extremist, desecration of Quran during a series of anti-Muslim protests in Norway, and the killing of a Muslim family including a grandmother, parents, and a teenage daughter in a hit and run incident in Canada are the examples of this phenomenon in which these linguistically and ideologically constructed "Islamophobic selves" can be seen attacking the Muslims.

The most recent manifestation of Islamophobia can be seen during the anti-immigration rally in London on September 13, 2025 (Robyn Winter et. al). Moved by the "political discourse around migration" the protestors displayed a profound hatred of Islam and Muslim communities as evidenced in slogans like "making West look like the Middle East" (18). In addition to this, a stall-display

of Peter McLoughlin's and Tommy Robinson's book *Mohammad's Koran: Why Muslims Kill for Islam* (2017) followed by the tearing of the placard displaying Muslim brotherhood, Islamic State, and Palestine, are some of the incidents which need no explanation regarding the Islamophobic nature of this protest. *Arab News* reports that there appeared a surge in Islamophobic incidents across this rally. Between June and September 2025, the Tell Mama charity "recoded a total of 913 cases, including attacks on 17 mosques and Islamic institutions" (3). This rally worsened the situation which was already deteriorated because of the ongoing Israeli genocide on Gaza. The anti-Muslim hate in the UK had already tripled just in the four months after Hamas's attack (Monetta, "Anti-Muslim cases surge in UK"), and in Canada this surge was reported to be 1800% (Aydogan, "Report"). I argue that this rise of anti-Muslim sentiments in the West is an epitome of the potency of the political narrative of Islamophobia which, in the present case, portrays Muslims, especially those of Palestinian origin, as "violent and extremists," and therefore they deserve no sympathy and should be expelled. The situation also substantiates Greenblatt's notion of "linguistically and ideologically constructed selves" which in the case of Islamophobia have been constructed on the narrative that Muslims are extremists, fundamentalists, and the other.

Post-9/11 politics of war on terror, Islamophobia, and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

The post-9/11 politics of war on terror not only reshuffles global power relations but also institutionalises Islamophobia as a hegemonising discourse that Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007) conspicuously textualises and historicises through its portrayal of the demonisation of Muslim subjectivity. Hamid's protagonist Changez, who is pursuing his dream in his dreamland America, being a handsomely paid employee at a valuation firm, shows much focus and devotion to his goal. The compassion and tolerance in his character are evident throughout the narration of the novel. Even after being a victim of stigmatisation due to his Muslim identity in the aftermath of the incident of 9/11, he keeps his love for America intact and, unlike Riaz's aggression in *The Black Album* (1995), tries to be more accommodating. He expresses his love for America even when he returns to Pakistan and his American guest (presumably the CIA agent) visits him there assuming him a terrorist: "Excuse Me, Sir, but may I be of assistance? Ah, I see I have alarmed you. Don't be frightened by my beard: I am a lover of America" (1). The exaggerated politeness of Changez satirises American paranoia about Muslim subjectivity after the incident of 9/11. The line "Don't be frightened by my beard" is an example of biting satire on

American stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists. At the same time, he is also resisting the stereotype that accords an antagonistic position to Muslims on the pretext that Muslims hate America and the West.

However, like Kureishi's Riaz and Chad, though not very explicitly, Changez too feels hatred for the West. His perplexed hostility becomes evident at the incident of 9/11. While speaking to his American guest in Lahore (after coming back from America), he confesses that although he is saying it with "a profound sense of perplexity," he "was pleased at the slaughter of thousands of innocents;" and that he "was caught up in the symbolism of it all, the fact that someone had so visibly brought America to her knees" (45). At this point, the character of Changez may give an impression of a hostile anti-West Muslim subject as imagined by the Western political discourse but, there also appears the character of Changez's girlfriend Erica's father who approaches Changez with a typical "American undercurrent of condescension" and reminds him of his fundamentalist background (36). There are other instances in the novel where readers see Muslims maltreated and hated publicly by Islamophobes and government officials. Changez notes on one point: "Pakistani cabdrivers were being beaten to within an inch of their lives; the FBI was raiding mosques, shops, and even people's houses; Muslim men were disappearing, perhaps into shadowy detention centers for questioning or worse" (56). The situation vividly textualises and historicises an Islamophobic environment in which Muslims are made subject to systematic physical violence in America in the aftermath of 9/11. The novel at this point subverts the dominant political narrative of Islamophobia by highlighting the Islamophobic violence on Muslims and therefore refusing to comply with the political construction which views Muslims as terrorists, fundamentalists, manipulative, and the other.

In addition to this, Hamid's other American characters also hold great relevance with the Western political narrative of Islamophobia that was prevalent in the aftermath of 9/11. It textualises the Islamophobic strains of its time. As Louis Montrose puts in *Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture* (1997), that New Historicism deals with the "textuality of history and the historicity of texts" (588), one can easily find the textualisation of the history of the "war on terror narrative" in Hamid's novel, which worsened the Islamophobic sentiments in the West. For example, in the novel, while describing the ramifications of 9/11 Changez narrates that the incident brought all Americans into a battle against Muslims who then started to be viewed as "enemies." His narration textualises and historicises the political narrative that was spread by the politicians like Margaret Thatcher. She glamourised American anti-Muslim response to the incident of 9/11 as:

> Methinks, I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep and shaking her invincible locks.' Milton's words perfectly describe America today. After the horror of September 11, the world has seen America gather its strength, summon its allies and proceed to wage war halfway across the globe against it enemy – and ours. (1)

Hamid's novel textualises this narrative by maintaining that the Americanism proclaimed after the incident of 9/11 made the people of America realise that they are the "mightiest civilization the world has ever known" (49), and since they have been slighted, the Mulsim world should be seen as proclaiming their wrath. Having established that *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* represents aptly the political terrains of its time, I suggest that it does not comply with the dominant political narrative of Islamophobia and, therefore, subverts it by creating a vibrant character like Changez. Rather than depicting him as a fundamentalist and a terrorist, the novel portrays his transformation as an outcome of political exclusion and cultural hostility. By doing so, it provides a Muslim-sided victim-view of the terrains of the Western narrative of Islamophobia and the war on terror. The character of Changez encapsulates the way the political narrative of Islamophobia causes alienation among the loyal immigrants living in the West. Thus, the novel not only subverts the dominant narrative of Islamophobia—in the words of Hugh Grady (1993) and H. M. Mutlagh (2015)—but also creates the possibility of "negotiation." However, after highlighting the textualisation of post-9/11 politics of war on terror and Islamophobia in Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*, the discussion now turns to a later politics of populism and Islamophobia in Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*.

Populism, Islamophobia, and Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire*

Kamila Shamsie's novel *Home Fire* (2017) textualises in great detail elements of the populist politics of the contemporary Western world, particularly as they interact with the narrative of Islamophobia. The novel centers on Pervez Pasha, a 19-year-old British-born Pakistani teenager who joins the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) after being approached by an ISIS recruitment team. They manipulated him by reminding him of his late father Abid Pasha, a former ISIS fighter in Afghanistan and Bosnia, who died while being transferred to Guatemala. Pervez Pasha leaves his two sisters and goes to Raqqa (Syria) to join ISIS's media wing. After completing their ideological and military training, he comes to a painful realisation that he has made a wrong decision. He reestablishes contact with his twin sister Aneeka who is deeply concerned about her brother's safety and his return. She informs him that she is already planning to take him

back with the help of Aemon, the son of a British-Pakistani politician who is now the Home Secretary of England. She instructs her brother to reach the British consulate in Istanbul. Although he successfully reaches the outside of the British embassy in Istanbul, he tragically gets killed by his own companion. The news of the death of an ISIS member named Pervez Pasha, a British-born Pakistani, goes viral on social media. This is followed by the Home Secretary's press release which asserted that Pervez Pasha is a "terrorist son of a terrorist father" (171) and that his sister is also involved as she has recently been sleeping with his son to use him for the repatriation of her brother. During this political turmoil, the British government refuses to accept him as a British national and orders his corpse repatriated to Pakistan and not to England.

Published in 2017, the novel underpins the stigmatisation of the younger generation of migrants in the West and underscores the role of populist politicians in inflaming the fire of Islamophobia. It unveils the terrains of exclusionary populism with the help of its populist characters like Karamat Lone, also Lone Wolf, who is a newly elected home secretary of England. He can be seen as gaining popular support by even turning against his own people: "He would sell out anyone, even his own son if he thought it would move him closer to number 10" (195), that is, 10 Downing Street or the official residence and office of the British prime minister. He is "an ambitious son of migrants who married money and class and social contacts in order to transform himself into an influential party donor, which allowed him to be selected ahead of more deserving candidates to run in his first election" (194). The reader can find great similarities between the real-time politicians like Donald Trump and Emmanuel Macron and the fictional character of Karamat Lone. It has been observed during the last few years that populist politicians such as Trump and Macron have done their utmost in associating Muslims with radicalism and terrorism as well as making them scapegoats for their own political interests (Azhar 2019; Curvi, 2020; Paracha, 2019; Klaas 2019; Saad, 2020).

Similarly, in the novel, the character of Karamat Lone despite his Muslim background can be seen manipulating the case of Pervez Pasha, who wants to come back to England after having realised that ISIS has no real connection with Islam. Despite knowing the fact that Pervez Pasha was repenting his decision to go to Syria and was trying to escape the place, he went on demonising him as someone "who had turned his back on his nation in favour of a place of crucifixions, beheadings, floggings, heads on spikes, child soldiers, slavery, and rape" (195). In addition to this, he twists the situation even more by revealing to the press that Pervez Pasha's sister Aneeka is her brother's accomplice and is trying to use his son Aemon to get her brother back to England, and that he has

handled the situation through heavy-handed measures: "She was barking up the wrong tree. The Home Secretary would never compromise this nation's security for any reason" (161). I suggest at this point that the political manhandling of the love affair between Aneeka and Aemon further worsens the situation and yields rhetorical attacks on her Muslim identity: "HO-JABI! PERVY PASHA'S TWIN SISTER ENGINEERED SEX TRYSTS WITH HOME SECRETARY'S SON" (capitalised in original). This situation which incites Islamophobic sentiments, also pushes the family of Pervez Pasha to a more vulnerable position. Instead of proving Pervez's innocence and telling the public the true story that he was not going to attack the British Embassy in Turkey, rather he was going to surrender and got killed by another member of the ISIS group, his elder sister Isma chooses to be apologetic.

The situation worsened by the populist politician, Karamat Lone, thereby gradually moves towards the rhetoric of exclusion. For example, the reader comes to know the way Karamat Lone (the Home Secretary) switches over to the issue of immigration and blames immigration for Pervez Pasha's kind of incidents. He says in an interview, "As you know, the day I assumed office I revoked the citizenship of all dual nationals who have left Britain to join our enemies. My predecessor only used these powers selectively, which, as I have said repeatedly, was a mistake" (145). It is interesting to note that there exists a reasonable similarity between the narrative of Karamat Lone and the populist politicians of today's West such as Donald Trump. Trump's 2017 executive order to ban immigrants from Muslim countries can be taken as a case in point. Nevertheless, his 2024 election campaign though not very explicitly but still targeted Muslims and Arab-Americans disguised in the rhetoric of migration. This striking resemblance between Donald Trump and the character of Karamat Lone suggests that Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) not only represents the populist politicians of contemporary Western societies but also encapsulates the way the narratives declaimed and propagated by such politicians shape public opinion. This can be evidenced by the situation when Karamat Lone's remarks about immigration go public. Right after his interview, there appears a swarm of tweets saying "#GOBACKWHEREYOUCAMEFROM" (147). The reader witnesses here a complicated fusion of Islamophobia and the immigration problem. The study suggests that the novel not only registers contemporary voices regarding Islamophobia, but also highlights the increased role of populist politicians in its current form and shape.

Now the question is to what extent Kamila Shamsie's *Home Fire* (2017) complies with the populist political narrative of Islamophobia? It is suggested that Shamsie's treatment of the theme of Islamophobia is apt and revelatory of

the Islamophobic populist imbroglio which is by no means compliant to it. Rather, her fiction can be seen subverting it by highlighting the fissures and cracks that exist in the contemporary political milieu in the form of racial discrimination, power struggle, and popularity. It can also be evidenced from the above discussion that she stands in alliance with Mohsin Hamid with regard to their treatment of the theme of Islamophobia. The comparative study of both Hamid's and Shamsie's selected novels affirms their ability to "live between East and West" (Shamsie, *A Dragonfly in the Sun* xxiv). Additionally, it also underscores their huge potential to subvert the dominant narrative of Islamophobia as propounded by the West.

Conclusion

The New Historicist reading of both Hamid's and Shamsie's selected novels concerning one of the gravest issues of today's world, i.e., Islamophobia, reveals the role of literary and non-literary discursive formations in its construction and development of its narrative. The study of the selected literary texts against the backdrop of the actual political narratives confirms the role of prevailing political narrative in its development and constructions on one hand and highlights its struggle to display a sight of subversion on the other. Stephen Greenblatt's critique that power uses literary and non-literary texts in the formation of linguistically and ideologically constructed selves is re-validated in the context of both Pakistani Anglophone literature and the politics of Islamophobia. The study finds that the selected Pakistani fiction records the implications of Islamophobia in various forms such as racial violence, expression of religious values, discursive and physical marginalisation of Muslims living in the West as well as in Muslim-majority countries, and immigration and citizenship issues. Moreover, their treatment of Islamophobia is not only about the representation of anti-Muslim bigotry and violence, but also forefronts some of the pressing issues of the contemporary world, such as citizenship issues, human rights violations, and political imbalance. By analyzing the selected anti-Muslim political discourse (co-texts) of two eras, i.e., post-9/11, and the contemporary era, in comparison with the selected literary discourse (texts) of their respective time, it comes to the fore that the West has been relying heavily on the discursive formations to promulgate and promote the narrative of Islamophobia. The study also finds that each era has its own unique characteristic regarding its treatment of Islamophobia: the post 9/11 era is dominated by the war on terror politics, whereas the recent years have seen a surge of populist politics disguised in the narratives of "nativism" and "protectionism" while making Muslims scapegoats for the sake of political might.

Lastly, by examining the role of discursive formations in the construction of the narrative of Islamophobia, the present study opens new vistas for future research on Pakistani diasporic fiction. Examining postcolonial literature against the backdrop of the New Historicist theoretical paradigm can also offer deep insights into the workings of normative power structures. However, besides Islamophobia, researchers can also explore other social issues such as gender discrimination, political imbalances, and religious discrimination in both indigenous and diasporic literary contexts, by reading the contemporary Pakistani Anglophone fiction alongside the actual political discourse surrounding these issues.

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