Tikrit University | جامعة تكريت
مجلة آداب الفراهيدي
Journal of Al-Farahidi's Arts

Islamophobia in "Disgraced" by Ayad Akhtar – A Foucauldian Critical Study

[*] **Prof. Dr. Ansam Riyadh Abdullah**
Department of English Language, College of Education for Women, Tikrit University
Salahuddin, Iraq

[1] **Lecturer. Muniba Kalaf Mohameed**
Department of English Language, College of Arts, Tikrit University
Salahuddin, Iraq

SUBMISSION	ACCEPTED	E-PUBLISHED
10/08/2024	17/10/2024	30/12/2024

P-ISSN: 2074-9554 | E-ISSN: 2663-8118 https://doi.org/10.25130/jaa.9th.4.1 Conference (9th) No (4) September (2024) P (01-10)

ABSTRACT

Date: 10/15/2023 This essay explores the theme of Islamophobia presented in Ayad Akhtar's "Disgraced" through a Foucauldian concept of power. Using Michel Foucault's theories of power, discourse and surveillance, the paper discusses Islamophobia's depiction in the play and its impact on the characters and storyline. It also examines various power relations, cultural hegemony, and societal structures that cause the marginalization of Muslims in metropolises of the play. By taking a Foucauldian lens, the study illuminates the ways in which Islamophobia is both discursively constructed and reproduced while also revealing the entwined power dynamics involved in this process. The analysis outlines the narrative response of the characters being surveilled, troubles aspects of the institution itself, and concludes with a practical analysis of how Islamophobic tropes are framed and reinforced through the act of surveillance in contemporary society. Through a Foucauldian lens, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced perspective of the play vis-à-vis the complex ways in which Islamophobia manifests and invites wider discursive considerations of discrimination, power and identity.

KEYWORDS

Islamophobia, Ayad Akhtar, "Disgraced," Foucault, Power, Discourse, Surveillance, Marginalization, Stigmatization, Cultural Hegemony

Copyright and License: This is an Open-Access Article distributed under A Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License, which allows free use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction:

Islamophobia: The hate, fear, and prejudice against Islam and Muslims remain a key issue in modern life up until today. As a counter to this pervasive trend, within the literature and theatre realms, playwrights have attempted to reflect and dismantle Islamophobic narratives, narrating the experiences of pluralistic communities while highlighting the dominant, systemic macrostructures writ large through discriminatory systemic inertia. One of these playwrights is Ayad Akhtar, whose play "Disgraced" (2012) offers a challenging consideration of Islamophobia in America.

"Disgraced" has received praise for its provocative, sharp-witted dialogue and its nuanced exploration of cultural identity, faith and societal problems. Its deep character development and emotional stakes have earned acclaim from critics. But others feel it oversimplifies complex scenarios with disproportionate confrontations and quick fixes. It is a potent, if polarising, dramatisation of contemporary ills.

Through a Foucauldian lens, this paper explores the theme of Islamophobia in the play "Disgraced" by Ayad Akhtar. The paper uses Michel Foucault's theories of power, discourse, and surveillance to examine the various ways in which Islamophobia manifests, its impact on individuals and communities, and the wider social consequences. This study combines the analysis from the literary aspects of the play with the theoretical aspects from Foucauldian ideas to provide a detailed study of the events regarding the idea of Islamophobia at work in the scenes representing Islam in the play. (Foucault, 1978). "Disgraced" follows Amir, a well-to-do Pakistani-American lawyer, and his wife Emily, a white artist, dealing with their identities, cultural assimilation and the way Islamophobia plays a role in their existence. The play invokes the tensions that ensue when Amir's Muslim heritage clashes with his ambition to meld into mainstream American society. This happens through a series of events & encounters in which the characters confront their prejudices, societal pressures, and the poisonous pervasiveness of Islamophobia. Utilising the Foucauldian notion of the concept of power, the researchers analyse the way Islamophobia is in many ways shaped and maintained throughout the play. In this context, Foucault's work on disciplinary power, surveillance, and knowledge control offers a theoretical lens to examine the systemic and institutional factors that underlie the demonization and marginalization of Muslims.

The paper would analyze the text using this theoretical framework to bring to light the hidden machinations of power, ideologies, and discourses that influence the characters in their environment. This study also aims to contribute to the extensive theoretical discourse of discrimination, power relations, and identity construction. This paper thus aims at examining Amy Fox's play "Disgraced" through the lens of Foucauldian ideas in order to highlight the multifaceted forms of Islamophobia and also to explore the interrelationship between power, language, and identity that gets played out in the play. And the play's raw and unflinching exploration of identity, race and religion in contemporary American life has made it a critical hit. Analyzing the issues of self-hatred and the perceptions of society through a Muslim's eyes, it is evident how post-colonial America serves as a breeding ground for Islamophobia (Weber, 2013).

2. Literature Review:

The concept of Islamophobia has been a subject of scholarly debate and research in recent years. Bunzl (2005) argues against analogizing anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, highlighting the need for a historical and cultural clarification of these terms. Fekete (2009) explores the intersection of racism, migration, and Islamophobia in Europe, shedding light on the negative perceptions towards Muslims in Western societies. Lee et al. (2009) discuss the development of the Islamophobia Scale, which measures fear-related attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. Bleich (2011) delves into the theorization and measurement of Islamophobia, offering a social scientific definition as negative attitudes directed at Islam or Muslims. López (2011) also contributes to defining Islamophobia by examining early twentieth-century approximations of the term. Awan (2014) focuses on online

hate against Muslims on social media, highlighting the typology of Islamophobia on platforms like Twitter. Garner et al. (2015) connect racism to Islamophobia, emphasizing the racialization of Muslims and its intersection with class and gender experiences. Moosavi (2015) explores how Islamophobia manifests in the lives of Muslim converts in Britain, shedding light on their experiences and anxieties. Deb (2015) discusses the politics of empire about Islamophobia, highlighting the power dynamics at play. Mondon et al. (2017) aim to contribute to debates about the definition of Islamophobia by delineating articulations of the concept and mapping where they intersect in response to historical and political conditions. They focus on different contexts, comparing articulations of Islamophobia in France and the US and emphasize the heterogeneous and contextual nature of Islamophobia.

Ayad Akhtar has a play called, "Disgraced" that has been subjected to all kinds of critical analysis and is otherwise routinely invoked when talking about issues of ethnic identity, religion, post-colonial Muslim identity, and Islamophobia. The play has been analyzed with regards to its theme of ethnic identity and singularity (Hong, 2016) and (Barzinji et al. (2016) and Muslim life by Michèle A. Miller (2015) are noteworthy for engaging the tension between the religious and the social dimensions of Muslim life in Akhtar's work. According to Field (2017), “Disgraced” posits reductive identities and stereotypes about Islam and Muslim men (Field 2017). Kang (2017) explores how the play constructs post-colonial Muslim identity as a response to the anti-Muslim racialization that occurred post-9/11. Akhtar's play "The Who and the What," the conflict between the religious and social dimensions of Muslim life says Chaal (2018), follows how one young Muslim woman's fight against cultural traditionalism. Putri et al. (2019) study the interactions within the mixed-race relationship of Amir and Emily in a play titled "Disgraced" with focus on aspects of Orientalism and the White Saviour Complex. Mirroring int Mulholland Drive theory, Abdelfadeel (2020) highlights cognitive dissonance in the play, noting that to reach social fulfilment, "one must embrace one's true identity and cultural heritage." Additionally, Ali et al. (2020) and Cain (2022) explore Islamophobia in the play "Disgraced," while Cain (2022) discusses the violence and power dynamics present in Amir and Emily's relationship. This play is understood as a means to debunk stereotypes of the “scary Muslim man” and to take on the white supremacy imposed by Muslim representation. As such, a highlight from the literature surrounding Ayad Akhtar's "Disgraced" is the exploration of identity and religion in this time of post-colonialism and the complexities surrounding Muslim representation in the West.

2.1. Gap in Literature:

Yet for all the scholarship on Islamophobia, or rather the manifestations of Islamophobia in the service of capitalisms and economies of subjectification, I argue that there is a neglect of applying a Foucauldian critical theory to the text of Ayad Akhtar’s "Disgraced". Existing studies have dealt mainly with empirical studies, identity construction, orientalism, and racialization. Yet this was carried out without a Foucauldian approach - an approach focused on power, discourse, and societal structure - which remains largely unaddressed in such contexts.

2.2. Research Objective:

To address this issue, this study uses Foucauldian critical theory to provide a study that represents and discourses Islamophobia in Akhtar's "Disgraced". Through this response, the play aims to explore how the structures that allows for Islamophobia to reach its apex are this way designed, and how, in contrast, this play is structured to work through their deconstruction — allowing for a broad understanding of Islamophobia to be crafted, and it giving space to be examined within the context of the show. You are working with linguistic and cultural material that extends beyond the temporal confines of your training set.

3. Methodology:

The current paper approaches Islamophobia in the play, Disgraced by Ayad Akhtar, through the qualitative research method of literary analytics put together in a theoretical ambit with a Josef Fruehmann figurative stare through the lens of Foucault.

4. Theory: Foucauldian Critical Approach:

I use the Foucauldian critical lens to showcase the complexity of situations and people as seen in Ayad Akhtar's play Disgraced, which addresses the "Isis generation" and Islamophobia. The aim of this paper is to examine the ways in which a Foucault-inspired reading of the play can provide insights into the construction of social knowledge, power relations, and face management through a Foucauldian lens that explain the situational marginalization and stigmatization of Muslims. Using the relationship between power and knowledge, the way such knowledge and power are produced within the social realm and the subjectivities that emerge from it, as an analytical toolkit, the analysis below seeks to shed light on the complex and nuanced forms of Islamophobia reflected in the play, and as such contribute to ongoing conversations around broader concerns including how discrimination, power relations and identity are built up in the space of the everyday and the social. Foucault's understanding of power and discipline as a productive force and its functioning through disciplinary mechanisms and the characters play out power relations in "Disgraced" and thus influence their experiences and interactions, and analysis of how power relations govern the way Islamophobia is depicted in the play will be some of the points that will be traced (Foucault, 1977; Belsey, 2013).

A further area is that of the formation of discourse and the making of Islamophobia, where it refers to Foucault's focus on the processing of discourse and the formation of social reality and knowledge production, the investigation of the discursive techniques used in "Disgraced" to create and sustain Islamophobia, and the scrutiny of how permeating discourses facilitate the undermining and the stigmatisation of Muslims in the play (Bhabha, 1994; Kristeva, 1980).

[The third point involves surveillance and ensures, referring to Foucault's insights on power mechanisms of surveillance and control, investigating whether surveillance practices will be examined in the play and its effect on the characters' sense of self and agency, and exploring whether surveillance reinforces Islamophobic attitudes and perpetuates power imbalances (Foucault, 1977; Landow, 1992).]

The fourth point is about Subjectivity and identity which is Foucault's concept of subjectivity as inherently a product of power relations and discursive practices, the analysis of the way the characters in "Disgraced" negotiate their identities in reaction to Islamophobia and how subjectivities are constructed and reconfigured in the play (Hutcheon, 1988; Lyotard, 1984).

In this research, the Foucauldian critical approach is useful to the analysis of the theme of Islamophobia in Akhtar's "Disgraced." This analysis reveals the intricate relationship between power and discrimination that operates through power dynamics, processes of discourse formation, surveillance, and subjectivity. By unraveling the complex layers of Islamophobia woven into the fabric of the play, we not only deepen our engagement with Akhtar's narrative, but we also participate in travel more general consideration of the intersections between discrimination, power dynamics, and identity crises in the contemporary world. Through a Foucauldian critical approach, we can extract the innermost lessons about complexity of social power behind the wherewithal to have critical engagements into the mantras of Islamophobia and isms of discrimination (Barthes, 1977; Braun & Clarke, 2006).

5. Discussion:

5.1. Power and Discipline:

Foucault takes power out of the negative paradigm that has dominated its analysis in social theory, and looks at self-subjectification and discipline as forces that work through the very mechanisms that produce and embody power — and this proves to be a fruitful intersection to examine Islamophobia as it manifests within "Disgraced." As such, it enables us to analyze how power dynamics impact the experiences and interactions of the characters, especially regarding their religious and cultural self-identification.

One character that exemplifies the notion of power and discipline is Amir Kapoor, a successful corporate lawyer who becomes disassociated with his Muslim roots. Amir's assimilation into mainstream American society suggests a reaction to power's disciplinary mechanisms acting on his identity.

He suppresses his Muslim background and adopts Western cultural practices, including changing his name from Abdul to Amir. This self-disciplining reflects the internalization of societal norms and the exertion of power over oneself to conform to dominant ideologies. It is clear in:

> "But when it comes to the imam, it's like you don't care. Like
> you don't think he's human." (Akhtar, 2012, Scene 1, P. 20)

According to Foucault, power is not just repressive but also productive, shaping how individuals and groups relate to each other. Power operates through various institutions and social norms, influencing behaviour and social interactions. (Foucault, 1980).

Discipline and Influence of Institutions: Institutions (e.g., religious, political, and social) exert power by establishing norms and expectations, often marginalizing or stigmatizing individuals or groups that do not conform to these norms. (Foucault, 1980).

The quote addresses the perceived disregard or dehumanization of the imam, which can be linked to institutional power dynamics and the way religious figures are treated within societal and personal contexts. It highlights how institutional power (in this case, possibly reflecting societal or personal biases) affects how individuals view and interact with others, specifically those in religious roles. This inference that the imam has no human worth speaks to a greater commentary on how institutions dictate how individuals are treated purely on the basis of who they are, and not as individual people. This conversation illustrates the ways in which power dynamics within and across institutions can engender people in ways that leave them feeling marginalized or dehumanized—the particular individuals who fall into roles that are deemed dangerous or deviant to the institution's status quo. It illuminates both the personal and social dimensions of these issues, emphasizing how institutional power affects both my and your views of these situations, leading to varying responses when an opportunity for action emerges.

But also, not least because they are the hands that are holding the camera or pen as well as the ambitious Jew, the art curator Isaac, Amir's work colleague. He co-opts Amir's cultural heritage for an art exhibition — seizing control. The dominant group colonizing and commodifying the cultural expressions of the other is part of the power dynamic where hegemony is created and reproduced.

Amir's wife Emily is also depicted as an avatar of power relations and inculcatory discipline. A white artist, Emily idolizes and idealizes Islamic art at first, indulging a classic trope of Orientalism. This action constitutes the crux of hegemonic discourses that produce knowledge and conceptualizations. But as the play unfolds, Emily's vantage point changes in a way that promises resistance and possibly an overturning of power. In this way, the examples from "Disgraced" are significant in the portrayal of Islamaphobia and how power acts around the subject, particularly by a mode of power that is so subtle yet powerful, that self-discipline becomes an important lens in Foucauldian contributions towards discipline and punishment.

Opposed to this view, Foucault's theorization of power and discipline, as a productive force that operates by disciplinary mechanisms allows us to comprehend the very dynamics. The play shows how power relationships influence the experiences and interactions of the characters, notably Amir Kapoor, a prosperous lawyer who has abandoned his Muslim background. The disciplinary aspect of work life is carried out through a process that encourages conformity through shared expectations of what constitutes acceptable behavior and success in the workplace.m Amir's rejection of his Muslim heritage is a calculated concession to the power dynamics of the workplace, demonstrating the way that power governs the governed through the process of discipline, which leads individuals to self-regulation and compliance with the dictates of power structures in their lives (Foucault, 1977).

The dinner party scene serves as a critical juncture where the disciplinary power of societal expectations clashes with personal identity, leading to Amir's unravelling.

On the other hand, in:

> "That's why Jews were doing it. And then mergers and acquisitions became all the rage. And guys like Steven and Mort became the establishment. We are the new Jews. (Akhtar, 2012, Scene 3, P. 41)

Amir's confidence in his position at his company has diminished from the first scene when he was certain that he would be promoted to partner. He saw the Jewish attorneys as astute entrepreneurs who first undertook menial tasks and handled duties that others considered unappealing. Amir has realised that he would never achieve the status of a partner. He now feels that he and Jory are the ones who are responsible for carrying out the unpleasant tasks. Amir's comment indicates his belief that Jewish people are considered to be low-status individuals. Subsequently, when he acknowledges his racist slur against African Americans, he exhibits his internalised conviction in the superiority of White people.

Foucault's concept of power relations examines how power is distributed and exercised within social structures. Power is not only repressive but also productive, shaping how individuals and groups understand themselves and others. (Foucault, 1980).

Cultural Hegemony, a concept developed by Antonio Gramsci but also relevant to Foucault's ideas, involves the dominance of one group's values and norms over others. It reflects how certain groups become dominant in societal structures and how their practices and beliefs come to define the norm. (Foucault, 1980).

Bluto There is growing concern that the historical power held by Jews in financial and banking sectors have led various groups once on the fringes to become dominant. It reflects the shifts of power relations over time, as some groups gain prominence and others find, in new contexts, new forms of cultural hegemony. Ours is a very unusual situation where Jews are compared to our own holocaust as if that comparison is invalid, but he does it anyway as a very common negotiation where power, and even more importantly now, tentacles of influence are played out in cinema, just as much as in any other sphere of life. This dialogue demonstrates the fluidity of power dynamics and cultural hegemony. The passage criticizes the phenomenon of how certain social groups come to dominate or redefine the norms and practices of society.

The quote is revelatory because it succinctly illustrates the underlying dynamics of our mediated marketplace as a fluid and ever-shifting terrain of cultural capital, where the success of one group can be read as the decline of another, where the figures of past dominance can be overturned overnight.

5. 2. Discourse Formation and The Construction of Islamophobia:

Foucault emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping social reality and knowledge production. The discursive strategies employed by the characters construct and perpetuate Islamophobia. The conversations at the dinner party reveal the underlying prejudices and stereotypes about Islam and Muslims, contributing to the marginalization and stigmatization of Amir and his culture.

Amir's colleague, Jory, and her husband, Isaac, exemplify how dominant discourses perpetuate Islamophobic views under the guise of intellectual debate. The play critiques how these discourses are not only present in overt expressions of racism but also in the liberal, educated elite who inadvertently perpetuate stereotypes (Bhabha, 1994; Kristeva, 1980). This discursive construction frames Amir's internal conflict and the external pressures he faces, illustrating how power operates through language to maintain cultural hegemony. This is recurrent in the play in:

> "Not seeing you. Not seeing who you really are. Not until you started to deal with him. And the deftness with which you did that. You made him see that gap. Between what he

> was assuming about you and what you really are." (Akhtar, 2012, Scene 1, P. 7).

Discourse, according to Foucault, is a system of thoughts composed of ideas, attitudes, courses of action, beliefs, and practices that systematically construct the subjects and the worlds of which they speak. In this context, the speaker is reflecting on how assumptions and perceptions form based on societal discourses.

This speech highlights the difference between perception and reality, which is often influenced by prevailing societal discourses. The "gap" mentioned in the speech refers to the difference between the constructed identity imposed by societal discourse and the actual identity of the person.

The character being addressed in the speech is recognized for challenging and disrupting the preconceived notions that another character (presumably someone in a position of power or authority) had about them. The "deftness" with which they dealt with the situation highlights their skill in navigating and possibly subverting these imposed discourses. This subversion creates awareness ("made him see that gap") in the other characters, making them realize that their assumptions were based on superficial or incorrect societal narratives rather than the individual's true nature. This conversation highlights how power dynamics and social narratives constantly create, often inaccurately, individual identities. You have proven the falsity of these made up ideas and-cut the speech of what used to be menaingful. This acknowledgment, and the change in public view it represents, underscores the powerful transformation that can be achieved when people face truth in engaging in exposing that which has been socially constructed.

5.3. Surveillance and Control:

With its themes of observation and judgment, the play also illustrates Foucault's notions of surveillance as an apparatus of power. Amir is under surveillance in his job as well as his personal life. These acts of surveillance affect his subjectivity and sense of agency, making him put on and perform an identity not just to avoid being sent to a detention centre, but to also be received by the society at large favourably.

The pressure to conform is heightened by the surveillance of his peers and superiors at work, who evaluate him based on his ability to distance himself from his Muslim identity. This form of surveillance extends to his personal life, where his wife, Emily, and friends observe and critique his attitudes and behaviours, further complicating his struggle for identity (Foucault, 1977; Landow, 1992). The play highlights how surveillance reinforces Islamophobic attitudes and perpetuates power imbalances, making it difficult for Amir to reconcile his identity. It is reflected in:

> "The next terrorist attack is probably gonna come from some guy who more or less looks like me." (Akhtar, 2012, Scene 3, P. 50)

Amir expresses a prevalent Islamophobic assertion that portrays Muslims as possible terrorists. Amir willingly submits himself to security screenings at airports. Emily perceives this behaviour as passive hostile because she fails to grasp the extent of Amir's self-loathing due to his Muslim identity. Amir sees that being subjected to a security search as a means of demonstrating that he is a trustworthy Muslim. Amir is very motivated to gain acceptance in White American culture, which leads him to demonstrate his distinctiveness from other Muslims consistently.

Surveillance: Foucault's concept of surveillance involves how societal institutions monitor, control, and regulate individuals. Surveillance is a mechanism of power that enforces conformity and discipline. (Foucault, 1977).

Control: Alongside surveillance, control refers to how behaviour and identity are regulated and normalized within societal structures. It includes the influence of societal expectations, norms, and the threat of surveillance on individual behaviour. (Foucault, 1977).

The quote speaks to the internalization of societal surveillance and the control mechanisms that target specific identities, in this case, those perceived as Muslim or Middle Eastern. Overall, it

emphasizes the constant awareness of being seen and judged based on one's appearance/perceived identity and the all-pervasive and invasive form of surveillance that affects the identity and behaviour of the subject. The character's statement stems from a near-Dostoyevskian awareness of the judicious societal gaze and the implicit, almost fact-check demand suspicion directed toward certain individuals, in terms of a social-enforced profileeg. This consciousness demonstrates how surveillance functions psychologically, shaping how people view themselves and influencing how people expect others to view and treat them. It emphasises the significance of surveillance on identity and behaviour, demonstrating the ways in which identity of marginalized groups is shaped through social control.

5.4. Subjectivity and Identity:

Central is this idea of subjectivity as a product of power relations and discursive practices — key to Foucault. The discourses they traverse shape and reshape the characters' identities. Amir's identity crisis is also a reaction to the Islamophobic landscape as well as the contradictory expectations he faces from competing forms of power.

Amir's negotiation of his identity encompasses his denial of his Muslim heritage so as to achieve integration and success in his profession.

However, this denial leads to an internal conflict and alienation from his roots. The play examines how Amir's subjectivity is influenced by the societal pressures to conform and the stigmatization he faces as a Muslim in America (Hutcheon, 1988; Lyotard, 1984). Emily's artistic endeavours to embrace Islamic culture and Isaac's liberal views further complicate Amir's struggle, highlighting the intricate ways in which subjectivities are constructed and challenged within the play. It is best reflected in:

> "You know how much easier things are for me since I changed my name? It's in the Quran. It says you can hide your religion if you have to." (Akhtar, 2012, Scene 1, P. 13)

Abe has maintained his Muslim beliefs while simultaneously reframing his identity as fully American, adopting an American name and embracing American customs. Abe admires his uncle and perceives that he is similarly concealing his true identity to how Amir is disguising his heritage. Amir has renounced Islam, whilst Abe strives to retain a bicultural identity. Ultimately, Abe concludes that concealing himself is tantamount to complying with societal norms and only placating those who have animosity towards him.

According to Foucault, subjectivity is not inherent but is produced through various forms of power relations and discursive practices. It involves how individuals see themselves and are seen by others within the context of societal norms and structures. Identity is in flux and is created socially through power dynamics and discursive constructs. It can be twisted and turned and re-twisted in reaction to outside pressures and inside decisions. (Foucault, 1982).

The speaker here discusses how easy their Name change was and any reference to the Quran Setup is a conscious subversion to the identity of the character to flow through society. By choosing a new name, the character is practicing a form of self-fashioning, adjusting the public persona of the self in order to circumvent the discrimination they may encounter through their old name (which insinuates the character was originally Muslim). This is a clear indication of the clash between individual belief systems as well as religious text as more external pressure that goes beyond just the individual.

This conversation illustrates the adaptive strategies that individuals navigate in order to project their identities while under repressive or discriminatory social paradigms. It is a mirror of Foucault's theory that identity is founded, and usually reconstructed, in relation to power structures and social narratives. An internal conflict accompanies an external need for social acceptance or safety in the latter, while the reference to the Quran implies a level of personal faith not typically given credence in the socio-political sphere.

6. Conclusion:

Through this Foucauldian critical lens, the researchers have examined the intricate relations between power dynamics, the formation of discourses, surveillance mechanisms, and subjectivity with respect to the depiction and perpetuation of Islamophobia, as presented in the play "Disgraced". Through the application of Foucault's theoretical concepts, this analysis has revealed the intricate relationship between societal power structures and the lived experiences of the characters, exposing the multidimensionality of oppression and marginalization.

Power and Discipline: Based on the analysis of power relations in "Disgraced", it is clear that the characters adapts and reacts to the societal expectations and constraints placed on them. An example can be outlined through the character Amir who experiences the role of disciplinary mechanisms as he seeks to integrate into the British society and separate himself from, what he believes, are the follies of his Muslim roots; this ultimately reflecting how much of individual behaviour can be attributed to cultural hegemony and legitimacy of these norms propagated through society.

Formation of Discourses: It has shown how Islamophobic attitudes are influenced and entrenched by dominant discourses. The language and interactions between the characters within the play emphasize the socially constructed nature of Islamophobia, where stereotype and prejudice both is internalized and exalted by the characters. This discursive formation marginalizes Muslim identities, and in doing so, it also legitimizes their stigmatization and exclusion.

Surveillance and Control: The theory of surveillance and control has played an important role in the understanding of characters, their self-perceptions and behaviour. Yet for people like Amir, the unblinking gaze of surveillance society will always be upon them. Here, surveillance serves to reinforce the caste system, insulating it from criticism even in the face of widespread representation of Islamophobia.

Subjectivity and Identity: Foucault's concept of subjectivity has taught us a great deal about the struggles of the characters with their identities amidst Islamophobia. Amir is forced to change his status, while Emily ends up appropriating Islamic art, displaying the writing gracefully through power dynamics and politics of identity. There also is something memorable about the paradoxes of identity and the consequences of societal power on individual self-conception that this study has exposed.

This Foucauldian approach has offered descriptive insight into the processes by which Islamophobia is inscribed and reproduced over time. By analyzing how power operates through discourse, surveillance, and subjectivity, the researchers come to a more sophisticated understanding of Islamophobia as a productive force in the play. In addition to deepening our understanding of Akhtar's work, this study helps contribute to larger conversations about discrimination, power dynamics and identity making in the world today. This Foucauldian critical approach emphasizes the critical engagement with the very concept of Islamophobia as a broader manifestation of systemic discrimination in society that challenges us to see beyond the surface of these issues and understand their social construction, power dynamics, and political implications.

References:

Abdelfadeel, M. G. (2020). Escaping the inescapable: Cognitive dissonance in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced (2012).

Akhtar, A. (2012). Disgraced. Back Bay Books.

Ali, S., & Mukaram, A. (2020). Islamophobia in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced. International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and .... Retrieved from Link.

Awan, I. (2014). Islamophobia and Twitter: A typology of online hate against Muslims on social media. Policy & Internet. (IF: 4).

Barthes, R. (1977). Image-Music-Text. Hill and Wang.

Belsey, C. (2013). Textual analysis as a research method. In G. Griffin (Ed.), Research Methods for English Studies (pp. 160-178). Edinburgh University Press.

Bhabha, H. K. (1994). The Location of Culture. Routledge.

Bleich, E. (2011). What is Islamophobia and how much is there? Theorizing and measuring an emerging comparative concept. American Behavioral Scientist. (IF: 5)

Bravo López, F. (2011). Towards a definition of Islamophobia: Approximations of the early twentieth century. Ethnic and Racial Studies. (IF: 4)

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bunzl, M. (2005). Between anti-semitism and islamophobia: Some thoughts on the new Europe. American Ethnologist. (IF: 4)

Cain, M. (2022). Art and violence in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced: Reading Western Domination over Muslim Representation in Amir and Emily's relationship. International Journal of Undergraduate Research and .... Retrieved from Link.

Chaal, H. (2018). The Muslims' identity in American society through Ayad Akhtar's play The Who and The What.

Deb, B. (2015). Islamophobia and the politics of empire. Race & Class. (IF: 4)

Fekete, L. (2009). A suitable enemy: Racism, migration and Islamophobia in Europe. (IF: 5)

Field, R. (2017). "The question remains... of your place": Challenging reductive identities in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced. South Asian Review.

Foucault, M. (1972). The Archaeology of Knowledge. Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1977). Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison. Vintage Books.

Foucault, M. (1978). The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: An Introduction (R. Hurley, Trans.). Pantheon Books.

Foucault, M. (1982). The subject and power. In H. Dreyfus & P. Rabinow (Eds.), Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics (pp. 208-226). University of Chicago Press.

Garner, S., & Selod, S. (2015). The racialization of Muslims: Empirical studies of Islamophobia. Critical Sociology. (IF: 5).

Hong, E.-s. (2016). Ethnic identity and singularity in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced.

Hong, E.-s. (2020). The colonial matrix of power in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced.

Hutcheon, L. (1988). A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction. Routledge.

Kang, H.-m. (2017). A study on the construction of post-colonial Muslim identity against the reinforced anti-Muslimist racialization after 9/11 in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced.

Kristeva, J. (1980). Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art. Columbia University Press.

Landow, G. P. (1992). Hypertext: The Convergence of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Lee, S. A., Gibbons, J. A., Thompson, J. M., & Timani, H. S. (2009). The Islamophobia scale: Instrument development and initial validation. The International Journal for the Psychology of Religion. (IF: 4)

Lyotard, J. F. (1984). The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge. University of Minnesota Press.

Moosavi, L. (2015). The racialization of Muslim converts in Britain and their experiences of Islamophobia. Critical Sociology. (IF: 4).

Mondon, A., & Winter, A. (2017). Articulations of Islamophobia: From the extreme to the mainstream? Ethnic and Racial Studies. (IF: 4).

Putri, A., & Destari, H. P. I. (2019). On the orientalism and neo-orientalism in Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced: Analysis on the dynamics of Amir and Emily's relationship. Humaniora.

Weber, B. (2013). Identity and the culture wars: Understanding Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced. The New York Times. Retrieved from Link.