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## Secular Dreams and Minority Question: Reading *Disgraced* with Talal Asad

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### Abstract

Edward Said in his *Orientalism* (1978) has developed the understandings of identity formation and otherisation based upon the distinction between ontology and epistemology, with an emphasis on humanitarian perspective. His book attempts to approach a heterogeneous and complex human reality in which the characters recognize and practice their individual agency. The minorities of a society have been pushed towards the fences under covert ideology of universalism and homogenization. The secular thinkers of the contemporary era have only underlined and applauded the assimilation project between diverse communities and few have addressed the terrorization and cancellation tolerated by the ‘others or them’. After the incident of 9/11, the Muslim scapegoating has increased in bounds more than ever. This paper aims to discuss this pertinent issue with a ‘contrapuntal reading’ of the text *Disgraced* (2012) by Ayadh Akhtar in relation to Talal Asad’s *Secular Translations: Nation-State, Modern Self, and Calculative Reason* (2018). Asad’s argument that Islam in Europe has become “quasi-civilization identity” which threatens European civilization and their struggle to overcome the essentialism of the Muslims will help to understand Ayadh Akhtar’s character Amir Kapoor’s relation with the post 9/11 American state. This paper seeks to discuss the problems in a homogenous universal culture and tries to explicate how the due recognition of heterogeneous identity can address the subject of minority identity discourse in its complex entity.

**Keywords:** Religion, Secular, Minority, Modernity, Identity Politics.