

**The Muslim Woman as the Other:
A Postcolonial Study of Mohja Kahf's**

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf

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Abstract

The front pages of Western media outlets continue to feature a substantial amount of negatively stereotyped understanding of Islam and Muslims. The "War on Terror" has made Muslims a common theme in today's discussions about Islam phobia. This article examines *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) by Mohja Kahf as a contemporary fiction exploring misconceptions about Islam and Muslim women in the context of postcolonial philosophy using the idea of the *Other*. The importance of the study comes from the way it offers a postcolonial analysis of how Muslim women's identities are represented after 9/11 and how Muslims are *othered*, thus enhancing academic literature studies in the narrative genre. Moreover, it examines how 9/11 affects Muslim women's sense of belonging and integration in an adversarial, secular American society.

Keywords: American Muslim, Islam, Mohja Kahf, Other, Postcolonial Woman.

Introduction

Politicians and the media have used deeply ingrained disinformation to maintain hegemony and political power through ideology, which is the cause of the erroneous perception of Muslims. Recent politicians and media representations of Muslims as uncaring, cruel terrorists and religious fanatics have instilled these unfavorable ideas into the public's psyche (Ibrahim, 2010). They have cultivated what is known as the "archetype of enemy" and welcomed it, which has been implanted in the minds of the general population (Hyde, 2008, p. 86).

The most prevalent misconceptions about Arabs relate to their brutality and cruelty. These misconceptions have been broadened to include Muslims from the Middle East as well as Arabs, giving the region a damaging reputation for danger and violence. They refer to everyone with a Middle Eastern appearance, not just those of Arab ancestry. In order to establish the false adversary that threatens American national security, politicians and the media actively foster unfavorable stereotypes and perceptions about Muslims in public opinion.

Following 9/11, political discourse and the media leveraged the unfavorable perception of Islam to incite hatred toward Muslims. Despite Edward Said's writings being published before the 9/11 attacks, Said has looked into the same anti-Muslim rhetoric. Said bemoaned "the almost total absence of any cultural position making it possible either to identify with or dispassionately discuss the Arabs or Islam" in his well-known book *Orientalism* (1978, p. 27). Said was vehemently critical of the history

of Orientalism, which he supposed diminished rather than elevated the topic of its study. A dichotomous paradigm that gave Islam bad traits and the West favorable ones served as the foundation for how Islam was portrayed in the West. Islam has received particular critical scrutiny from Orientalists, who have labeled it a Christian heresy and an unredeemable abuser of women. Said extensively discusses this historical epistemic prejudice against Islam in his long study of Orientalism. It may have persisted over centuries in Western academia. Said asserts in his 1981 book *Covering Islam* that an earlier "ideological work" had been done to influence Western media attitudes toward the religion of Islam:

"The association created deliberately between the Islam and the Fundamentalism guarantee that the common reader starts to see both as being essentially the same thing. Due to the tendencies to reduce the Islam to some rules, stereotypes and generalizations regarding faith, its founder and its people, the reinforcement of all the negative fact linked to Islam – its violence, primitiveness, and atavism, threatening qualities- It's perpetuated." (Said, 1981, pp. xvi-xvii)

These are the persistently detrimental traits that have irrevocably tarnished Muslims. Said believes that most Americans view Islam as nothing but problems (Ibid., xv). Said acknowledges a dangerous environment where "many Americans will find it difficult to think of Muslims as anything other than enemies" (Sides & Gross, 2013, p. 597).

In the wake of 9/11, the mainstream media and "liberal imperialists" contributed to the creation of the domestic Muslim adversary. American Muslims are no longer free. They are concerned about being charged and being linked to terrorism. By linking Muslims to terrorism, Muslims have continued to be seen as the "Other," which is supported by the binary opposition of "we/they". Muslims are considered both insiders and aliens, rather than the "Other" who is from the outside. Therefore, it is vital to investigate how Muslims are misrepresented as the Other in various fictional works. Doing so would shed light on how Muslims are used as internal and external opponents and how the Other distorts and misconceives Muslims. Through a postcolonial lens, this study examines how Muslim women are portrayed. A new awareness of "Othering" will also be created by investigating the Other through literature, which is the most potent form of communication. The current study claims that the unfavorable portrayal

of Muslim women after 9/11 has been exaggerated and has hampered Muslim identity creation. *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* by the Arab-American author Mohja Kahf is a representative example of the *othered* Muslim women after 9/11.

Kahf was born in Damascus, Syria, in 1967. She moved with her family to the United States in 1971. Kahf encountered a significant deal of intolerance and tyranny after the family relocated to Plainville, Indiana, which left an enduring impression on her and influenced her creative perspective. "I remember the precise moment and day when I knew how not to take it anymore," she writes. It can be useful to turn around and respond, and this response may be useful in some way. I can still hear that voice." "Setting off her mission as a representative of Arab and Muslim-American women in the U.S." (Koban, 2016, p. 2), Kahf's first publication was a 1999 academic research titled *Western Representations of Muslim Women: From Termagant to Odalisque*. She has written short stories, essays, literary criticism, academic scholarship, poetry (*E-mails from Scheherazad*, her debut collection of poems, was a 2004 Paterson Poems Prize finalist), creative nonfiction, and the 2006 book *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. This experience has also helped Kahf develop her voice and challenge the way that women are perceived in her writing. Nevertheless, "Muslim identity in the diaspora is not the only subject that Kahf explores in order to imagine a more hospitable place for first and second-generation immigrants" (Koban, 2016, p.3).

Othering the Muslim Woman in Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*

Arab-American Muslim women offer themselves as ambassadors for their Arab culture and have accepted the responsibility of dispelling inaccurate preconceptions of the mainstream American nation while retelling tales of genuine Arabs and their cultures. Arab-American writers employ this strategy to change the fundamental essence of being either Arab or Arab-American. Their stories aim to counteract stereotypes of Arabs as primitive, violent, terrorists, etc., by showcasing positive Arabs. These authors hope to alter Western perceptions of Arabs and Muslims by offering at least a different interpretation of reality. Early Arab-American authors emphasize the success stories of Arab immigrants in America, presenting them as role models for later generations of Arab-Americans. Kahf's novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* is a testimonial text that depicts the struggles and successes experienced by Arab immigrants in the United States. She focuses on the difficulties faced by Muslim women in America.

The current political and cultural climate in America that is hostile to Islam and Muslims, according to Samaa Abdurraqib, makes it more challenging to decide whether to display one's Muslim otherness or assimilate. Furthermore, Muslim authors have relatively few options for subject matter because Islam is seen as being foreign (Abdurraqib, 2006, p. 59). It is much more challenging to understand Kahf's points of view because she prefers to discuss religion through the veil, which is obviously a religious symbol. Abdurraqib maintains that when "literature focuses on religion, religion is treated as a culture that needs to be left behind because it does not correlate with being American". (Abdurraqib, 2006, p. 61) Additionally, "normative immigration novels" tend to exploit the same motifs as religiously focused immigrant writing. The fact that the novel's author is a woman furthers the separation of "us" and "them," with Islam serving as the religion of the "other" and the society from which women must be freed. Women are frequently "assigned the role of bearers of cultural values, carriers of traditions, and symbols of the community," which means that women are frequently "compelled to assume the burden of the reproduction of the group," which is why this trend is consistent with many immigrant experiences (Abdurraqib, 2006, p. 62). The female protagonists, however, are forced to think about surrendering their religion and culture in order to fit into American society because Islam is associated with cultural traditions and is perceived as restrictive. In terms of their identities as Arab-American writers, these female authors are then faced with two opposite options. The options are to either integrate, which is, in the best situations, an imperfect process, or to oppose assimilation and be perceived as being outside the norm. The concept of "difference" as "self-defense" is examined by Trinh Minh-ha, who thinks that it "becomes important for immigrant subjects who are facing isolation and ostracism" (Minh, 1989, p. 82). In this situation, identity has two distinct meanings. It is "rationally constructed through difference from the other; identification with a group based on gender, race, or sexuality... depends primarily on binary systems of "us" against "them," where difference from the other defines the group to which one belongs." (Minh, 1989, p.83).

On the other hand, identity can also imply similarity; it affirms some sort of shared basis or similarity. Therefore, the foundation of identity formation is built on the premise of being "different" or "same" as a particular group. Based on factors like color, gender, and ethnicity, this type of criteria would include specific people and exclude others. Certain physical characteristics typically identify it. These indicators include skin tone, facial expressions, and clothing choices. According to Leila Ahmed, "the veil

is the most visible marker of [difference]", denoting exclusion from mainstream American society and acceptance of a particular ethnic and religious group (p. 27).

Kahf depicts a similar situation in her novel, which is the coming-of-age story of Khadra Shamy, a Syrian immigrant girl who grows up in a devoutly observant Muslim family in 1970s Indiana. (Moore, 2014, p. 189). The plot centers on Khadra, the main character, as she makes her way "back home" to Indiana, the state from which she escaped, first in her native Syria and then in Eastern America, in search of her identity and a less "dissonant" existence. Her personal and discreet investigation explores the various nuances of the Islamic faith, its place inside the US, and its interactions with the US national identity. A dissertation on Islam, the Muslim-American community, inclusion and exclusion, identity, whiteness, and the national narrative of the United States in relation to the Ku Klux Klan, 9-11, Orientalism, and patriarchy is seen apparently in Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*.

Kahf's novel stands out in the canon of contemporary Arab American literature for the empowerment of women through self-described spirituality and religion. On the other hand, most other Arab-American feminist narratives focus on reclaiming the transnational histories of Muslim women's agency by appropriating orientalist Scheherazade figures. The post-9/11 era has seen an actual explosion in the genre of Arab-American fiction. This growth, though, is related to modern neo-Orientalisms. It nevertheless maintains a problematic relationship with the expectations of a stereotypical audience and the marketing demands placed on "Muslim women" to represent not only themselves but also the presumed widespread marginalization and oppression of women in Islam as opposed to the supposed strength of men. Kahf highlights this tension in her own theoretical work by focusing on the intersectional specificity faced by Muslim feminist writers who have to work within both Western Orientalisms and the disapproval of Muslim conservatives who reject any critique of their own patriarchy and dismiss feminism as a Western import. Kahf recommends careful contextualization and ongoing double scrutiny as solutions to this problem. Using a non-binary understanding of Muslim women's agency, she applies this technique to her own creative writing and uses her novel to create a connection between literary activism and Muslim feminist religious studies. In this story, Khadra, a Muslim activist, experiences two equally traumatic and life-changing events: an abortion and the early divorce of her husband. In response, Khadra makes an effort to reinvent herself

in opposition to conventional Muslim instructions. Khadra concurrently criticizes how Muslims are portrayed in American culture (Abdurraqib, 2006, p. 56).

Khadra is compelled to continue examining the divisions between "Muslims" and "Americans" as a result of the East-West cultural clashes and her experiences with practicing and secular Muslims who have differing interpretations of Islamic law inside the community. Teenage militancy, doubt as her perspective broadens, and a brief, terrible marriage to Juma, her domineering Kuwaiti husband, are all stages that Khadra experiences. She then travels to her native Syria, where she starts to heal and rediscover her faith. When she returns to America, she avoids Indiana since she still has nightmares about her tragic history there. She returns to Indiana later on assignment to attend a national Islamic conference. She discovers alterations on the familiar ground and a connection to her former neighborhood (Hampton, 2011, p. 250).

Kathleen Moore (2014) says that when Muslim women express their religious convictions at work, they experience anxiety and confusion. Muslim women in America will be able to practice their religion and express themselves freely. The veil, however, has an oppressive reputation and needs to be abandoned (Turner, 1974, p. 184). Muslim women must view themselves through American eyes if they want to participate in American society. Muslim women are typically expected to dress like American women. If Muslim women dress like Americans, they are more likely to be regarded as typical women. This implies that Muslim women are restricted in exhibiting their cultural identity. They can encounter a problem and an irony: Muslim women may need to give up their own culture in order to live better in America. This irony suggests that Muslim women's success in integrating into American society can be seen in how they dress: the more they dress like Americans, the simpler it will be for them to fit in with most people. As a result, the woman in this novel must give up her beliefs and identity to be accepted. Khadra, the main character, is compelled to take off her veil in order to get money and survive. If she wants to work as a photographer, she must remove her hijab. Khadra "wasn't even wearing a scarf" according to Kahf (p. 322) on the day she had a job interview.

Khadra, the main character, is a devout Syrian American from Indiana who deviates from the typical domestic trajectory that is outlined in numerous Muslim-American and Arab American texts. She gets pregnant after being conjugal while still in college, but she soon decides she doesn't want to have children with her Kuwaiti

husband, who is very controlling (one of their many issues stems from his dislike of her riding a bike). It is against Islam, he claims. It exposes your body" to "cycling a bike while wearing a hijab is ridiculous." You appear completely foolish, clumsy, and clownlike. He becomes increasingly intrusive; at one point, he objects when other guys approach her during a gathering of people and try to speak to her (Makari, 2014, p. 360).

Khadra refuses to be controlled by him and decides to undergo an abortion; she then starts a divorce. After spending time with her grandmother in Syria, she eventually returns home, having decided to wear the hijab on occasion. Despite this choice, she is still devout; both being covered and uncovered have their moments. She gave them both a hug. She suddenly understood one day that if she were to go out without her hijab, she would have to act modestly. It shows up in every decision, action, and gesture I make. Now, without the boost a veil provided, she had to accomplish it on her own. This was a difficult task. She occasionally wished only to have her trusted companion hijab guard her side.

Although Khadra's story is the book's focus, the characters surrounding her represent the full spectrum of Muslim life: they are secular, pious, wise, and insightful. No character, however flawed they may be, is a caricature, not even her tyrannical ex-husband: A panorama of lovable people whose lives collide at this specific time in Indiana has been created by Kahf. This is a careful examination of a group of people in Indiana, not just the story of a Muslim American woman told in broad strokes. It is as much a Midwestern story as it is an American and Muslim one (Makari, 2014, p. 362).

The protagonist of this story experiences prejudice because of her unusual clothing—a veil. This shows that the hijab has become problematic for Muslim women living in America because radicals find it difficult to understand the veil. Radicals can believe that the hijab is something horrible, unknown, and ought to be eliminated. This mysterious feeling may lead radicals to attack Muslim women, particularly those who conceal their faces with a headscarf. The veil is just a piece of clothing; it shouldn't be frightening. Consequently, in an effort to decrease bias against discrimination directed towards Muslim women, it is necessary to start a conversation on why Muslims must wear the hijab. (Hampton, 2011, p. 250).

Khadra, now an adult, is returning to Indiana, the state she grew up primarily in. Indiana's reunion with Khadra is set up from the beginning to expose a hatred that one would not expect to see between a person and their hometown: "'Liar,' she says to the highway sign that claims 'The People of Indiana Welcome You'" (p. 1). The author then goes on to describe the sights Khadra encounters as she travels back to her birthplace, specifically those that reinforce and propagate this animosity:

"There are silver silos and pole barns, tufts of gold thread on the meridian, and the blue day pouring into the dark sky. But it is not mine, this blue and gold Indiana morning. None of it is for me. She feels ground down to the grain between the flat land and the broad sky, erased. She feels as if, were she to scream in this place, some Indiana mute button would be on, and no one would hear." (p. 2)

In this section, Khadra is introduced as a subject who has been dislocated, and she has no belonging or connection to the home where she was raised. The background of this animosity is then revealed to the audience through a flashback in which tiny Khadra is playing innocently in her seemingly serene and paradisiacal childhood world when she is abruptly disturbed by:

a boy with heavy pink flushed cheeks on a dirt bike, tearing through the hung laundry, pulling down rope, soiling sheets with his tire tread. Khadra ran. Screamed and ran. Fell, scraped her cheekbone on the cracked asphalt. He wheeled and turned. Gunning for her. [...] (pp. 4-5)

Khadra is compared to other Americans, this is evident when Khadra's mother assigns the kids to work so they "don't turn into lazy American children" (p. 21). Therefore, when Khadra and her family traveled to the sacred city of Mecca to do their Haj, the mandatory pilgrimage for all Muslims once in their lifetime, she experienced a sense of attachment and belonging. Khadra identifies with the "imagined community" of Muslims prior to travelling to Mecca (Anderson, p. 6). Due to this, when their jet lands in Mecca for the first time, she has the following thoughts to herself, "At last someplace where we belong. It's the land of the Prophet. The land of all Muslims" (p. 159).

Khadra discovers during her stay in Mecca that while thinking of herself as a Muslim subject, she is entirely at odds throughout the city. Regarding the informal

address of her generation, Khadra is an outsider, the other. The initial conflict takes place in the early morning. She decides to travel to attend the prayer of dawn at the mosque, which is close to her parent's comrade's house:

"Thirty minutes later, with a tear-streaked face, Khadra was back, escorted by two burly matawwa policemen [...]. "Is this one of your womenfolk?" they asked Uncle Zaid, Saweem's husband, his face freshly washed. "We found her trying to get into the mosque." They said it as if she was a vagrant or something." (p. 166)

Her parents did not clarify that women were not allowed to worship in a mosque, an issue for "most Muslim countries" until after it happened (p. 168). Khadra's fundamental assumptions regarding the Islamic teachings are at odds with this, "What about the Prophet saying 'You must never prevent the female servants of God from attending the houses of God?'" (p. 168).

Khadra finds the manner in which the police officers handled her for her alleged transgression to be more disturbing:

"He said 'this woman' – it was like the police thought she was some kind of a bad woman, out in the street at that dark hour, alone, face uncovered. Then, the expression on Uncle Zaid's face when he wouldn't look at her at first and then when he recognized her: it was that look again. For a minute, she actually felt like a bad woman. (p. 168-169)

Every time, she gives up her previous religious convictions because they run counter to various aspects of her evolving identity. The best illustration of these internal struggles is the marriage between Khadra and Juma, a young Kuwaiti man she meets at the university. Juma's objection to Khadra riding a bike triggers their marriage's first signs of trouble. First, he politely requests that she refrain; second, he tries to persuade her by promising to make her stay worthwhile; third, he makes fun of her by saying that she looks foolish riding a bike while wearing a headscarf; and finally, he forbids her:

"I forbid you," he said, laying his hand on the bike seat. "As your husband, I forbid you." Khadra recoiled. She couldn't believe he would out and say that, even if it was Islamically valid. Her Father never said

things like that to her Mother. It was alien to everything she felt and knew." (p. 230)

Khadra finds it very difficult to agree to her husband's request even if she considers herself to be a Muslim woman. Although she eventually gives in to the conflict between two sides of her identity, "Something inside her rusted a little too" (p. 230). She admits: "I can't go on in this marriage without killing off the 'me' that I am" (p. 242) when such incidents occur in her marriage. Juma is not the real issue for Khadra; rather, it is the demands he places on her because she is an Arab Muslim woman, which is, in his opinion, an integral part of who she is, "She was an Arab girl, familiar with Arab customs. He hadn't expected her to be doing things that would embarrass him. If he'd wanted to have to explain every limit of proper behavior, he'd have married an American" (p. 227-228).

They disagree on what they believe an Arab Muslim lady should be. The main dispute stems from Khadra's pregnancy and subsequent abortion. She believes she does not want a child at this point in her life, not because her life is in danger. Her husband, family, and all of her friends oppose her desire to abort her child. They claim that Khadra rejects her maternal, traditionally religious position, saying that "her most important work is to convert people to Islam" (p. 21). Because of this, her status as a Muslim lady is questioned, and her transgression is seen as a danger to the entire community, "both in the original culture and in the diaspora, the female body, especially the body of the middle-class woman, functions as the repository of cultural tradition" (Kimak, p. 13).

After having an abortion and getting divorced, Khadra experiences despair. She does nothing but sit at home crying, sleeping, and mourning the loss of her identity and the foundations she had built her entire life upon. Khadra questions:

"And then what? Where do you go when the first part of your life is coming to an end, and you don't know what is yet unborn inside you? Where do you go when you're in a free fall, unmoored, safety net gone, and nothing to anchor you? " (p. 265)

To this end, and ensuing the adventures of the trip to Syria, Kahf also introduces the poet's persona, whom Khadra encounters at the summit of Mount Qaysoon, to the readers. It is impossible to tell whether the poet is real or a creation of Khadra's

imagination. The poet helps Khadra get past the either/or right/wrong, black or white thinking she was raised with. He serves as a bridge between reality and imagination in this way, acting as a liminal character. His liminal status is crucial to his function in the book, leading Khadra to doubt her most cherished convictions:

"Why do you spend so much time worrying about what God thinks of you?" [...] [H]is low voice seemed to come right out of her own gut. She didn't think she'd shared that much of her state of confusion. "It's the other way around, you know. God is what you think of God, you know."
(p. 301)

Khadra, Téta, Téta's friend, and the poet walk to a synagogue where Khadra has a heartbreaking encounter with the rabbi. She comes to realize how arbitrary the distinctions she had made between people, religions, and good and wrong were and that these distinctions were the root of all of her difficulties and contradictions:

"[The Rabbi] spoke with the deepest Damascene accent Khadra had ever heard, drawling out the last "m" on every word. His voice in those chords was like family to her. Something vibrated in her chest She'd thought of them as Them, these people over There, not all the same of course, she knew that, but, still not part of Us. Never. She could suddenly imagine being his granddaughter. Blood and soil and home, boiling coffee in the kitchen, puttering about in faded house slippers to find him dozing in his chair, his finger on a word in the holy book in his lap. And then this whole other life opened up in her mind." (p. 302)

In a way, the entire book could be viewed as an effort to create a place in American society where these women could "just be" by engaging with the debate's terms and illustrating the apparent insurmountable contradictions of both writing from and being in the position of the Arab-American woman. In order for them to contain these identities, the author engages with the discourse's terms and modifies them. Only after Khadra has grieved for Zuhura's passing does she realize:

"She looks around at the white people, too – the Americans – no wait, she's American now – the other Americans. [...] Midwesterners – Hoosiers – set in their ways, hardworking, steady, valuing God and family. Suspicious of change. In a funny way, Khadra realizes suddenly,

as she surveys the crowd: they're us, and we're them. Hah! My folks are the perfect Hoosiers!" (p. 438)

Because Kahf ends the book with Khadra in Indiana, even though she has changed since the beginning, it has a cyclical pattern. Throughout the novel, she goes through several minor and significant growth and transformation phases. Readers are convinced she will keep changing by the book's end because her identity is often broken and reconstructed.

Conclusion

People typically have an unconscious image of other people based on their cultural, religious, and geographic backgrounds, which leads them to misread religions that have their roots in their diverse social backgrounds. Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* is essential in fostering greater understanding amongst Americans of Muslim and non-Muslim faiths. Kahf suggests that the relationship between the two mainstream groups is crucial because hostility and selfishness are all too frequent. One gains a deeper understanding of the themes Kahf represents by considering how she challenges both Muslims and Americans as cultural translators and other minorities who face discrimination as "others." In this tale, a Muslim woman experiences marginalization, oppression, and othering in her surroundings. Khadra, the main character, struggles to fit into American culture and is compelled to take off her headscarf to get money and survive. Despite being an American, she feels alien to the majority of society because of her Islamic faith and culture. The way American fundamentalists attacked her and how she lost her identity are examples of failure to adapt. Kahf provides a critical account of how an American Muslim woman navigates the difficulties of assimilating into American culture. In order to combat the narratives promoted by the American mainstream and the resulting stereotypes, Kahf offers counternarratives. She discusses transforming the veil from oppression into a symbol of resistance and an independent identity. She emphasizes the inclusion and exclusion that the hijab as an ethnic clothing causes. Instead, she concentrates on a series of events that Muslim women in veils go through.

By examining the novel's beginning and finish with a representation of a Muslim lady, it is possible to understand Khadra's plight better. The protagonist of the story struggles to understand and come to terms with this representation, which

underlines the problematic equation that is represented by two complex factors: "the represented and the representer." Khadra has been attempting to establish her identity by rejecting her ethnic and religious heritage and embracing the norms of an Islamophobic culture that despises foreigners and views them as parasites that must be destroyed. Due to her dual citizenship as an American and a Muslim, Khadra's identity is shattered and ruined. Khadra balances how she perceives herself and others in this hybridizing domain. Khadra's religious and ethnic identity must be acknowledged and reconstructed, especially in the climactic Islamophobic context of Muslims' racialization in the wake of 9/11, which has resulted in the ongoing demand for a reconfiguration of the indices of belonging to the American community. *The Girl in The Tangerine Scarf* urges the audience to consider the plight of American Muslim women in-depth and discuss how they view Islam and Muslims. All the Muslim women in Kahf's novel are portrayed as *othered*, marginalized, and victimized, who have a right to resist and fight for their rights.

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المرأة المسلمة في دور الآخر: دراسة في سياق نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار في رواية مهجة كهف "الفتاة ذات الحجاب البرتقالي"

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المستخلص

لا تزال الصفحات الأولى لوسائل الإعلام الغربية تعرض قدرًا كبيرًا من الفهم النمطي السلبي للإسلام والمسلمين. لقد جعلت "الحرب على الإرهاب" من المسلمين موضوعًا مشتركًا إلى اليوم حول الخوف من الإسلام. يتناول هذا البحث رواية "الفتاة ذات الحجاب البرتقالي" (2006) للكاتبة مهجة كهف باعتبارها رواية معاصرة تستكشف المفاهيم الخاطئة حول الإسلام والمرأة المسلمة في سياق نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار باستخدام فكرة الآخر. تأتي أهمية الدراسة من خلال التحليل النقدي في سياق نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار لكيفية تمثيل هويات المرأة المسلمة بعد أحداث 11 سبتمبر وكيفية اختلاف المسلمين، وبالتالي تعزيز الدراسات الأكاديمية في حقل الأدب. علاوة على ذلك، يناقش البحث كيفية تأثير أحداث 11 سبتمبر على شعور المرأة المسلمة بالانتماء والاندماج في مجتمع أمريكي علماني معادٍ. أن اختيار كهف في هذه الدراسة ينبع من معرفتها المباشرة بالتحديات والتهميش التي تواجهها النساء المسلمات في أمريكا ما بعد 11 سبتمبر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المسلم الأمريكي، الأسلام، مهجة كهف، الآخر، امرأة ما بعد الاستعمار