

THE DEPICTION OF MUSLIM WOMEN IN RANDA ABDEL-FATTAH'S *DOES MY HEAD LOOK BIG IN THIS?*

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Original Article

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Abstract

The present study explores the depiction of a Muslim woman in Randa Abdel-Fattah's Does My Head Look Big in This? (2005). The novel challenges the image of Muslim women in the Western discourse about female's social role. The religious journey of the protagonist in Australia has been depicted in the novel. Data for the present study was analyzed through qualitative content analysis in the light of postmodern theory and Said's Orientalism (1978). The analysis showed Muslim women are devotees who follow their religious practices, recognized and empowered by their faith. The Muslims in the West are being treated as subaltern and are always represented by someone else either as rebellious or victims by neglecting their voices and choices. But Islam has been portrayed as a source of inspiration and a matter of personal choice rather than a compulsion for the protagonist to wear Hijab and follow other Islamic doctrines. The protagonist willingly selects the Islamic way of life and becomes a practicing Muslim. It empowers her against all negative temptations and her moral standards uplift and other characters realize this at the end and accept her worth and wish. The Western concepts about Muslims being violent and extremists were highlighted and corrected. The dominance of the West should be justified by accepting every label it pastes on different nations and religious groups and the minority groups should not always be depicted as oppressed and victims. The brighter side of every picture should be presented in every literary work as well. Amal's adherence with her religious practices has been depicted in a positive way to portray a positive picture of a devotee Muslim by overthrowing the stereotypes attached with Muslims and becoming a tolerant inhabitant of Western society.

Keywords: Women Depiction, Islamophobia, Stereotypes, the Subaltern, Hijab Orientalism.

Introduction

Randa Abdel-Fattah's is an ordinary Muslim female who always struggled in her life being not exotic and alien and wrote about female issues in an oriental setting and perceptions of the same in the West. Does My Head Look Big in This? (2005), by Randa Abdel-Fattah,

depicts the story of Amal an Australian born Muslim teenager and her decision to wear Hijab all the time. She studies in a high-class private school McClellans Grammar in Melbourne. It is a tough decision being in an elite school and in a non-Muslim country. Randa tried to challenge the attached misconceptions and stereotypes as 'oppressed', with Muslim women and

especially those Muslim women who wears Hijab. She has depicted a Muslim girl who has been empowered by her faith and presented it as a spiritual quest of an individual. The depiction of Amal as a devotee is to confront the stereotypes and also to present an alternative account of a Muslim woman of faith for the readers. The novel was published shortly after the traumatic incidents of 9/11 and Bali bombings. These incidents have increased the predicaments of Muslims immigrants in the West. Muslims and Muslims writers are challenging these stereotypical images of Muslims through different means and perspectives. Randa portrayal of a practicing Muslim woman in a non-Muslim country aims to paint the picture of an ordinary person who faces many challenges in life along with religious discrimination. In an interview, Abdel-Fattah told about her motif behind writing this novel "... wanted to write a book that gave a young Muslim teenager a voice and allowed her the chance to dispel stereotypes and shock readers into realizing, that teenagers, no matter their faith or culture have common experiences; that there is more in common, than there is different; and that the differences should be respected, not feared" (Majid, 2015, p. 17). It has been written on the motif for the readers, to know the actual self of a devotee and to end perceiving him/her with the established stereotypes. The book has the purpose to build a meaningful interaction among natives and immigrants to accept differences of each other.

Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyze the depiction of protagonist in *Does My Head Look Big in This?*
2. To analyze and explore the motive of the author by presenting Muslim women in the novel
3. To highlight the predicament of the Muslim women in the novel

Literature Review

The perception of the West about Muslims being orthodox has basically come from the non-availability of the word in Arabic to replace the English word 'orthodox' used in Christian context. The liberal aspect of Islam can be recognized from the lack religious authority, any strong office (ecclesiastical) or hierarchy acceptable to all Muslims unlike the decision-making authority in Eastern Christendom and as result Islam has more pluralistic and complex characteristics (Langer, & Simon, 2008). As a result of not realizing these liberal aspects of Islam, the religious liberties are denied from the Orthodox Christians to Muslim communities along some other economic and regional causes for this, though religious practices, especially of Muslims have little to do with intolerance (Karpov, & Lisovskaya, 2008). Even the founder of the Islam, Muhammad is considered as prophet and not God (Clendenin, 2003) but the dogmatic and radical interpretation of Islam in various Muslim communities was also introduced for vested interests of few (Rabasa, Waxman, Larson, & Marcum, 2004) giving rise particular movements in particular time (Federspiel, 1970).

In real Islam, all human beings (both male and female) are beautiful creation of Allah, to choose among the conflicting values of good and bad along the path of freedom of their choices (Kirabaev, & Chistyakova, 2020).

There are some efforts at different forums to make sure interfaith dialogues having some positive impact on the relationship between believers of Islam and other religious groups. New paradigms are suggested for addressing some pressing issues for world today and accommodate the same life purpose for all believers of divinity by preaching harmony among all religious groups and avoiding clash of civilizations (Sharp, 2010). Such endeavors for intercultural, interethnic and interreligious, dialogue have increased both qualitatively and quantitatively (Boldişor, 2016), taking into

account the global perspectives of today's modern world (Guglielmi, 2018).

The efforts of those Muslims in academia to oppose the negative representation of Muslims in media being extremists are worth appreciating (El-Aswad, 2013) and because of these efforts, it is now heavily debated whether veiled women can work in public administration (Sharp, 2010). Muslim women in the East have consistently been depicted in the film industry as in need of rescue by West like the acclaimed needed European colonialism presented as a justification (Ahmed, 1992). All such slogans just turn into propaganda as the liberation of Eastern women has not been answered. The West does not provide the justification that, it is liberating the women from what (Haddad, 2007).

This was highly needed after the 9/11 incidents when *"Over the past decade, and particularly since the September 11 terrorist attacks, the Muslim community in the United States has experienced an increased level of social and religious scrutiny. This unfortunate incident has fundamentally changed the way the American society views Muslims, especially Muslim women who wear the veil or Hijab in public"* (Munir, 2014, p. 1) and as a result, *"negative attitude towards Muslims, as various polls show, Muslim, in the West are the main targets of racist attitudes and behaviors"* (Ameri, 2012, p. 1). Fawal (2013) stated, *"Regrettably, for many decades, United States mass media has been promulgating negative stereotyped images about the Arab Muslim world. These negative images have been dramatically intensified after September 11 attacks. ...Since then, an aggressive campaign has been waged against Muslim values, traditions, culture and people"* (p. 1). The fabrication of Muslim is primitive among the Westerns but these terrorist incidents around the globe increased it to a high degree. Schuller (2012) mentioned that the 9/11 trauma accelerated the detest crimes against

Muslims around the world. *"Overall, it is unsurprising that a large-scale terror event such as 9/11 fueled acts of anti-immigrants or anti-Muslim aggression and hostility"* (p. 2). This situation is aggravated when the media wrongly depict the condition of Muslim Women. These are stories about oppressed or veiled women who are in hope that a white savior (writer or reader) will come to save them. These stories are blend with two kinds of ideas, Muslim woman as victim or escapee. These Muslim women are depicted as helpless and speechless and are in need of Western voice to speak for them. In victim stories, Muslim men are depicted as misogynist and Islam as backward, unjust and despotic while veil stories as repressive. In the world of literature, a book written by a white writer about Muslim subjugated women is considered standard and validated unlike our books. In reality, the women in many Islamic communities have played prominent roles in religious affairs, those not isolated from the vast majority of male clerics in Christianity (Kupari & Vuola, 2019).

The question of gender roles in any community today are being influenced highly by media and so their thinking about the sexual matters (Jillions, 2018) and Islam is no exception in this regard. The conversion of other communities to Islam is even their own decision (Sadvokasova & Orazbayeva, 2016). Randa Abdel Fattah wrote about the struggles and plights faced by Muslim females. Haines (2018) analyzed the decision of Amal wearing a Hijab in a non-Muslim country and stereotypes related to Muslim. He has mentioned different scholars and their approaches to the central issues of identity and respect in the novel. Zin and Low (2014) have analyzed dual identities of the three Muslim characters in *Does My Head Look Big in This?* by using Bhabha's concept of hybridity. They took three key concepts in their analysis; assimilation, ambivalent, and mimicry. The character of Amal has been

analyzed with the concept of assimilation, Samantha with mimicry, and Leila with ambivalent. According to their study these three Muslim characters hold various kind of identities as hybrid in a multicultural society of Australia.

Methodology

The present research was guided by qualitative content analysis of the selected novel. This subjective method for evaluation was selected because it helped the researcher in analyzing the different themes (Creswell and Poth, 2016). It helped in focusing on the integrated view of discourses in the selected text, keeping in view the specific sets. The aim of this study was to analyze the depiction of the female character Amal as an orthodox Muslim female. Amal being a Muslim female had faced numerous challenges by living in the West (a majority non-Muslim country) and so to practice her Islamic doctrines was no less than a challenge in itself. The analysis was guided by postcolonial theory (Kumar, 2011). Post-colonialism deals with different attitudes of the colonizers about colonizers and colonized. These ideas were collected in the selected text and analyzed in the light of the selected theory. The findings of the present study were further confirmed with the findings of the previous studies.

Analysis

Muslims always came under the stereotypical perceptions of West in 18th and 19th century. The mass media is demonstrating a negative image of Muslim world. Amal is presented like other teenagers who struggle to develop their identity and personality. Amal faces many challenges due to her decision: external and internal. Externally, she faces racial and religious discrimination and internally, after wearing the Hijab, she struggles to be morally good. Amal has embraced her Muslim identity being in an environment that is religiously biased for demolishing stereotypes attached with Muslim women and Islam. Muslims are

linked with stereotypical image of theirs in West and Amal decision of wearing Hijab displays a Muslim identity. As Majid (2015) argued that "... attempt to present an alternative portrait of a young, religious Muslim woman and she stands in opposition to the stereotypical presentation of submissive and subjugated characterizations of Muslim women" (p. 60). Abdel-Fattah portrayed Amal not as a subjugated woman but an ordinary person who faces routine problems like others. The story of Amal presents the differences of a person in a positive way that these differences among people should be accepted and respected, not be humiliated or marginalized.

Hijab as a Choice not Subjugation

The protagonist decision to wear Hijab was a voice from her inner self. She was motivated by a very liberal character, Rachel, from a TV show. It was Amal's inner self and a connection with God that gave her the courage to take this big decision. *"I'm telling you, this rush of absolute power and conviction surged through me. ... One minute it was the last thing on my mind. The next minute, this courage flowed through me and it just felt unbelievably right. I was ready to wear the Hijab"* (p.1). In a multicultural and liberal society like Australia, taking such a step (being a Muslim who always confronts biasness) can only be someone inner call. It was her personal experience that encouraged her to take a bold step regarding her faith. Amal's mother used to wear Hijab but she never compelled her daughter to wear it. Instead, when she announced her decision of wearing Hijab to her parents *"At dinner I tell my parents that I'm thinking about wearing the Hijab and to my disbelief they look at each other nervously. I was expecting a cheerleader routine around the family room. Not two faces staring anxiously at me. ... my dad says '... Are you sure you are ready to cope with such a huge change in your life?'"* (p.18). Amal realized that they were not happy with her

decision though she was expecting their support because they always encouraged her to pray and said, *“What’s the big deal? It’s a piece of material”* (p.19). Her mother knew the depth of her decision and told that it is a big deal to wear Hijab in West because, the Western perceive Hijab very negatively associate it either with oppression or terrorism. *“My mother snorts. ‘Since when do people see it as a mere piece of material? You and I both know that’s being a tad optimistic, ya Amal’* (p.19). “Her sudden decision and announcement of wearing Hijab shocked her parents because they were worried about her future insecurities after wearing Hijab, though they accepted her decision *“... my dad says. of course, it’s your right to wear it”* (p.19). In an elite school, it is not that easy to adopt religious identity and she might be humiliated and marginalized, *“We’re proud of you. But it’s a big decision, honey, and you’re not at Hidayah anymore. It’s a different environment at McCleans. It might not even be allowed”* (p.19). Amal like other teenagers, struggled to develop her personality and identity by taking their own decisions (Zin & Low 2014). Her faith and relation with God were important component of her life. Amal is not the exception, *“I’m terrified. But at the same time I feel like my passion and conviction in Islam are bursting inside and I want to prove to myself that I’m strong enough to wear a badge of my faith”* (p.5). She was uncertain about her decision but was in struggle to figure that out. She was struggling with her inner self and considered wearing Hijab as a religious duty and part of her faith’s symbols and practices, *“I guess when I’m not wearing the Hijab I feel like I’m missing out. I feel cheated out of that special bond”* (p.5). This decision shows her great devotion to Islam, *“The Religious/Scriptures/Sacred stuff: I believe in Allah/God’s commandments contained in the Koran. God says men and women should act and dress modestly”* (p.5). She explained it to her school mates that wearing Hijab was her

own decision and they fully supported her decision.

Amal’s ‘Otherness’ Because of Wearing Hijab

Amal decided to wear Hijab but was also aware of the problems that wearing Hijab will bring in her life. She was hesitant to adopt her religious practices because of the feelings of insecurity and public responses of it. Muslims in West are considered as ‘Other’ and are often deprived of basic right like jobs (Upton, 2018). Amal was anxious about such things, *“I can’t sleep from stressing about whether I’ve got the guts to do it. To wear the Hijab, the head scarf, full-time”* (p.1). It illustrates her feeling of anxiousness because after wearing the Hijab she had to face biased behavior of the public. She would be called by different names like *nappy head, sand nigger, conservative or terrorist*. When Amal was in primary school, she faced the same discrimination and teasing, *“Oh my God! I wore it! To school! To McCleans! And everybody was staring and kind of freaked out and avoiding me ...”* (p.39). “When she entered school with Hijab put on all students were trying to keep distance from her because they were considering her ‘other’ and a threat to them” (p. 50).

People like Tim have their predetermined views about Eastern and Muslims shaped by the stereotypical image of Muslims through Western print and televised media. They behaved in strange way as she wearing the Hijab is going to harm them as they perceive Muslim negatively (terrorist or threat) due media misrepresentation. Her principal too associated her Hijab with oppression and subjugation when saw Amal in Hijab. She guessed that it was enforced upon her by her parents because she already has in the background the distorted picture of Muslims, *“So your parents have made you wear the veil permanently now? ...”* (pp.31-32). Ms. Walsh ascribed the Hijab with the stereotypical image

of a Muslim woman as propagated through print and electric media. Amal had experienced been 'Othered' because she was a Muslim and belonged to East and the incident of 9/11 had heightened the marginalization of Muslims in West. The biased and stereotypical attitude towards Muslims in the contemporary era has been originated from 18th and 20th century Orientalist scholarship. The depiction of Muslims in Western media and Hollywood movies are the results of colonialism and orientalism. Nowadays, Muslims are stereotypically inferred as extremists. Tia said to her, "*Did you catch that doco on those Muslim fundamentalists last night? You're Arab aren't you? It must feel awful knowing you come from such aviolent culture.*" (p. 121). Western just like Tia hold such hostile and prejudice views towards Muslims and Islam. Amal being brought up in Australia was well aware of the consequences of her decision that wearing Hijab will expose her to public being looking different and she will confront othering. As a kid in a catholic primary school, she confronted alienation being a Muslim. Amal yearned to wear Hijab in public but she has not the guts to wear it because she was aware of the public responses towards Hijab wearers. "*The problem was that I had to change trains to get home and there was no way I had the courage to go the distance alone with it on*" (p. 9). In the current wave of terrorism, the biased subalternization of Muslims has been increased and Muslim world is portrayed negatively (Upton, 2018). Western masses have shaped their perceptions about the Muslim world on the centuries old orientalist discourses and have been intensified due to the present war and terror situations. Muslim immigrants being ordinary people hesitate while following their religious practices because they had to face public and their discrimination, "*Hard-core feminists who don't get that this is me, exercising my right to choose*" (p.13). Amal was fearing that feminists will consider her

oppressed and a victim of religious doctrine or Muslim patriarchal household, and will neglect it as her own right to choose. Amal had many fears because of practicing her religious doctrines, which she later on courageously and wisely overcame. She mentioned the future three fears of adopting Hijab. During interschool debate competition, the opponent debaters whispered by calling Amal terrorist which made her teammates uncomfortable. Amal after her decision faced humiliation, taunting, teasing and discrimination. Once, she was rejected from a job because the owner did not like her Hijab, "*Sorry, love, we can't accept people like you. What do you mean? The thing on your head, love, that's what I mean. It's not hygienic and it just don't look good up at the front of the shop*" (p. 244).

Once when Amal was in Adam birthday party with other school friends. A boy humiliated and taunted her because she was a Muslim and looking different from others. "*Scarf girl! He shouts happily. Helloooo scarf girl!!! Tell me, do you have hair? Take off your scarf and belly dance for us!*" (p. 185). Abdel-Fattah time and again challenged the stereotypical views of Western towards Muslims. Through the character of Amal, she depicted that Muslim are not terrorist or Muslim women are not always oppressed. As Amal narrated, "*So she persuades us to write I'm a Muslim and I'm not oppressed*" (p.110). Abdel-Fattah on motif presented Amal a devotee Muslim woman to abolish misconceptions about Muslim women who used to wear Hijab.

Portrayal of an Ordinary Hijab Wearer

Portrayal of Amal as an ordinary Hijab wearer was to challenge the attached stereotypes with Muslim women who wear Hijab. Amal's Hijab wearing was an individual pursuit to improve her faith and spirituality. It was her personal quest to strengthen her relationship with God by facing challenges and hardships, "*... I feel like my passion and conviction in Islam are bursting inside me... to*

wear a badge of my faith. I believe it will make me feel so close to God" (p.5). Amal was determined to establish a strong relation with her God. She considered that wearing Hijab strengthened this relation. She was not oppressed or subjugated but was committed to her faith and was aware that her decision will bring odds in her life, "That's when this warm feeling buzzes through you and you smile to yourself, knowing God's watching you, knowing that He knows you're trying to be strong to please Him" (p. 5). Abdel-Fattah has depicted Amal as an ordinary person who followed her religious doctrines but she also behaved like other normal people: listen music, parties with friends, work hard to get good grades and also look after her beauty and figures.

So, I turn the stereo loud... match all my clothes with assorted coloured scarves as I dance to a J. Lo track. I try different styles with the scarves and attempt to figure out which shapes makes my face look slimmest...I have decided on a navy blue veil and baby blue cotton headband to match my jeans and blue cardigan (pp 14-15).

Amal was a devotee Muslim and Australian society perceived her oppressed and terrorist because she used to wear Hijab as her faith marker. They associated her actions with the established stereotypes and did not try to know or understand her. Amal's devotion to her religious practices perceived negatively and with that of the distorted image of Muslim world. Abdel-Fattah tried to educate Western readers to know the actual self of a devotee person as and she should be heard like other subaltern (Maggio, 2007). It is important to know about a person beliefs, culture and tradition before to have an opinion about him/her. Amal has been depicted as a typical teenager. She struggled to develop her personality and tried to control her feelings and decisions. As readers, we see her time and again giving priority to her religious beliefs. For example, Amal has fantasies about Adam but she controlled her feelings.

Amal, being a Muslim believed that a woman should have intimate relation just with her husband. In Islam both husband and wife should be loyal to each other. She explained it to Adam when she refused him to kiss her, "I don't want physical intimacy with a list of people in my life. I want it with one person (p. 188). She talked to Leila's mother very rudely and arrogantly but soon realized that wearing Hijab is not enough to be good. For a person to be good, it is important that one should be good from inside too.

Amal in the novel is represented as a normal girl. She believed in something different from the main stream Australian society making her like an alien. She passed her life according to Islamic principles which she considered important in building a morally good personality but in response she faced very negative treatment from the people. Following her religious rituals is a development process for her: at every stage of life, she learnt and realized new things. All these things explicitly indicated that she was a typical person neither oppressed nor terrorist. She at first was scared of adopting her religious practice in public due to Orientalist discourses and media deformed representation of the Muslim world. "I'm ready for the next step. I'm sure of that. But I'm still nervous. Agh! There are million different voices in my head scaring me off (p.5). She was sure and ready for wearing Hijab but felt uncomfortable when imagined people's responses. Her friend Yasmeen reminds her that it was not so easy to adopt it. "Now you want people to wonder if you're batting for Osama's team? (p. 16). Yasmeen knew the reaction of Western public whenever they saw a Muslim woman in Hijab. She is discriminated, people are afraid of Hijab wearers, refuse to give them jobs and comments very negatively about them. Amal's principal called her Hijab "an agenda" and mentioned that she respected her decision but she looked "different" and it was difficult for the teachers to understand. Her principal behaved

in such a manner that allowing her Hijab was a great favored done for Amal. It showed their hypocritical nature to the world not to allow the immigrants to follow their religious practices. for West, East is a place of mysteries, violence, alien people and a place of adventures beauty (Said, 1978). Muslim immigrants in West always tried to be safe from discrimination like Amal and others characters who tried on different levels to face public. They behaved and often did things in contrast to their culture or beliefs just to look like natives. As Amal's uncle and aunt even changed their names to fit in Australian society.

Western media misrepresented the Islamic values, principles, thoughts and beliefs. They have assigned their own meanings to it and are unaware of the true importance and meanings of Islamic doctrines (Ridouani, 2011). After reading the story of Amal, the readers realized that Hijab was a sign of modesty, virtue, empowerment nor of oppression or terrorism. In the novel, we see Amal as a victim of the established stereotypes when she started wearing Hijab. Amal after her decision received negative attitude of people. Amal was the only Muslim in the class and used to wear a badge of her faith. Tia knew that Amal had nothing to do with matters in other Muslim countries. Amal was refused a part time job just because of her Hijab, *"I probably couldn't find a casual job now. So what later on? ... when they get up in front of an interview panel they find interviewers choking on their bottled water because the candidate is wearing Hijab"* (p.173). Muslim immigrants faced religious, cultural and racial discrimination and were often deprived of their basic human rights. The incidents like 9/11, Bali bombing, Sydney gang rapes and few more very badly affected the lives of ordinary Muslim immigrants in West. Amal being a Muslim and wearing the Hijab was considered as alien, 'other', *"I wince every time MS Walsh says the word 'massacre' with the word 'Islamic' as though these barbarisms somehow belong to my Muslim community. ... These people are aliens to our faith"* (p. 194). The portrayal of Amal as a typical teenager and devotee was to show characters like Amal, Islam and Muslims

have nothing to do with violence. Amal condemned those terrorist and participated in the mourning with the rest of the people like other Australian nationals. This misrepresentation having biased views towards the Muslim world by Western can end if the West try to understand and know the Muslims as the misunderstanding between Amal and Adam resolved at the end of the novel and they became good friends and Ms. Walsh personally congratulated Amal for winning the speech competition, *"You've made this educational institution proud"* (p. 273). Abdel-Fattah tried to build a bridge between East and West to vanish stereotypes about the Muslim world. Amal is a strong, firm and determined female Muslim, who challenged misconceptions about Islam and Hijab wearers, *"... It's their stories and confrontations and pains and joys which have empowered me to know myself, challenged me to embrace my identity as a young Australian-Palestinian-Muslim girl"* (p. 275). Amal learnt from her personal confrontations and also from the lives of immigrants around her and developed a balance personality. Abdel-Fattah provided an opportunity for readers to know and understand the actions and behaviors of a devotee Muslim.

Conclusion

The present study analyzed the depiction of a Muslim women Amal in Randa Abdel-Fattah's *does my head look big in this?* Muslim women who practice their religious doctrines are very rare in English literary world. Some new writers emerged who presented Muslim women in a positive way and represented them as neither victims nor rebellious. They represented Muslim women as devotee who follow their religious practices, recognized and empowered by their faith. There are a few works that represent women empowered by their faith. Islam is a part of Muslims lives and it does not mean being a Muslim you should be represented as oppressed or violent. The analysis was done in the light of postcolonial theory and Said's *Orientalism* (1978). It cleared the concept and history of the biased and stereotypical representation of Muslim world by the West. The stereotypical

representation that affected lives of Eastern people in time of colonialization and is affecting the lives of Muslims even today but in form of Islamophobia. The Muslims in the West are being treated as subaltern and are always represented by someone else either as rebellious or victims by neglecting their voices and choices. It is important for subaltern to raise voice for themselves and it is more important that they should be heard. Abdel-Fattah's work has strived to represent the true picture of Muslim women by clarifying the stereotypes depicting the lives of Muslims especially Muslim women in other works. Islam has been portrayed as a source of inspiration and a matter of personal choice rather than a compulsion for the protagonist to wear Hijab and follow other Islamic doctrines. The protagonist willingly selects the Islamic way of life and becomes a practicing Muslim. It empowers her against all negative temptations and her moral standards uplift and other characters realize this at the end and accept her worth and wish. The Western concepts about Muslims being violent and extremists were highlighted and corrected. The dominance of the West should be justified by accepting every label it pastes on different nations and religious groups and the minority groups should not always be depicted as oppressed and victims. The brighter side of every picture should be presented in every literary work as well. The practice of Islamic practices like wearing Hijab is not always dictated but Muslim women to a great extent do it willingly. Amal's decision to wear Hijab in her homeland Australia undermines her positions initially as uncivilized and backward. Yet, her invincible decision motivated her inner feelings and gave her a drive to stand against the stereotypical image of Muslim women wearing Hijab as oppressed. Thus, Amal is portrayed as a woman who resists the Western stereotypical views. Following Islamic doctrines and wearing Hijab is what she does at her own choice. But the West forces her to assimilate into Western culture, thus,

creates hurdles for her to practice her free will. The prejudiced and stereotypical representation of Muslim characters in the West are whitewashed by portraying religious discrimination for subaltern and the unnecessary indulgence of the Western thought in relation between the Creator and His creation is highlighted. Amal's adherence with her religious practices has been depicted in a positive way to portray a positive picture of a devotee Muslim by overthrowing the stereotypes attached with Muslims and becoming a tolerant inhabitant of Western society.

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