

Beyond the Scarf: A Critical Exploration of Female Identity in Mohja Kahf's Novel

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Abstract

This deconstructive article aims to analyze the issue of female identity in Mohja Kahf's novel The girl in The tangerine Scarf (2006). The analysis emphasis on deconstructive elements in the novel's text: différance (differ and defer), trace, concept of absence, binary opposition, aporia, and so on. This study explores the ability of the protagonist i.e. Khadra to accomplish and institute her boundaries and world view distant from the powers of someone else, which might be signified through characteristics of her identity. This article demonstrates the significance of social relationships regarding identity formation. The protagonist (being a woman) faces the issue of identity crisis because of the following issues: hierarchical ostracism, identity crisis due to diaspora, development of personal identity, immigrant Muslim identity and ideologies, the cultural Identity of the Syrian Muslims, diasporic Muslim identities and social alienation of women. Hence, a continuous development of constructing and re-constructing an individual status that is reliant on previously recognized ethnic and cultural norms and her status in a Non-Muslim community prevented her from becoming a static identity.

Key Terms: Deconstruction, Binary opposition, différance, aporia, female identity, logocentrism

Introduction

The present research, investigates the text of Kahf's novel *The Girl in a Tangerine Scarf* (2006) to explore the theme of female identity. The methodology adopted is Deconstruction by Jacques Derrida (1960) for textual analysis. Kahf represents an understanding parallel to the coming of age account of a girl in a Muslim community in the center of Indiana.

It's a coming of the age novel that strongly marked by recurring cycles of encounter and convergence on several levels. By using such a cyclical outline, Kahf investigates the

observation which grasps self and identity to be motionless and petrified that problematizes the predominant stereotypes of nationality and gender. The researcher focuses on poststructuralism keeping in mind deconstruction by Jacques Derrida and explore the theme of self and identity. Additionally, the researchers concentrate on the works written by the writers who belong to the first generation of these families who went to the United States and researcher compares between the diasporic and the (de) colonized self. While the subsequent novel maintains the idea of interstitially, it too comprises the thoughts of legitimacy and post modernity. Kahf (2006) bring resolution to the s that lie beneath her relationship as Khadra contends that if authenticity is to endure as a horizon, it need to reorganize as a search rather than ontology. The authors that have attained progression in West, such as Hanif Kureishi, Gish Jen, and Moyez Vassanji are just a few of the authors who have written about the problems associated with a diasporic identity crisis.

Deconstructive study aims to scrutinize the concepts of self and identity in Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in a Tangerine Scarf*, a fictional work. The deconstruction process comes from a philosophical standpoint. Deconstruction exposes a new aspect of the work itself as well as further details on the real-life narrative of a literary work. The researchers are eager to assess each and every individual in this book. According to the research, all of the characters in the book—not only the ones that are portrayed as the primary protagonists and antagonists—have significant roles to perform.

Literature Review

The events of *The Girl with the Tangerine Scarf* take place during a time of Muslims' settlement to the USA after the Second World War. Wajdy and Ebtehaj, the protagonist's parents, are representative of the bigger group of Muslim intelligentsias that immigrated to the United States in the 1970s. At that time, immigration procedure in the United States was centered on the requirement for an expert labor force, hence favoring specialists and learners. That is why the protagonist's parents immigrated to the United States. Kahf's narration paints a picture of the challenges that this generation encounters, regardless of the welcoming government policy that was in place at the time. They were frequently exposed to public and political attitudes that were

formed as a result of the tense and fragile diplomatic relationship that existed between the United States and the Muslim world (Hilary et al, 2007).

This is due to the need for collaboration to combat the gender norms placed on women in the United States, as well as societal constructs ‘in the Arab world that oppress and limit women’ (Berrebbah, 2020). In this article, researchers argue that Khadra, as a female semi-nomadic figure, adopts a hybrid form of feminism in order to enhance understanding about her gender identity and to assert her rights. My argument is founded on renowned feminist critics such as Carole Badran and Fatima Mernissi and is derived ‘from Islamic and secular feminist paradigms’ (Ali, 2015).

Khadra raises up dipped in the culture of traditionalist dawah: ‘of the Deen being black and white, of certain rules followed scrupulously, of culture frowned upon in exchange for the purity of Islam’ (Zine, 2014). ‘Her ideal Islamic marriage begins to crumble when her husband evokes the Qawwam card to prohibit her from riding her bike in public – and when she gets pregnant, only to decide on an abortion, and then a divorce, Khadra creates a schism between herself, her community, and all that she has known. In the years that follow, Khadra breaks down and recreates her identity as a Muslim and her beliefs about Islam’ (Mehdaoui, 2020). However, the damaging effects of the captive predicament do not end at the level of society; Khadra also faces similar attacks in school as a result of the hostage situation. (Bose, 2009).

Susan Muaddi Darraj (2011) wrote the book ‘*Personal and Political the Dimension of Arab American Feminism*’, in which she argued that gender discrimination, chauvinism, and domestic exploitation are all products of the massive Arab culture, ‘which haunts women in both the Arab American community and the larger American society’ (Cooke, 2001). Due to the fact that Arab American women exist in a position of in-between’s, it is not surprising that they subscribe to both of these unique feminist points of view (Fernea, 1998). This article also adopts the ‘Islamic and secular feminist criticism and perspectives of prominent feminist scholars and theorists such as Margot Badran, Valentine Moghadam, and Fatima Mernissi, amongst others’ (Duderija, 2017). ‘This is not a narrative that deploys stereotypical tropes, such as misogynist male protagonists or characters that are driven insane by their split identities’ (Toossi, 2015).

“While Khadra's narrative is at the center of the novel, the characters surrounding her run the gamut of what it means to be Muslim: they are secular, devout, intelligent, and thoughtful. No character, flawed as they all are in their ways, is a caricature, including her domineering ex-husband: Kahf has presented a tableau of endearing individuals whose lives intersect at this particular moment in Indiana. This is not simply a story of a Muslim American woman writ large: it is a thoughtful exploration of a community of individuals in Indiana: it is a much a Midwestern tale as it is a Muslim and an American one” (Bose, 2009).

Material and Methods

The Deconstruction approach was firstly introduced by Jacques Derrida (1979) in retort to the concepts of formalism new criticism and structuralism. This approach helps to understand the meaning of words then we understand a text and when we understand a text, we get the idea of the author's intention behind his or her writing. So in this way understanding the meaning between text and words is called deconstruction.

Derrida outlined the goal of reinterpretation, which is to show that there is an inadequacy in logic or rhetoric between what is explicitly mentioned and what is implicitly hidden by the text. Deconstruction serves this purpose. Within Ferdinand De Saussure's framework, conversation had been given precedence over the written language from the very beginning. Deconstruction is a method that persistently investigates the meaning of a text to the point where it reveals the purported inconsistencies and internal opposition upon which it is constructed. This approach demonstrates that the foundations in question are irreducibly complicated, unstable, or impossible. Derrida demonstrates that a text be able to read in a way that is completely dissimilar from what it seems to be saying, and that it can also be read as carrying importance or as claiming many unlike things that are essentially at discrepancy with, contrary to, and dissident of what may be seen by condemnation as a single, constant "meaning." Derrida's work demonstrates this. As a consequence of this, a text may expose its author's intentions.

Texts can only produce the illusion of meaning by being consistent throughout. The many options that are provided in a book are typically outlined in the form of seeming binary opposition, which the author then seems to distinguish between. The theoretical and analytical mode that examines Derrida's difference and signifier concepts is called deconstructionism, and

it is explained in Barry's book: *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory*. Derrida's deconstruction theory is the theoretical and analytical mode that examines Derrida's difference and signifier concepts (Berry, 2020). According to Derrida, there is nothing that exists outside of either the language or the text. In addition, the word "language" is a self-referential term that does not communicate any meaning that is applicable to a context that is not concerned with language. Nothing exists outside of what is written in the book (Berry, 2020).

The word logocentrism was created by Derrida. This idealistic approach to language philosophy is always predicated on the idea that the conception of speech and writing can only occur through the assumption of a logos. Even if the word 'deconstruction' has become commonplace, its underlying concept is far more nuanced and sophisticated than its innumerable appropriations have repeatedly shown it to be. One method to comprehend a system is to read about it as an activity that aims to articulate its operational components; this understanding can be useful.

Différance is the central idea of deconstruction; although Derrida insists it is not a notion, it serves as a model of how deconstruction should be done as well as an example of the outcomes. Even though différance is not a concept in and of itself, this is nevertheless the case. In his widely read essay titled simply 'Différance?' (1968), Derrida says that the term is spelt this way to combine two meanings of the verb to differ, which in Derrida's reading means both to recognize the different and to defer. It is preferable to see différance as a situation or state of circumstances that takes the form of "play," a term that Derrida employs to encompass a wide sense, including the ludic, performativity, and architectural.

Discussion and Analysis

This section of the article investigates the novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* explore the female identity by employing the deconstruction theory by Jacques Derrida. In the realm of literature, however, deconstruction is not thought to have reached its full potential. It is grounded on a philosophical perspective and outlook. Following the development of structuralism in the year 1960, a new school of thought known as deconstruction emerged. The purpose of the theory is to show the hidden meaning of the text that is absent in the text. As process of deconstruction

rises, some terms starts to use in practice: self and identity, logocentrism, phonocentrism, binary opposition, difference, trace, and arche writing.

The analysis focuses on deconstruction elements, the difference (differ and defer), trace, Signifier and signified, and the concept of absence present in the novel. Mohja Kahf, in her novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) depicts the tale of a woman (that highlights the female 'identity' related issues) called Khadra. Khadra was born in Syria and is a member of the Muslim community. Khadra lives in a small Indiana town known for its tight- knit society. Kahf explains how individuals who are a part of the majority and those who are a part of the minority are capable of acting in a bigoted and prejudiced manner against one another. Because of what happened to her, Khadra has decided to distance herself from those who do not share her religious ideals and philosophy, which makes the predicament that, is in much more challenging. The process of attempting to discover one's own identity while residing in the United States of America as a Muslim ethnic community.

By looking at the various connections Deconstruction is performed, that Khadra makes during her life by studying how those ties progress. Influence how she interacts with the world around her as well as how she sees the world around her. This helps to understand why has been exerting so much effort to distance herself (her identity) from the forces in question. She has never-ending struggles to carve a unique and distinctive sense of personal identity for herself. At the completion of this process, Khadra reveals herself to be a person who is devoted to both the culture of the nation in which she now lives, the United States of America, as well as the religion of Islam. Specifically, is devoted to the American Muslim community.

In Kahf's novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) writer proceeds gradually from her physical look to discuss her psychological attributes. Meanwhile, the deconstruction theory helps us to (de)construct the novel text that enables us to understand the ideology and gradually development of the identity of the main character 'Khadra' by the writer. Such as, Khadra is a girl with an olive complexion and black hairs who goes through the river holding a camera and Quran (the holy book of Muslims) which are separate beings entirely.

Further, she learns the English language without any effort and by combining with her new friend Alessandra-called-Sandra they used to tease a Japanese kid by shouting "Chinese,

Japanese, filthy knees, look at these! And "I sleep in my loom. (Kahf, 2006, p.11). Then the character creates itself by studying the technique of prayer, ablution and Fatiha from her father. The Square place was a vision of paradise to her, where it used to reside in her early days. As her mother says "heaven is where you have all your desires" (p.10). For Khadra square one is heaven because they do not have to face any racism. The only reason they moved to America is they were having financial issues here.

After immigration to America, Khadra (The protagonist) started to study at a school where she has an adorable fight over refusing a sweet offer to her by her schoolteacher. Khadra believed that candy might include meat of the pig since her mother informed her of the exact thing and was advised not to consume any food item made up of pig s flesh. "Khadra exclaimed, "I can't eat this," her round, baby-fat face grave" (Kahf, 2006, p.13). Eventually, she has a sweet and places it into her pocket. Afterwards Shamy family heads toward Indiana for the love of God.

Kahf (2006) then alters her persona into more attentive and watchful once when the migrant's family relocates to Dawah (a fearful location for the Muslim community) where the progressive growth of Khadra towards things around her begins. With her brother Eyad strives to seek a career to for a livelihood and to help their parents since a new baby is soon to birth at Shamy's and is careful about the financial concerns of her family. Khadra has recently relocated back to Indiana. In pursuit of her interests, she is currently working on a variety of exciting and novel projects. Khadra is currently inside a mosque, where Khadra is capturing photographs of people in the act of prostrating themselves. She (Khadra) muses about how to view the world from the perspective of those individuals who are praying. "This is the way that we move our bodies on a regular basis and change the angle at which we look," (p. 251) At this point, also meets Trish's aunt, who is navigating the area using a wheelchair. The character of Khadra evolves in such a way that it is easy for a reader to comprehend what she is thinking and feeling as the story progresses. In addition to these qualities, she is compassionate and polite and isn't afraid to be outspoken when it comes to asking questions. She also possesses a wonderful quality of brainstorming.

Researchers notice that Khadra is undergoing changes, such as her chest expanding like that of a woman, and even tells Khadra about these changes. When everyone was getting ready for Zuhura's wedding ceremony, the braids in Khadra's hair were discovered, and everyone was surprised. She is also getting ready for the wedding with great enthusiasm and plans to dance and take pictures at the event, despite the fact that photography was already her work. The protagonist is then confronted with the tragic incident of the death of her close friend Zuhura, which was a mystery to her because she did not understand the motivation behind her friend's slaying. She bravely meets this catastrophe head-on and stays until the very end of her friend's burial. Now that the holy month of Ramadan has begun so her parent demands that she has to make her fast throughout the entire month. The beginning of Ramadan marked the beginning of her puberty as well as the beginning of her periods. Teta explains to her the concept of periods. According to her routine, Khadra inquired as to whether or not she is permitted to use tampons, whether or not she is permitted to break her fast, and other such inquiries. It is not concerned about her periods; rather, she is ecstatic that she is permitted to consume food even though it is the holy month of Ramadan.

During that particular discussion, Khadra is engaged in an argument with her father about inventions from around the world and the recognition that should be given to the people who came up with ideas. She is not aware of the fact that persons of the Muslim faith makes majority of inventions. Because she was orthodox, she even got into a fight with her friends Livvy and Hanifa over Livvy's beliefs in Christianity and Hanifa's decision to live with her grandmother, who was not a Muslim, despite the fact that Hanifa was going to live with her grandmother. Because she was such a staunch adherent to her ethnic beliefs, she was usually quite precise while presenting her reasons. Now that she is an adult and has reached full maturity, that enables her to take care of her period on her own and shave her legs. She was adamantly opposed to the notion of restricting access to the mosque's prayer space to male members alone. While she was in Saudi Arabia, she had no idea what life was really like behind the veil of Afaaf, and, as a result, she was mistreated horribly by both her cousin and her other female acquaintances. However, true to her role as the book's protagonist, she rose above the circumstances and fearlessly confronted them.

I despise you; you're a SLUDDY girl who hangs around with SLUDDY people; you have to take me home; you have to take me home RIGHT NOW. You-you-you goddamn bitch (p.122).

The sense of homelessness can also be observed on this specific incident when Khadra was told that she is just being over dramatic as she is an American and this normal for her. "Not an American rather an Arab like you" (p.119). Before coming to Saudi Arabia she has a logging for this land. She had the concept of home for this land, but the researcher notice that after facing the incidents of the mosque where she cannot go alone and seeing her cousins committing in adultery, this concept no longer remains the same as while leaving for America she was glad and says" Finally home" (p.123) without thinking.

Khadra began taking birth control pills on the day of her wedding because she was anxious about the prospect of having children after she was married. And after they were married, when her husband made a joking comment about having nine children, she became concerned and refused to have them. "She stood up and sat down. "Nine! Nuh-uh!"(p.146).

After that, she travelled to Kuwait, which was the location of Juma's family and her in-laws' home. She was greeted with open arms. On the other hand, found her sister and mother-in-law's propensity for frequent shopping to be very irritating. After some time had gone, everyone started questioning her about her pregnancy. Her perspectives on pregnancy were a little bit contradictory because she advocated for a woman's right to have an abortion despite the fact that such a practice was frowned upon in her tribe. Jumah is clearly seen as misogynistic when he stops her from riding the bicycle. "In Islam it is not allowed to display your body parts and when the silly girls like you ride it, it objectifies your body parts. You look clown like" (p.157).

She was reflecting on the events of the previous day and thinking back on it when she recalled some words of wisdom from her grandmother and the jeweler, which had been given to her as a present and told her that it would be beneficial during times of difficulty. "Because there may be days when you wake up and feel as though the future is closing in on you, as though the horizon is getting smaller."(p.186). Khadra makes a purchase of tangerine silk when it is in Syria. With this silk, she creates two scarves for herself and Teta that cannot be distinguished from one another. As a result of this, the tangerine scarf wears, which also serves as the title of

the book, carries a symbolic meaning that connects her to the voyage, the growth of herself and her identity, her mother, and her native land.

Because of Khadra's decision to have an abortion, she eventually gets divorced, but more importantly, it causes her to become estranged from her family. They discontinue talking to her and move away from her hometown in Indiana as a result of these events. The pillars of her identity—her religious belief, her family, her community, and her home—have all broken at this point. By donning a tangerine scarf, she has demonstrated that she has achieved acceptance of the new, improved version of herself. That transforms her from a dark-skinned person into a multicolored one.

She is fully aware that is exactly where she should be; performing the duties assigned to her with the full intention and complete abandon. And it is magnificent, and it is heavenly, and Khadra's own art transports her there: into the state of complete surrender (p.230).

Another one of Kahf's creations, Trish is a female character that appeared in this book. She is originally from the United States, and her husband served as the general director of Dawah. As the plot develops, this main female character, like Khadra, helps this other major character, also a female, construct her identity alongside one another. At Dawah, Khadra's mother was meant to advance her Islamic education and become more knowledgeable. Aunt Khadija, another converted Muslim woman, who also had a chit conversation with Khadra on religion and its practice, makes Khadra's identification clear by observing the gestures he uses at various points throughout the story.

Tayiba, who is described as having a mix of Islamic and western influences, makes her initial determination about her identity based on her appearance, which Khadra considers to be suspect. A character in the book that exemplifies the trait of being fearless is Zuhura, a young woman known for her bravery. According to the observations of another character in the book, she is more forthright than her sister Tayiba. Because of the significant distance between her home and the college, she attended in the past, Khadra's father and other people expressed some concerns regarding her safety. But didn't care about it, and even her aunt Ayesha defended her by saying that she's capable of looking after herself.

Her (Maha) additional attributes include the fact that she is fluent in Arabic, is a native speaker of the language, has an accent that is free of contaminating influences, and was trained to speak the language by her father, who also employed the tutors who taught her the language. Her qualities did not end here; rather, she possessed all of the prerequisites necessary to instruct children in the tenets of the Quran. Kahf did an excellent job knitting this character, which is similar to Khadra. The character of Ebtehaj, Khadra's mother, is yet another persona that plays a significant role in constructing her own perfect female identity. She is an independent, forthright, and the sociable woman who was born in Syria. She has an effect on almost every character and makes her stance abundantly clear when it's required.

Ebtehaj was a defiant adolescent until she travelled to France and was raped by her professor. Prior to that, Ebtehaj's mother had tried to shape her daughters like herself. Ebtehaj's stepmother may have felt embarrassed by Ebtehaj's religious activities, which may have contributed to Ebtehaj's decision to become religious after this traumatic experience. Because of this, Ebtehaj is extremely protective of her children and careful about the people with whom they form relationships considering the pros and cons of each potential friendship. For instance, Khadra's mother says no when she begs her to go with her to a friend's house for a sleepover, even though Khadra wants to go with her. Is there a brother in her family? "Will he get intoxicated, take off his shirt, and try to touch you as he's walking around? No? How can we be sure that he won't?"(p.61).

Another very vibrant character that was done by Kahf was that of Teta, the woman who was responsible for Wajdy's upbringing when he was a child. Throughout the course of the book, I maintained a firm viewpoint. Found out in lengthy chats with Mrs. Moore about gardening and with Norma about cooking and recipes. She was quite open and honest regarding her thoughts with all of the other people she interacted with in the book. Even she was completely open and honest regarding periods of Khadra and personal grooming practices like shaving does not remain alive all the way through the finish of the book.

A case study of this novel leads us to the conclusion that there are typical Americans who no longer value the institution of the family and place a greater emphasis on the uniqueness of each person. They engage in adultery, discard their own children after they reach the age of

eighteen, have no morals, and even their way of living is very unclean. On the other hand, there are certain non- native people, like Muslims, who still have faith in the traditional family unit; they uphold certain ethical and moral standards; they avoid drinking establishments like bars and pubs, and they do not approve of engaging in sexual activity before marriage. The analysis of a variety of characteristics reveals a comprehensive contrast that is brought to life in this research. At this point in the story, there is a guy named Orvil Hubbard. He is a lanky, towering person who stands in stark contrast to the people who live in Dawah. He has been vocal in his opposition to Muslims. In the past, he had the belief that the presence of Muslims in his country would be detrimental to its future. On the other hand, members of the Dawah community hold these kinds of ideas, which are described in the brochure "Preserving Our Islamic Identity in the Midwest."

Deconstruction also makes it possible to differentiate between two distinct nations of the globe, one of which is governed by correct guidelines and standards for living a life, while the other is largely unrestricted in practically every aspect of existence. Ablutions, to give one example, are a necessary component of cleanliness. However, non-Muslims have no sense of purity; in fact, they don't even use water to wash their bottoms. In Islam, the act of purification comes before any prayer. Kahf brought up an example of American hypocrisy that occurred in November of this year when Iranian militants abducted American embassy employees and held them as hostages. Kahf discussed this event. They recognized that black people were already oppressed; therefore, they released the black women Americans from their custody. They recently abducted fifty-two white Americans from the United States. Because of the terrible famine that was occurring in Somalia at the time, the fighting that was going on in the Western Sahara, the immigrant camps that Afghans had made in Iran and Pakistan, and the fact that life in Lebanon was a personification of death, Eastern Islamic countries were of the opinion that it was a taste of their own medicine. This was due to the fact that Somalis were in the grip of famine at the time, and a fighting was going on in the Western Sahara.

These were the challenges that the entirety of the Muslim world was dealing with, but for the United States, this was not a particularly pressing issue because the news channels were more concerned about fifty-two white Americans. They were exclusively covering every minute detail

of the hostages, including the hostages' parents, grandparents, cousins, and second cousins, in each and every day's news. In light of the fact that Americans were treating them as the only humans involved, many donned yellow ribbons to demonstrate their support for the Americans and to garner sympathy for the hostages. The term "deconstruction" is used to differentiate between these two polar extremes and to highlight the significant differences in philosophy, color, culture, and priorities that exist between them.

Kahf identifies the mechanisms of patriarchal speech, which exploits women's sexual traits and assesses them based on the angel/whore binary in order to control them. This is done in order to keep women in their place describes how this causes Khadra to be placed in a position of reduction and quieting and how she is regarded as an evil woman whenever she disrupts societal Convention. On the other hand, presenting Khadra's parents' response, in which they do not judge her for breaking the social enigmas but then again enlighten them to her, establishes that not every Muslim who has grown up in so-called oriental countries accepts and approves of these social codes. This is demonstrated by the fact that Khadra's parents do not judge her for breaking the social enigmas. This is a particularly noteworthy example of Kahf's efforts to avoid falling into the trap of re- Orientalism is writing from an unjustifiable position, trapped between two cultures, and such depictions of eastern beliefs in the novel aid as nodes that might be presented as re- Orientalizing.

For example, right from the start of the book, we notice that when Eyed used to ride a bicycle, they would do so while heading in the direction of the home so that no one could see Khadra riding a bicycle, as if riding a bicycle was inappropriate for women or that riding a bicycle was against nature. Later on in their childhood, their mother with her children's private areas (bottoms) personally. However, when they matured a little bit, she stopped washing her children's private areas and instead asked Khadra to do it herself. However, she was happy to clean her son's private areas. It is clear that male and female cognitive processes are not equivalent in this instance.

“Look. You reach down with your left hand like this as you pour the water with your right hand like this, and as the water goes over your pee- pee or poo-poo region, you wipe and wipe and clean yourself.” “You pour the water with right hand like this, and you reach down with your left hand like this” (p.11).

We notice that both men and women are handled in an equal manner throughout the entirety of the book. However, in certain exceptional circumstances, the situation is different. One such instance is when Khadra's neighbor Ginny Debs invites her to a sleepover; however, Khadra's parents decline the invitation because "Girls whose parents care anything about their well-being do not allow them to spend the night at someone else's house," (p.62). Which is a common parental rule was allowed to attend the parties but couldn't stay over at anyone else's house. It is not often the case that females are treated differently than boys simply due to insecurity on the part of their parents, but it does happen occasionally. During the wedding ceremony for Zuhura, all of the young women are expected to look their best and follow all of the prescribed rites. However, they are not permitted to leave that particular location, and the wedding hall itself is obscured by drapes. In a similar vein, Khadra was tasked with taking photographs in order to prevent any male visitors from interfering with the dynamics of the family. In yet another incident, while is in Saudi Arabia performing the hajj, he hears the call to prayer known as the Adan and heads in the direction of the mosque.

On her way there, she is apprehended by Mattawa policemen, who then take her (Khadra) back to the house of Saleem Shahbander, where she had been living. In this conversation with her father, she inquires about the reason why was not she permitted to pray at the mosque. After that, it was made clear to her that, female members of the mosque are not permitted to recite the prayer aloud there. Challenged these accepted norms because, in her view, they promoted gender inequality in terms of how men and women were handled in society. In this study, male and female representation shifts throughout the course of various events, such as the wedding ceremony for Khadra. Joy wonders aloud why there aren't any mixed-gender seating arrangements, considering that a wedding is supposed to be a meeting of all the people who were invited, regardless of whether they are male or female. Because of cultural norms, men are not permitted to walk beside women in this location. According to the deconstruction theory, eastern societies have some restrictions due to the fact that western societies do not have gender in equality in the same kinds of functions. "At separate wedding parties for men and women, there was an overwhelming amount of joy. Then exclaimed, "I mean, come on!" "If that's the case, then how is it a wedding?"(p. 231).

In her book, Kahf calls into question the viewpoint that identity is something that can be fixed and solidified, and also raises issues with the prevalent stereotypes of gender, race, and ethnicity portrays the self as a beginning, a zone in between two varieties, but also a region of proximity where the components of differences come into contact with each other and pass through one another. Not only does the protagonist possesses contradictory aspects of her own identity, but also possesses contradictory aspects of the identities of those around her.

The researchers also observe a clear discrimination between male and female when we come to know about the Contest that is being conducted by the dawah center. They have not written in the ad that women are not allowed to participate in that contest. Khadra prepared for that contest day and night. She memorizes whole Surah Merium. When she came to Dawah Center to hand down her recorded tape to the student who organized the whole contest they said women are not allowed to participate as they have sultry voices that can seduce men. His brother Eyed also stopped him from recitation in public by saying that he does not want men to listen to my sister's voice and get turned on" (p.141).

Conclusion

After analyzing the text, researchers find that the ability of the protagonist (Khadra) to attain and establish her limits and worldview apart from the influences of someone else could be represented of aspects of her individual identity. Khadra's experiences demonstrate the significance of social relationships regarding identity formation. After years of evasion from the local inhabitant, the non-Muslims and Muslims disagreed with her interpretation of her ethnic identity concerning the religion of Islam. Khadra discovers that there are obstacles to create a distinct sense of self which demonstrates her identity as a continuous negotiation and growth process. The protagonist never lacks identity, but is in a state of ambiguity that becomes the reason of identity crises. A constant process of constructing and re-constructing an individual status identity that is reliant on already established ethnic and cultural norms, as well as her status in a non-Muslim community, prevented her from a static identity. Khadra reveals herself to be a person who is devoted to the culture of the nation in which she now born, and the United States of America, as well as the religion of Islam.

Henceforth, this study explores a wide range of enigmatic meanings, ideas, and philosophies, including issues related women specifically issue of female identity crisis. Further, the writer Kahf, uses this issue to describe the monotheistic viewpoint. The different reasons that were attached to the identity of protagonist never allow her to reach at a specific point regarding her identity. For instance, the philosophy of Sufism, which is associated with virtuous people, confuses her to accept the culture of non-Muslims. In the light of what has been discussed, this passage seems to imply that there has been a social identity that always dominates the individual identity.

All the above discussion can be concluded that Kahf (the writer of the novel) has explored the female identity crisis based on different social issues that are faced by the protagonist (Khadra) during her mental and physical development as an immigrant.

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