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فلسفة الفردية، وادب المهجري في رواية الفتاة ذات الحجاب البرتقالي لمهجة كحف

Une Identité En Ruine : Postmodernisme, Individualisme et la Diaspora dans *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* de Mohja Kahf

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## **A Crumbling Identity : Postmodernism, Individualism and the Diaspora in *Mohja Kahf's The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf***

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## **Une Identité En Ruine : Postmodernisme, Individualisme et la Diaspora dans *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf de Mohja Kahf***

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### **Introduction**

This article proposes a postmodernist reading of Mohaja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006). Kahf is one of the most influential Syrian-American feminist authors. Her novels and poetry are shaped by her perception of the overlap between the Arab Muslim background and the American culture. She was heavily inspired by the Islamic religion as she grew up in a strict Islamic setting. In an interview with Hilary Davis, Kahf tells us that religion was the foremost factor that inspired her writings. She especially expresses her pride in the fact that she came "from an extended family that has Muslim Brotherhood roots going back three generations." (Davis, Zine, & Taylor, 2007)

However, despite her vocal pride in her Islamic faith and the Arab roots, we suggest that *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* projects a reformation of the Islamic thought as a consequence of the overpowering postmodernist philosophy of individualism thriving in the West. Kahf's portrayal presents Khadra as an emotional character suffering a crisis of identity. Social scientists agree that the displacement of people from the homeland to a foreign land accentuates the significance of origin in the new environment (Garghi, 2019: 50). William Safran distinguishes six tenets that often characterize the diasporic communities. These are: (1) being detached from an original "center" to a "peripheral"; (2) maintaining a shared memory about the motherland; (3) believing that they are not appreciated in the host society and thus remaining partly disengaged from it; (4) considering the motherland as the home to which they shall ultimately return; (5) remaining devoted to the protection of their homeland; (6) and finally preserving the connection with the motherland and its people in a way or another. (Safran, 2011: 84)

Examined through the perspective of Safran's ideas, criticism on Kahf's fiction shows that the displacement of the writers from the homeland Syria to the United States emphasized the concept of identity and the crisis of belonging (Garghi, 2019: 50). Fedda-Corney notes that contemporary Arab-

American writers such as Kahf propose “revisionary spaces responding to racial stereotyping, blanket labeling, and discriminatory profiling” exercised on Arabs in the American society (Fedda-Conrey, 2014: 140). She argues that Kahf’s novel “constantly pushes against exclusionary conceptualizations of US citizenship and belonging” (Fedda-Conrey, 2014: 55). Similarly, Gonçalves and Braga compare Kahf’s female characters to the oriental icon Scheherazade, who struggles to survive in the American society (Gonçalves & Barge: 85). They suggest that the novel’s description of a hybrid position in the crisscross of cultures supports the possibility of being Arab and American at the same time. This hybrid position is identified as the “liminal identity” by Alkarawi and Bahar in their 2013 analysis of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. The investigation of such liminal identity gives Arab American writers the chance to bring forward the inconstancies of the dominant discourses of the diaspora (Alkarawi & Bahar, 2013: 103).

Breaking away from Safran’s traditional conceptualization of the diasporic character, these critics offered through studying Kahf’s novel a way to negotiate the problem of belonging. The objective is to highlight Kahf’s toleration of a harmonious co-existence between the minority and the dominant groups in the United States. Though the current study partakes to this view, however, it argues that it is the postmodern philosophy that ensures the cohesion of the different nationalities, ethnicities and religions in the country. Postmodern philosophy builds on skepticism and relativism as analytical tools, this paper draws from Jean-Francois Lyotard’s concept of the death of “metanarratives” and the celebration of the “little narratives”, to demonstrate the triumph of the individual over authoritarianism in Kahf’s novel. Authoritarianism in the latter is represented by the patriarchal manipulation of Islam that can occasionally be found in the Arab countries. The social identity theories of otherization and categorization developed by Henry Tajfel are also used in this paper to examine the increasing awareness of human differences, which eventually offers a moral platform for characters like Khadra to demand for political and social validation.

*The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* portrays Khadra’s experience from childhood to adulthood. Her journey to self-construction starts from Indiana to the Middle East and back again to the United States. The plot is divided into two main sections: the first describes the protagonist’s upbringing in America, and the second shows her return to the US after a stay in the Arab world, as an escape from the oppression of the Baathist government. From the opening lines of the novel, Kahf pictures Khadra’s family as religious people who are not really welcomed in Indiana. As such, Khadra grows up heavily influenced by the Islamic doctrines, while suffering from an invalidating community especially at school. She then

travels to the Middle East to reconnect with her Arab roots, particularly Mecca, Kuwait, and Syria ; Her stay in all those Arab places transforms her conception of the religion and the Arab heritage altogether. Therefore, Khadra's journey can be said to epitomize the struggles of Arab Muslim women in the American world, where the construction of the self is the focus of uncertainty and rebellion.

This paper analyzes the tough experience of the protagonist in the struggle to construct a strong character capable of enduring a dual sense of belonging, while - at the same time - being subject to patriarchy. The characteristics of the diaspora provided by Safran fit the description of Khadra at earlier stages. However, the influence of the postmodern individualist culture carries the protagonist outside the boundaries of a traditional diasporic model. After her encounter with the Arab culture especially in Mecca, Khadra's character is finally shifted from a conventional homesick immigrant to an individualist wanderlust on the American land.

## **1. Understanding the Postmodern Individualist Culture**

The term postmodernism indicates the representation of the cultural changes associated with the aftermath of the Second World War in art. The "post" in postmodernism denotes a critical reaction to the values of the modernist movement in art and literature (Nicole, 2009: 1). It signifies an ideological adjustment in the way theories are received, realized by anti-universality and innovation. A major drawback in the study of postmodernism in literature is the multiplicity of definitions designated to the term. One of the widely-established definitions is that postmodernism is an umbrella concept which comprehends the various viewpoints that came as a result to the new world of post-war. It aims at moving away from the securities of tradition and the boundaries of the established value systems, in a way that appreciates the innerworkings of all social factions (Nicole, 2009: 17).

Inspired by the philosophy of the Enlightenment, the postmodern culture comes as a byproduct of the wearing high culture value systems associated with the modernist culture, by bringing about faith in the individual's judgement (Blum, 2020). In his article entitled "How Individualism Created Our Postmodern Culture", Alexander Blum argues that "Today, in the era of QAnon, Russian electoral interference, Covid-19 conspiracy theories and Donald Trump... people cannot choose what is factually true, but they are left to interpret those facts according to their own value systems" (Blum, 2020). In the postmodern age,

where truths were lost, and subjected to suspicious examination, each individual is left free to think for himself.

Under the postmodern individualist culture, people are unable to isolate what is objectively accurate because truth has been replaced by subjective discourses and conspiracies. The alleged “return of the sacred” is often understood as a reaction to the pluralization of the ideologies which has trembled the fundamentals of social security and generalized faith (Motak, 2009: 150). After the twentieth century failure of the totalitarian regimes and the standards of high culture, the postmodern culture ceased acknowledging the all-encompassing world-views that operated as guidelines for the individuals. From that time on, the discourse was, *de rigueur*, anti-authoritarian and experimental (Nicole, 2009: 11).

Jean Francois-Lyotard was among the first theorists to explain the end of metanarratives – or the authoritarian value systems. He even identified the essence of the postmodern condition to be the incredulity towards metanarratives. The demand of the postmodern theory is to “wage a war on totality... witness the unrepresentable... (and) activate the differences” (Lyotard, 1984: 82). Priority is placed on the individual as an independent entity that is capable of self-understanding and sense-building. Dominika Motak summarizes the zealous interest in the postmodern tendency of individualism as such:

“a constitutive component of postmodernity is reflected in notions of ‘individualization’ and ‘individualism’. Individualization of personality and biography has become the main, widely understood and respected, postulate of Western societies... In other words, we are now living in the culture of individualism. its sense is well reflected in Emilé Durkheim’s century-old formula : ‘a cult of the individual’ ... ‘there remains nothing that man may love and honor in common, apart from himself...’ (Motak, 2009: 151)

This pertains, perhaps as equally, to the spiritual matters. The new religious world-view that is taking shape under the postmodern condition presupposes that the religious doctrines – as a grand-narrative – can be dogmatic and restrictive to the human freedom of thought. Such an open viewpoint regarding religion, and life in general, can be shocking to a teenage girl whose family embraces a strict Islamic culture in the United States.

## **2. The New World vs The Muslim World**

Khadra’s journey starts with her family’s immigration to the United States when she is six years-old. Typical to the Arab-American narrative, the first pages of the novel describe a rough childhood in a hostile environment. Trapped in a

state of in-betweenness, the Shamys family attempts to protect their children with layers of pride. Khadra is raised to believe that the Arab Muslim culture is superior to the Western American one, and that there is an unbridgeable gap between the two (Abdullah, 2017: 71). Growing up among these cultural differences resulted in Khadra being less tolerable to other ethnicities and religions. Her identity is kept separate from the American people, as Muslim, on the one hand, and as a female, on the other. For instance, this is apparent in the mother's reaction to Khadra's request to attend a friend's party:

“Does she have a brother ? How old ? What is her father like ? her mother said. “Does he drink alcohol ? Will he walk around drunk in his undershirt and try to touch you ? No ? How do we know he won't ? We don't know, do we ? We don't know anything about these people.” (Kahf, 2006 : 85)

Khadra is raised to see herself as a non-American living in America. When her parent apply for citizenship, she feels defeated as this act means to surrender and to submit to her. Khadra considers the outer world to be a battlefield that she constantly struggles in vein to protect her identity against the American children and teachers at school. During high-school, every time she writes an assignment criticizing the American false democracy, and the way it supports violent regimes like Israel.

In an attempt to satisfy her thirst for an Arab-Muslim sense of belonging and reassurance, the protagonist marries Juma. For the Shamys, Juma is the logical partner for their daughter, since he possesses all the qualities of the Arab Muslim man that they equally uphold. Juma, too, regards Khadra as the suitable educated and traditional housewife in the Arabian sense. A while after, however, the image of the perfect match finds its end. Juma does not appreciate his wife's social engagement. He refuses her participation in campus demonstrations because he prefers her to give up the non-female dreams and prepare him food. She constantly reminds him of the way in which “the Prophet never asked his wives to do anything in the house for him” (Kahf, 2006 : 240), and he would always reply with irrelevant Quran verses that does not convince the well-educated Khadra. The gap in understanding and interpreting Islam between Juma and Khadra increasingly grew to cause them to divorce. As a result, Khadra's hopes to find self-assertion are met with disappointment, since she her partnership allows her no sense of individuality.

Not only does the American postmodern culture impose challenges on the Muslim community, but the people in this community are also portrayed as having to overcome various thoughts and attitudes among the members. From Khadra's

experience, being married to a Muslim husband living in the United States does not mean that he would interpret the religious doctrines any different from a man belonging to the dominant group. All of these reflections and encounters with the diverse frontiers of faiths trigger more confusion for the protagonist. Thus, she feels obliged to deconstruct her past knowledge about religion and reconstruct new individualized views based on the knowledge that she collects from her involvements with the Muslim and non-Muslim groups around her. “Postmodern Knowledge is not simply a tool of the authorities” notes Lyotard, “it refines our sensibility to differences and reinforces our ability to tolerate the incommensurable. Its principle is not the expert’s homology, but the inventor’s paralogy.” (Lyotard, 1984: xxv)

The Muslim people in Indiana share a conventional understanding of the world; this is manifested in their constant effort to bound themselves into a home-like territory of beliefs and fears. The exilic position as in Eva Hoffman’s words, is “congruent with exactly those qualities which are privileged in a certain vein of the postmodern theory: marginality, alterity, the de-centered identity” (Abdullah, 2017: 70). Against these privileged little narratives, the grand narrative symbolized through the strict Islamic religion is portrayed as the source of frustration for Khadra. Subsequently, the continuation of her journey, is in essence the struggle to construct an individualized little narrative that tolerates both the Muslim and the American identities.

### **3. The Myth of Home**

Khadra’s understanding of the Arab Muslim culture takes a different turn when she sets foot in Mecca. Although her experience was short lived since she traveled with her family to perform pilgrimage, this place helps her to realize what it really means to be in the land of her dreams: at home. As explained in Safran’s description of the diasporic character, Khadra’s eagerness to reconnect with her cultural and geographical origins is informed by the desire to gain a deeper self-knowledge and to negotiate the issue of belonging that traumatizes the Arab Americans in the diaspora (Fedda-Conrey, 2014: 66).

As ‘the mother of all cities’ and the cradle of Islam, Mecca is anticipated to be the site of purity, in which every individual is blessed with good manners, and is faithful to the religious principles. However, Khadra quickly stumbles across the reality of the Muslim society in Mecca ; its structure, but also its norms that clash with her ambition to construct a satisfying Muslim identity. Upon arrival, she is accompanied by policemen who criticize and mock her simply because she wanted to perform the morning prayer *Fajr* at the mosque. This incident is

translated in Khadra's language as an unjustifiable act of gender inequation, and against women's rights even in Islam. She expresses her confusion to her father Wajdy arguing:

“Women have always gone to the mosque. You always said it was part of Islam. What about Aisha ? What about how Omar wished his wife would not go to the mosque for Fajr but he could not stop her because he knew it was her right ? What about the Prophet saying ”you must never prevent the female servants of God from attending the houses of God ? I told the Matawwa that hadith and he laughed – he laughed at me, and said listen to this woman quoting scripture at us ! (Kahf, 2006: 168)

From this conversation between Khadra and her father, Matawwa, Kahf exposes the way in which the Islamic principles in the Arab countries are manipulated by men to control the movement of the female. However, this concept grew increasingly misused by men. Therefore, the Muslim males in Mecca – and Khadra eventually – misinterpret the Islamic faith because of the patriarchal domination. Her father criticizes her for being too westernized in his view ; “you are used to America, benti... in most of Muslim world, it has not been the custom for hundreds of years” for the female to move freely (Kahf, 2006: 168). The first encounter with the Arab Muslim origin, made Khadra feel unfortunate for being a woman as she grew “very angry – angry that they would treat her that way, and angry that she let them get inside her feelings – and she wanted to come out swinging”. (Kahf, 2006: 169)

Along with the male domination that the protagonist observes in the Arab Muslim society, people in Mecca disrespect Khadra for her American background and her Syrian origins. Ghazi hints that the Syrian girls have a bad reputation. When they ride the car in the center of Mecca, he “started pulling her veil down the back of her head and pushing his hand up against her breast and his mouth was grazing her now exposed neck... and then he was pushing himself on top of her” (Kahf, 2006: 177). The driver too remains silent and does not feel the need to do anything. Khadra suffered an identity-crisis even more serious than the one she experienced in the United States. The idea of the “home” as constructed in her mind was nothing more than a myth because “even though she was in a Muslim country... and not just any Muslim country but the Muslim country, where Islam started, she had never felt so far from home” (Kahf, 2006: 177). As a consequence, an appreciation for the American individualist culture is verbalized for the first time in the novel after that experience.

Gender inequality resulting from patriarchal domination stands, in Khadra's view, as a key aspect of the Arab Muslim society and culture. This view echoes Lyotard's account on the metanarratives as dogmatic and inflexible. Khadra's dissatisfaction with the Islamic value system reflects the appreciation of the individualist postmodern culture present in the United States. Disappointed with the lifestyle that she witnessed in the Arab world, Khadra demands a more flexible and subjective discourse that satisfies her individualist craving for meaning and belonging: "The west for the Arab individuals is no longer an oppressor but a savior, a place of refuge from repression at home, a space of freedom with the promise of prosperity", comments Rasheed El-Enany (El-Enany, 2006: 186). Therefore, it is only natural for the Arab Muslims, who live in the diaspora to be in the forefront of the process of individualization and integration with the new culture.

#### **4. Between Faith and Individualism**

The main challenge faced by the protagonist in Kahf's novel is establishing a secure sense of meaning and belonging. The reason that caused Khadra to undertake that journey to the Arab world is to find a solid answer for who she truly is. Khadra's identity is created by three main fragments: a diasporic, an Arab Muslim, and a female. The multi-layered consciousness enforced on the protagonist is hardly reconcilable, and it remains difficult for her to assume a unified self. This triple consciousness is an extension to what W. E. Burghardt Du Bois's conceptualizes as the double consciousness, which he presented in his article "Striving of the Negro People" as early as 1897. Regarding the Afro-American's characteristic of being both black and immigrants in America, Du Bois uses the term "a peculiar sensation" to explain what it feels like to be constantly defined according to the other (Du Bois, 1897).

Khadra's peculiar sensation starts with her first encounter with the American society in Indiana. Holding up on the strict Islamic beliefs engraved into her by her family excluded her from the people around her who mostly submitted to no religion. Because the idea of assimilation meant a coward surrender for Khadra, her feeling of estrangement was never reconciled. After that, the problem of gender separation increasingly grows up as she matures into a woman during her stay at Mecca. Kahf explains that the Muslim female is doomed to disappointment both inside and outside the host culture. Khadra is forced to re-evaluate her sense of belonging because this peculiar sensation was experienced in the Arab world as much as in the United States.

Up until this point, Khadra's feeling of exclusion is maintained by otherization, a sentiment nurtured by stereotypical representations (Berrebbah, 2019: 28). In the Social Identity theory developed by Henri Tajfel, it is otherization that creates the social categorization and comparison. The theory indicates that the individual's self-conceptualization depends partially on the significance and relevance placed on the group membership to which that individual belongs. Tajfel defines social identity as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership in a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that group membership" (Reimer, Schmid, Hewstone, & Ramiah, 2020: 6). In Mecca, Khadra categorizes herself as an intruder and a stranger on the basis of differences in values and origins. Her religious principles are challenged by the Mattawa men, and her origins as a Syrian American is disrespected by her Saudi acquaintances. In both Indiana and Mecca, Khadra has a tendency to position herself on the ground of the criticism she receives from her "group membership" (Reimer, Schmid, Hewstone, & Ramiah, 2020: 7). The division of people into social categories for Khadra is inspired by the positive or the negative evaluation of these categories. The positive category to which the protagonist aspires to belong, shifts, therefore, from the Arab world to the Western world.

As a result of frustration and hostility, the image of home is altered for Khadra. Mecca is not a place of belonging anymore, and she is now "glad that (they) are through with that place" (Kahf, 2006: 179). Considering the Arab world as a place of ghurba, the United States is now the real home for Khadra: "She pressed her nose against the airplane window. The lights of Indianapolis spread out on the dark earth beneath the jet. The sweet relief of her own clean bed awaited her there – and only there, of all the earth" (Kahf, 2006: 179). The female protagonist comes to appreciate the individuality she enjoys in the United States where she is able to verbalize her thoughts without persecution. Though the problems of ethnicity and religious difference are not erased, Kahf's narrative reveals that a Muslim American is better to be in America than in Muslim countries like Syria and Saudi Arabia.

After returning to America, Khadra appropriates the essence of the postmodern culture of individualism through physical distancing. Though she treasures the encouragement and affection that she receives from her family, she decides to travel to fulfil her sense of self. She moves to Philadelphia to pursue her interest in photography away from the Dawah center. More than anytime else in her life, Khadra embraces the freedom of interpretation that the postmodern individualist culture supports. "Her scarf, a Kelly-green chiffon, was slipping

off the crown of her head”, narrates Kahf, “she reached to pull it back up. Then she stopped, noticing the wine-red juices running between her fingers, and not wishing to stain the lovely scarf... her palms spread, her hands spiraled upward to the sky like question marks” (Kahf, 2006: 308). Khadra’s decision to wear hijab less often, marks the beginning of new individualized little narrative that does not abide by the preestablished rules.

It is important at this regard to stress the fact that Khadra does not completely forsake the Islamic doctrines for freedom. Daniele Hervieu-Léger suggests that the recent sociological studies on religion in the West progressively shift the emphasis “to the patterns of individualization of belief, leading individuals to independently evolve personal credos that would give meaning to their existence, according to their own frame of mind, interests, aspirations, and experience” (Motak, 2009: 151). In the case of the Arab Muslims in the diaspora, the view of religion becomes gradually individualized to ease the peculiar sensation. Khadra’s friend, Maryam, is a case of the way in which an Arab Muslim in America individualizes her view of Islam. Kahf writes:

“this friend mapped Muslim space in a way new to Khadra. Maryam’s thing was service. Service to the poor is service to God. I don’t have to be working only with Muslims or Muslim issues or Muslim this or Muslim that. By representing impoverished defendants ; I’M. manifesting Muslim values in my life. We don’t need a ghetto mentality.” (Kahf, 2006: 367)

Thus, Kahf constructs an individualized identity who refuses to give up her tangerine scarf, but wears it whenever she wants. Khadra does not restrict herself to a single model of Islam, and she gives herself the freedom to choose and interpret the Quran and Sunnah in a way that suits her life and aspirations. Kahf’s depiction of her female protagonist’s experiences in the Arab world is symptomatic of other Muslim women who live in the diaspora but strongly seek a sense of origin in the Arab world. The postmodern culture allows this faction of society to embrace and explore their hybrid identities without conforming to the strict standards of a certain metanarrative.

## **Conclusion**

In drawing to a close, it can be suggested that the personality of Khadra articulates an attempt to culturally and socially locate the Arab Muslim female immigrant in the postmodern culture. The diasporic characters in Kahf’s novel are continuously in the process of displacement in their search for a proper sense of belonging. Even though Khadra was born in an encouraging and sympathetic

family, her needs as a female adult in the United States to find her own voice and personality detaches her from the unity of the Muslim community in Indiana. The representation of the female protagonist's experiences in the Arab world and especially in Mecca is symptomatic of Muslim women living in the diaspora who actively seek to reconnect with their homeland. Kahf proposes a reconfiguration of the binary opposition associated with the Arab world as a place of high complexity and the Western world as a realm for social and cultural refuge.

The troops of the American postmodern culture are in constant conflict with, and perhaps overpass, the margins of religion when constructing the female identity in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. Therefore, the need of the diaspora to maintain the bond with the motherland is contradicted by the female writer since the culture of individualism opens up possibilities for freedom. Kahf echoes the first diasporic studies made on the Jewish people in *Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity* by Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin who said that "diasporic cultural identity teaches us that cultures are not preserved by being protected from 'mixing' but probably can only continue to exist as a product of such mixing. Cultures, as well as identities, are constantly being remade" (Daniel Boyarin, 1993: 721). Eventually, hybridity and multi-layered consciousness continues to grow as the new norm in the culture of individualization, as everyone is allowed to think in the way that best suits their environments and ambitions.

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## Abstract

This article draws on Postmodern philosophy and social identity theory to analyze Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006). It seeks to show how the postmodern culture and its individualistic philosophy constitutes a strong factor in the shaping of both the identity of the diasporic Arab woman and the social interactions among the Arab American community. In the novel, Kahf presents through the figure of Khadra what it means to drift between different cultures, and proposes a strategy for bridging the gap between the home and the host cultures. Her strategy is underpinned in the Postmodern sense of individualistic freedom of expression, which helps her to construct a hybrid identity that encapsulates her Islamic faith as an Arab and Muslim woman in exile with the individuality of the American woman.

## Keywords

Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Postmodernist individualism, diasporic female identity, Arab American literature, Islam.

## مستخلص

يهدف هذا البحث إلى تحليل رواية مهجة كهف الفتاة ذات الحجاب البرتقالي (2006) من وجهة نظر ما بعد الحداثة. ما تسعى هذه الدراسة لإثباته هو أن ثقافة ما بعد الحداثة بما تحتويه من فلسفة الفردية يؤثر على بناء هوية الاغتراب وعلى التفاعل الاجتماعي في المجتمع العربي الأمريكي. بما أن الثقافة تشكل الهوية، فإن كهف تعرض من خلال شخصية خضرة ما يعنيه الانجراف بين الثقافات المختلفة، وتقترب استراتيجية لسد الفجوة بين الأم والثقافة الأجنبية عند بناء هوية الاغتراب. تكمن هذه الاستراتيجية في حرية التعبير المطلقة التي تعتمد عليها ثقافة ما بعد الحداثة في الولايات المتحدة. بالاعتماد على فلسفات ما بعد الحداثة ونظريات الهوية الاجتماعية، يتناول هذا المقال الية تحول شخصية خضرة واحساسها بالانتماء من امرأة عربية مسلمة في الغربية الى امرأة أمريكية ذات تفكير إسلامي غربي.

## كلمات مفتاحية

الفردية، ما بعد الحداثة، الاغتراب، الهوية النسوية، ادب المهجر العربي الأمريكي، الإسلام.

## Résumé

Cette recherche présente une analyse du roman de Mohaja Kahf, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), d'un point de vue postmoderne. Elle vise à démontrer que la culture postmoderne, avec sa philosophie individualiste, affecte la construction de l'identité diasporique et l'interaction sociale parmi les membres de la communauté arabo-américaine aux États Unis. Le personnage de Khadra montre ce que la dérive entre les différentes cultures signifie, et propose une stratégie identitaire pour combiner les cultures d'origine et d'accueil dans le but de construire l'identité diasporique. Cette stratégie est articulée dans la liberté d'expression individualiste de la culture postmoderne aux États-Unis. En

convoquant les philosophies postmodernes et les théories de l'identité sociale, cet article étudie le mécanisme de transformation de la personnalité de Khadra et son sentiment d'appartenance d'une femme arabo-musulmane en exil à une femme américaine avec une pensée islamique individualisée.

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**Mots-clés**

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L'individualisme postmoderne, l'écriture diasporique, l'identité féminine, la littérature arabo-américaine, l'islam.