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**Black and Muslim Immigrants' Search for Identity: The
Case of Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and
Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006)**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved parents,

Slimani Ghania , Khattaoui Rezki

Who sacrificed their youth and nursed my daughters to grant me a chance to follow my studies

To my dear husband,

Khattaoui Rabah

Who encouraged me and gave me strength and ability to complete my studies, achieves this work, and improves my English

To my daughters,

Ilina (Thanina), Aya, Liliane

To whom I apologize for taking their time as a mother

To my parents-in-law

To my sisters and brothers

For their immense help

To all those who supported and encouraged me

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Abstract

This research is a comparative study between Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) from a post-colonial perspective. The aim of this work is to demonstrate the instability and changing nature of identity and to shed light on the racism faced by the Black and Muslim immigrants in the two novels, focusing on the two protagonists Faith and Khadra. To reach this purpose, we have relied on some post-colonial concepts developed by Stuart Hall, Edward Said and other post-colonial theorists. At first we have studied the Black immigrants' experience in Britain through Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). In fact, we have dealt with the effects of racism and the generations' gap on Faith's identity. Moreover we have shown the Importance of roots and history in constructing her identity. Similarly, in the second chapter, we have explored Muslim immigrants' experience of racism and identity crisis in America through Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006). We have focused on Khadra's identity crisis and her undergoing the journey of self realization through roots and history. Thus, after studying the two selected works we came to the conclusion that even though Andrea Levy and Mohja Kahf are of different geographical areas, culture, religions, languages, they share common attitudes toward racism and identities' transformations.

Keywords: *Andrea Levy, Black Immigrants, Mohja Kahf, Muslim Immigrants, Post-colonialism, Identity, Racism*

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I. General Introduction:

Literature is a reflection of society's ideologies, concerns and conflicts. Black British and Arab American literature is no exception to this fact. The recent works by Black British and Arab American writers have indeed given voice to the Blacks and Arabs in Diaspora. Their literary productions have received a huge interest, like never before, by the western mainstream. These writers used their works to reflect the problematic state of identity and community they are facing in their host countries, notably the predicament of racism and bigotry as well as their social and political exclusion.¹

It is often assumed that Black British literature refers to a literary tradition which developed only after the Second World War, in the wake of the arrival of the Empire Wind Rush, the ship that docked in 1948 bringing immigrants from Jamaica, Trinidad, and other islands to London, and was ,therefore, assumed to be the starting point of the Black presence in Britain.² In fact, Black British Literature deals with the situation of the immigrants from the British former colonies and their descendants. It explores effects of migration and displacement onto subsequent generations. Black British writers explored different issues, such as: identity (personal, cultural, ethnic, national identity), cultural hybridity, cultural difference and racism, and the processes of cultural change that creates new spaces and transformations.

Similarly, Arab American literature came as a tool to critically challenge the American falsified stereotypes associated with Arabs mainly the Muslims. Arab American writers have produced many literary corpora to defy Americans biased representations that depict them as “others”, inferiors, backwards and oppressed. Their literary productions illustrate the vital role that Arab Muslims can play throughout their literary accomplishments. Their writings look at themes related to religion, religious freedom, identity's hyphenation, the status of Muslims in

the American Diaspora and the recurrent struggles that Muslim and Arab constantly encounter against racism and bigotry.

In this context, we can situate Andrea Levy and Mohja Kahf, the writers of the works under study. Thus, the primary goal of this research is to analyze the effects of immigration, focusing on the Black and Arab Muslim immigration to the West. Our main concern is to examine the experience of Black and Arab Muslim immigrants in Europe and America. From this, we think it is interesting to analyse Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl the in tangerine scarf* (2006).

These two selected novels deal with the second generation of immigrants' experience of racism, negotiating identity, and the clash between the first and the second generations in the West. Several theoretical texts about immigrants are worked with in order to set a theoretical background. The secondary sources are applied to see how the situation constructed in the two novels corresponds to the theory.

Literature Review:

Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) have been the target of great bulk of criticism since their publication. Indeed, they have been studied from different perspectives.

To begin with, the work of Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) has been of great interest to many scholars. Helena Kostohryzova (2007) opens up a discussion on Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). She emphasises on the need for the immigrants to know and understand their national identity. She argues that immigrants, especially the second generation (Levy's generation), suffer from "multiculturalism" which leads them not only to search for their personal identity but also their national identity. With making reference to the

novel's protagonist, Faith; Kostohryzova asserts that Faith does not only embark on a quest to know herself but also to acquaint herself with her people.³

Paying close attention to prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination, Linda Cinkova (2010) asserts that *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) is not only Levy's personal experience but also the experiences of the first and second generation of West Indians in Britain. Cinkova argues that Faith's, the protagonist, identity crisis is caused by the presence of discrimination, stereotypes and racism in Britain. In fact, she sheds light on the Black immigrants' difficulties to assert their rights and live like normal human beings in Britain. She blames the mother country for disappointing the Black people.⁴

The work of Mohja Kahf has been the subject of many works questioning the experience of Muslims, mainly the veiled women, in Diaspora. In "Notion of Home for Diasporic Arab women writers" (2009), Ruzi Suliza Hashim and Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf discuss notions of home and immigration throughout Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* (2003) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006). The article focuses on the way in which the authors depict the lives of Arab immigrants in a country that is not their own, and how are they struggling to adapt to their new environment. R.S Hashim and N.F Abdul Manaf discuss the issues of identity and home relying on the concepts of "memory" and "Diaspora". They argue that the two concepts are important to understand the plight of both writers.⁵

Areen Khalifah (2016) discusses the symbolism of the veil in Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) from a post-colonial perspective. She discusses the Western biased representations that consider the veil as a sign of oppression. She argues that the symbol of the veil is not universal as many Western theorists and feminists aver, but rather a shifting signifier with multiple meaning. She uses the novel as a tool to assert that the veil doesn't stand only for heritage and Islamic identity, but rather as a feminist, political, idealistic, and a revolutionary symbol as well as a symbol of love.⁶

Carine Pereira Marques (2012) examines the themes of gender and migration in relation to *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006). For her, Mohja Kahf's novel shows how the position of women undergoes transformation in Diaspora. Pereira argues that "in Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf*, Khadra Shamy, the main character negotiates her subjectivity in the space of Diaspora, which is illustrated mainly, among other things, through her choice of clothes."⁷

Issue and Working Hypothesis:

From the above review of the literature, we have noticed that many works have dealt with the two novels from different perspectives. As far as we know, no previous research has ventured to study the two works together; this is why we intend to compare them. This work, therefore attempts a comparative study of Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006). The objective of this work is to study the Black and Muslim immigrants' experience in two different cultural spaces, respectively the British and the American ones.

We will study the effects of racism, discrimination and the generations' gap on the second generation of Black and Muslim immigrants in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) respectively. As a matter of fact, we will study the way these immigrants search for their national identities, focusing on the two protagonists, Faith and Khadra. More precisely we will analyze the main characters' Faith and Khadra, journey of identity crisis and self realization. In order to achieve the purpose of this research, we will rely on some literary concepts of post-colonial theory developed by a number of theorists as Stuart Hall and Edward Said.

Methodological Outline:

Our present research is undertaken using IMRAD method. It starts with a general introduction in which we review the literature about Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006), state our issue and working hypothesis. In the Methods and Materials section, we provide a brief summary of the post-colonial theory, Stuart Hall's views of Cultural Identity, and some concepts developed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978), followed by short biographies of the authors and summaries of the two selected works. After enumerating the results of our research, we moved to the most detailed section of our work which is the discussion. This discussion section is divided into two chapters. The first chapter studies the Black immigrants' experience in Britain through Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). In fact, it deals with the effects of racism and the generations' gap on Faith's identity. Moreover it shows the importance of roots and history in constructing one's identity. The second chapter is concerned with Muslim immigrants' experience of racism and identity crisis in America through Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006), with making reference to the protagonist Khadra. It looks into Khadra's journey of identity crisis and self realization. Finally, we end up with a conclusion that sums up the main issues that we have raised along our work.

Endnotes:

¹ "The struggle of Muslim Women in America through Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*" (2017). Accessed on July 2020. <http://www.despace.uni.msila.dz>

² Ledent Benedicte, "Black British Literature." (2009), 66-22. Accessed on June 2020. <https://www.Books.google.dz>

³ Kostohryzova Helena, "The Immigrant Search for National Identity in Novels of Andrea Levy and Zadie Smith." (MA. U of Masaryk, 2007.)

⁴ Linda Cinkova, "West Indian Experience in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century: Bitter Sweet Home Coming." (Master's Thesis. 2010)

⁵ Ruzy Suliza Hashim and Nor Faridah Abdul Manaf, "Notions of Home for Diasporic Muslim Women writers." *European Journal of social Sciences*. V.9.n.4. (2009) 545-556.

⁶ Khalifah Areen, "The Symbol of the Veil in Mohja Kahf's *the Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*". (International Journal of Humanities and Social Science.Vol.06. N.1 January 2016.)

⁷ Marques P.Carine, "Mohja Kahf's:*The Girl In The Tangerine Scarf* Seen Through The Hijab Perspective." (Estudos Anglo-Americanos, no. 37, 2012).p 177

II. Methods and Materials:

A-Methods:

In order to achieve the purpose of this research, we will rely on the post-colonial theory. In fact, we will make use of some concepts developed by some post-colonial theorists mainly Stuart Hall's approach to identity.

Andrea Levy and Kohja Kahf's works present debatable subjects both individually and collectively in relation to the differences in culture, especially with regard to identity, racism and discrimination. At the same time, there exists a set of theories and arguments in relation to these subjects as presented through the available literature like Stuart Hall's *Cultural Identity and Diaspora* (1996), Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978), and Frantz Fanon who used in his research the method of psychoanalysis to show the inferiority complex the colonizers had managed to instill in the (un)conscious mind of the colonized. He published his research in his book *Black Skin, White Masks* in 1952. According to Peter Childs, these debates assist us to accelerate discussion in post colonialism, more than in any other period before, as a result of many waves of immigration, and the need to anchor oneself to a given background. Investigating the presentations in these works becomes important in trying to question why the spirit of belonging and identity arises in human beings¹. The collision between the 'East' and the 'West' is truly made visible through these theorists. In *Location of Culture* (1994), Homi Bhabha states that:

Postcolonial criticism bears witness to the unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest for political and social authority geopolitical division of east and west, north and south. They intervene in those ideological discourses of modernity that attempt to give a hegemonic "normality" to issues of cultural difference, social authority, and political discrimination in order nations, races, communities, people. They formulate their critical revisions around testimony of third World countries and discourses of "minorities" ...to reveal the antagonistic and

ambivalent moments within the “rationalizations”...to the uneven development and differential, often disadvantaged, histories within the modern world. Postcolonial perspectives emerge from the colonial modernity.²

Bhabha’s definition applies to some of the many themes in the two selected novels, where the main characters experience an identity crisis and racism.

The main focus in this research paper is to explore how identity and the feeling of belonging develop, and how this may differ from one generation to another, from one ethnic group to another, and from one country to another. We will apply post-colonial literary theory as the two novels cover the roots and origins of the characters. Postcolonial literature embraces both the past and the present. It covers writings from former colonies and deals with issues like, independence, race and Diaspora. The term postcolonial can indicate the literal meaning of the period that follows the end of colonization. However, it is also about the issues of the independent countries throughout the world before and after the end of the colonization. In their introduction to *“The Empire Writes Back’: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures”* (1989), Bill Ashcroft et al emphasize the same idea by saying that the term postcolonial is used to cover “all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day.”³ Further, they say it is concerned with the “world as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures.”⁴ Dr. Datta G. Sawant defines post-colonialism as follows:

Postcolonialism is a critical theory which focuses on colonial experience from the colonised society’s point view, the semantic base of Post-colonialism means something that has concern only with the national culture after the departure of imperial power. But in actual practice, it has to be understood only when to refer to colonialism, myth and history, language and landscape, self and other are all very important ingredients of postcolonial studies.⁵

Post-colonial theory represents a complex field of study that include issues such as identity, gender, race, racism, and ethnicity “[...] Focuses on exploding knowledge systems underpinning colonialism, neo-colonialism, and various forms of oppression and exploitation present today [...] challenges epistemic violence; that is, it questions the undervaluing,

destruction, and appropriation of colonized people's knowledge and ways of knowing, including the colonizer's use of that knowledge against them to serve the colonizer's interests.'⁶

In fact, since the 1970s the rise of Postcolonial Studies marked resurgence in investigating the relations of the West with the East in the literature of late nineteenth century.⁷ Theorists such as Edward Said, in his influential *Orientalism* (1978) offer a new way to conceptualize the history of relations between the West and the East. He analyzes how the Orientalist classification of the East as different and inferior legitimized Western domination.⁸ He argues that the West has the tendencies of "dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient."⁹ Moreover, Said (1978) critiques the history of American dominations that often use 'Orientalism' to strengthen their identity by "setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."¹⁰ Based on this crucial issue, many Muslim-American writers produce their own identities and stories in order to combat American attempts to dominate Muslims through representation. Actually, they address both Muslim and American readers, providing a significant dialogue and a balanced perspective in representing Islam. Inevitably, Said's works have inspired many Muslim writers worldwide.

In order to discuss the issue of identity' transformation in the two selected novels, we will rely on the Jamaican cultural theorist and sociologist Stuart Hall's Approach to Identity. Stuart Hall stresses on the importance of the question of identity. He argues that the question of identity is not the same with its traditional meaning. Hall (1990) says that "identity is not as transparent or unproblematic as we think. Perhaps, instead of thinking of identity as an already accomplished fact, which the new cultural practices then represent, we should think, instead of identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation."¹¹ For him the concept of identity has undergone changes through time. So, it is obvious that identity construction is a dynamic

process which brings change through time according to historical events. Stuart Hall sustains this claim by defining the term 'identity' as:

“A moveable feast formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural system which surround us. It is historically, not biologically, defined. The subject assumes different identities at different times, identities which are not unified around a coherent “self.”¹²

Hall uses the Caribbean identities in order to define and explain the term 'Cultural Identity' and its impact and importance in the Caribbean or the Black Identity. Hall defines “cultural identity” in two different ways. In the first position “cultural identity” is defined as the common cultural manifestations and the shared history that reunites a group of people to form a community. He adds: “This oneness, underlying all the other, more superficial differences, is the truth, the essence of ‘Caribbeanness’, of black experience.”¹³ Hall acknowledges that cultural identity is the ‘Oneness’ or something that unifies not only the Caribbean, but every group of people, and that this cultural identity is more important and true.

Hall, then, goes further in the second position and defines cultural identity as “a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as of ‘being.’”¹⁴ It is understood as unstable and changeable. Identities are not something that already “exist” but rather they come from a place that has history. This means that it is not a fixed essence but a positioning and we give the categories of identity to the ways that we are positioned by the narratives of the past. This identity that is produced in the past is not eternal, but it goes under the influence of place, time, history and culture.¹⁵ According to him, this position admits the presence of similarities shared by a group focusing on the changes that individuals undergo, which are not fixed in a common past;¹⁶ but constitute “what we really are” or “what we have come.”¹⁷ For him, we cannot form an identity for so long with ‘one experience and one identity:

We cannot speak for very long, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity,' without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Caribbean uniqueness.¹⁸

B-Materials:

B-1-Biographies of the Authors:

Andrea Levy's Biography:

Andrea Levy was born on 7th March, 1956, and died on 14th February 2019, London. She is pure Afro-Jamaican descends; she has a Jewish paternal grandfather and a Scots maternal great-grandfather. Her parents migrated to England on the Empire Wind Rash in 1948; her father Mr. Winston was among the first wave of immigrants who wanted to test the widely heard British multiculturalism, with the hope of being welcomed by their "Mother Country"¹⁹.

Young Levy was raised particularly in Highbury, North London. As she grew older she lived in London and studied at the University of Middlesex. She gets married with Bill Mayblin, who is a graphic designer by profession. She is a step mother to Mayblin's daughters: Hannah and Maya. At the age of 26, she used to work part time in the various costume departments of the Royal Opera House and the BBC. Then, she worked for a social institution that includes dealing with racist attacks. Soon enough, she started joining seminars and civil rights activism. She grew an affiliation towards the works of Dr. Martin Luther King and W.E.B Du Bois.²⁰

In her mid-thirties, Levy turned into fiction in order to discuss the Black British experience. Just few months before 1994, her first novel, *Every Light in the House Burnin*, was written. In 1996, her second novel, *Never Far from Nowhere*, was published; then *Fruit of the Lemon* in 1999. In these three novels she explored- from different perspectives- the problems faced by the Black British born children of Jamaican emigrants.

Her background provided her with ambivalence and confusion as she explains, “I want to belong to anywhere but this place where I am made to feel like an outsider-not welcome, definitely not welcome at all.”²¹ All these, are addressed in her writing:

Any history book will show that England has never been an exclusive club, but rather a hybrid nation. The effects of the British Empire were personal as well as political. And as the sun has finally set on the Empire, we are now to face up to all of these realities.²²

Mohja Kahf's Biography:

Mohja Kahf was born in Damascus, 1967. She is a Syrian-American poet and novelist. Her own conception of Islamic Feminism influences the themes of her poetry and writing as do other issues facing American Muslims. She explores themes of cultural dissonance and overlap between Muslim-American and other communities. Islam, morality, gender and gender-relations, sexuality, politics, and especially identity are important aspects of her work.

In fact, Kahf received her PH.D in comparative literature from Rutgers University. She is currently an associate professor of comparative literature and faculty member of the King Fahd Centre for Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.²³

Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) is a departure from her poems in form, but not in content. The novel's protagonist Khadra Shamy is a Syrian girl growing up in the American Midwest in 1970s. The Egyptian-American professor Dina Ibrahim comments on Mohj's work after attending one of her readings. “It is just so refreshing for someone to put a lighter spin on being a Muslim in America”²⁴, she says.

B-2-Summary of the Novels:

Summary of *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999):

Fruit of the Lemon (1999) was published for the first time in Great Britain 1999. It centres on the protagonist, Faith Jackson, the daughter of Jamaican parents who moved to England as young adults. Faith knows little about her parents' early lives in the Caribbean and even less of their ancestors- and her own. She thinks little of being Black in England, surrounded by white friends, colleagues and housemates. Faith is integrated in her own world in London until her parents announce their decision of moving back to Jamaica after decades away in the "Mother Country".

The story is divided into three parts; the first is set in England and the second in Jamaica. The third part consists of one page that deals Faith's journey back to England with her new constructed identity in Jamaica. At the very beginning of the story, Faith lives in a simple and small family with her father Wade, her mother Mildred and her brother Carl. But as the actions move she had to know other members of her big family with whom she never meets before. There, she meets her aunt Coral, whose storytelling provides Faith with ancestors, whose lives reach from Cuba and Panama to Harlem and Scotland. Branch by branch, story by story, Faith knows the family tree, and discovers her cultural heritage, which is far richer and wilder than she could have imagined.

Levy focuses her fiction on England and Jamaica, with the depiction of Faith struggle to achieve her own identity. Born in Britain as the daughter of Black parents, Faith fights both racism and her parents' gender discrimination. She belongs neither to her ancestral homeland, Jamaica, nor England, the legendary "motherland" of her colonies. The hybridity created by this circumstance is resolved by Faith's journey to Jamaica. Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) explores the significance of places in identity formation, and the function of homeland and motherland for translated hybrid identities.

Summary of *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006):

The novel *the girl in the tangerine scarf* was published in 2006. It tells the story of Khadra Shamy, a Muslim Syrian immigrant in the United States. The story is told by an omniscient narrator who uses flashbacks. Several events of the story take place in Indianapolis, where Khadra “spent most of her growing-up years.”²⁵ Her father went to USA in order to work at the “Dawah Centre”, a Muslim community centre, where, he believes, he would answer God's call and help other Muslims. Khadra grows up in a devoutly observant Muslim family in 1970s Indiana. The East-West cultural clashes, along with varying interpretations of Islamic codes, compel her to continually explore the fault lines between “Muslims” and “Americans.”

Endnotes:

¹ Childs Peter and Williams Patrick, *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*. (Michigan University Press: Prentice Hall , 1997).

² Bhabha Homi, *The Location of Culture*, 1994.

³ Bill Ashcroft et al, *The Empire Writes Back; theory and Practice in post-colonial literature*. (Routledge, London and New York, 1989), 02.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271633479_Perspectives_on_Postcolonial_Theory_Said_Spivak_and_Bhabha, Accessed on 10th March 2020.

⁶ Lungua B.Violet, “Postcolonial Theory :A Language for a Critique of Globalization? ” (V.7. Issue 3-4. June 2008),193. Viewed on 24th May 2020.

<https://doi.org/10.1163/156914908X371349>

⁷ Bill Ashcroft, et al, *The Empire Writes Back; theory and Practice in post-colonial literature*. (Routledge, London and New York, 1989), 18.

⁸ Said Edward W, *Orientalism*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978),123.

⁹ Ibid., 03.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Stuart Hall ,“Cultural Identity and Diaspora”, in, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1990), 222.

¹² ibid p

¹³ Ibid., 223.

¹⁴ Ibid., 225.

¹⁵ Ibid., 225-226.

¹⁶ Ibid., 224.

¹⁷ Ibid., 222.

¹⁸ Ibid.,225.

¹⁹ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2000/feb/19/society1> Viewed on 03rd April 2020.

²⁰ <http://www.andrealevy.co.uk> Accessed 10th August 2020.

²¹ Levy Andrea, "This is my England" (The Guardian, 19 February 2000). Viewed on 03rd April 2020. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2000/feb/19/society1>.

²² Ibid.

²³ <http://www.mohjakahf.pennyspoetry.fandom.com>. Viewed on 2^{8th} June 2020.

²⁴ Irwansyan Achmad Dian, "The Main Character's Islamic Identity Construction in Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*".(Theses. 2017), 87.

²⁵ Kahf Mohja, *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (New York: Carroll& Graf, 2006), 01.

III. Results and Discussion:

A-Results:

This research paper has explored the Black and Muslim immigrants' experience through Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006). The analysis has relied on some theoretical concepts developed by a number of post-colonial theorists.

From our exploration of the two works, we have noticed that although they belong to different countries and cultures, the two authors share common attitudes toward identity and racism. Both of them have focused on the second generation of immigrants.

Children of immigrants have lived and spent their whole lives in the West (Britain and America) under two different influences. The first is their home, where their parents are trying to bring them up in a traditional way; the second is the influence at school where they mix with children of other origins. Their position is therefore a difficult one; the new society expects them to assimilate, but at the same time the immigrants are often confronted with hostility and racism. Their parents expect them to maintain their traditions and at the same time avoid conflicts with the new society. In such a complex situation, under two different influences, young people can easily develop an identity crisis. The main characters of the two novels, Faith and Khadra, find themselves in such circumstances. The two characters are in transition from early childhood to young adulthood in patches of memories. Faith and Khadra live the painful experience of the second generation of immigrants, trying to understand where they do in fact belong.

Our study of Andrea Levy and Mohja Kahf's biographies and the summaries of the two selected novels, has provided us with enough evidences about the Black and Muslim immigrants experience in Britain and America. It shows a true presentation of identity crisis and racism faced by the characters.

Moreover, from the study of the two authors' biographies, we have deduced that both of them experienced an identity crisis and racism in their lives. We have also reached the conclusion that their two novels are semi-autobiographies. In fact, both stories resonate with those of the two authors.

B-Discussion:

Chapter One: Black Immigrants' Experience in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999)

In this chapter, we will explore Andrea Levy's rendering of the themes of West Indies immigrants' search for their national identity through their roots and history; the identity crisis which is created by the gap between immigrants' generations, and racism in her novel *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). We intend to look into the way Levy's characters experience all these in the light of the post-colonial theory, focusing on the main character, Faith. It is important to say that the importance of these themes stem from the fact that Levy faced the same problems in her life.

1-The Black Immigrants Facing Racism:

Immigration to Britain is a historical phenomenon closely related to the Empire itself. From the beginning it was accompanied by the problem of racial discrimination. People from the Caribbean were encouraged to come as they represented cheap labour; however, they were not invited to settle. Nevertheless, the number of immigrants kept rising, and after 1918 the British state reinforced discriminatory practices and made further efforts to prevent British subjects considered to be a different race from settling in Britain. The situation changed after the Second World War, when Britain suffered lack of labour. The state policy towards immigration therefore did a u-turn and started to seek workers from Europe as well as the commonwealth, inviting them to come to live and work in Britain. In 1948, the British Nationality Act was introduced which gave any commonwealth citizen a legal right to settle. However, even at this early stage and although encouraged, Black migration and settlement was politically perceived in a different way from European migrations. Coloured immigrants were employed particularly by London transport, the British Hotels and restaurants

Association, the NHS, and similar organizations. In other words, to do jobs traditionally of low status and low pay and they were considered as ‘alien’ and a possible threat to the British way of life¹. Andrea Levy extensively deals with this topic in her novels, especially in *Small Island* (2004), where she described the disillusionment that immigrants from the Caribbean felt after having come to the ‘mother country’ and not being welcome.

For most white British citizens, Black immigrants meant a threat and were commonly perceived as being the reason of increasing social problems and crime. This negative image was largely created by the media and encouraged by public figures, such as politicians. The Media and ‘Western’ discourses that positioned and subjected Black people as ‘others’ within the categories of ‘the West’, continue to haunt the postmodern era in the form of modern racism. Black immigrants attempt to start a new life in Britain that accompanied the desire to forget the traumatic histories of slavery and colonial subordination.

Andrea Levy’s *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) deals with the Black immigrant’s disillusionment and their experience of racism, especially in the first part of the novel. Sebnem Toplu asserts that the West Indies immigrants considered England as a kind of home, a “Mother country” whose history, culture and literature were familiar to them from their school textbooks.² He says: “For migrant Jamaicans like Faith’s parents, Jamaica is their homeland and where they truly belong; their arrival in England is explained by their desire to earn money for a better living. The idea of England as a mother land is maintained by the fact that the British population is shaped by imperial history.”³ He adds that the irony in England’s welcoming of immigrants and their naive faith in the Motherland is narrated in *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999):

The ship finally docked at West India dock on Guy Fawkes’ night. As the ship pulled into its berth, Mildred and wade heard the pop and whistle of crackers and saw fireworks lighting up the sky. Mum explained, ‘At First we didn’t know what it was for. In Jamaica you only get fireworks at Christmas. Your dad thought it might have been a welcome for us, having come so far and England needing us. But I didn’t think he could be right. And he wasn’t.’⁴

Toplu points out that Faith's parents lived under terrible conditions until they started earning enough money. For him, that is what led them to hide their past from Faith and her brother, Carl; Faith's father, Wade, remarks: "those days are best to be forgotten, Faith. Best forgotten."⁵ Sebnem Toplu sums up the idea of racism by stating how it is a reality that forced most coloured people in Britain to go through a transformation of identity, a process which is also reflected in the selected novel. The reason for studying racism of post-colonial migrants in Britain in *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) can further be justified by Paul Gilroy statement that "the recovery of historical knowledge is felt to be particularly important for Blacks because the nature of their oppression is such that they have been denied any historical being."⁶

According to Paul Gilroy, racism is a process which is based on "psychological aberration" or "some historical antipathy to Blacks which is the cultural legacy of empire."⁷ This legacy still haunts the consciousness of all white British "regardless of age, gender, income or circumstances."⁸ He also points out how "the right to be prejudiced is claimed as a heritage of the freedom Briton."⁹

In *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999), Andrea Levy focuses on the experience of the Black immigrants facing racism, mainly through her protagonist, Faith. Faith moves away from her parents' house, starts working and begins to have a more direct contact with society. She meets with hostility and racism and realizes that her position in society is not as automatic as she presumed. While in the beginning Faith believes herself belonging into British society as she "was born and bred in England,"¹⁰ but she gradually loses her illusion as the story proceeds.

For multicultural children in Britain, racist persecution is basically initiated at the school environment. At school, the 'bully boys' makes fun of Faith by referring to something she has no idea about "...your mum and dad came on a banana boat."¹¹ Faith is unable to respond to their remarks because her parents have not shared with her their stories of

migration to Britain. She is surprised when her mother tells her: “We came on a banana boat to England, your Dad and Me.”¹² Faith remembers the illustrations of slave ships from her history lessons and imagined that “curled up on the floor of a ship, wrapped in a blanket perhaps, trying to find a comfortable spot amongst the spiky prongs of unripe bananas.”¹³ But in reality Faith’s parents “set sail for England on the Jamaican Producers’ banana boat. The bananas, evidently, were kept in the hold of the ship.....And every night they went to the ballroom and danced”¹⁴ Ironically Faith depicts the “bully boys”¹⁵ similarly by observing their colour difference: “the boys with unruly hair, short trousers and dimpled knees that went bright red in the cold.”¹⁶

Moreover, Faith experiences racism in her work-place and becomes aware of her colour. According to her employer, Olivia, “it was something to do with (Faith’s) being black and everyone else on the course being white.”¹⁷ Olivia, remarks as follows: “Your work has an ethnicity which shines through....A sort of African or South American feel which is obviously part of you. Don’t you find that exiting, Faith.”¹⁸ From this, Faith’s cultural identity is described as different from that of Olivia. Unaware of her true background, Faith responds: “As I was born and bred in Haringey I could only suppose that I had some sort of collective unconscious that was coming through from my slave ancestry.”¹⁹ Toplu asserts that racism in this novel is positioned in a dichotomy; on the one hand, society emphasizes her Blackness, whether positively or negatively, and on the other hand, Faith tries to disregard being ‘different’.²⁰

In a later episode, when working for the BBC Television costume Department, Faith’s new boss, Lorraine, told her when she applied for a job as a dresser “But they don’t have Black dressers....Oh sorry...I don’t mean to be horrible but it’s just what happens here.”²¹ This racist expression is not directly aimed Faith. In Fact, Lorraine encourages her to apply anyway: “you’ll probably all right because everyone likes you.”²²

In *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), Frantz Fanon deals with the psychological damage suffered by colonial people. He believes that colonialism perpetuated the belief that 'white' was the 'norm' and the 'Black' was the 'other'. This was the 'colonizing of the mind'.²³ That is what led Black people like Faith to be ashamed of their colour:

“I go to bed. But as my eyes adjusted to the dark I could see my reflection in the wardrobe mirror. A black girl lying in a bed. I covered the mirror with a bath towel. I didn't want to be black any more. I just wanted to live. The other mirror in the room I covered with a tee-shirt. Voila! I was no longer black.”²⁴

2-The Black Immigrants' Search for an Identity:

Identity is a key issue at the societal and personal level which is closely related to immigrants in the search for their national identity. Identity is a term used for an individual's understanding of him or herself as a separate entity.²⁵ Sociology recognizes the concept of “identity negotiation” where a person has multiple identities that relate to different aspects of their life and personality and “negotiates” with society as to the meaning of that identity in their life.²⁶ Charles Taylor defines identity as “who we are, where we are coming from.”²⁷ As such it is the background against which our tastes, desires, opinions and aspirations make sense. Taylor further explains identity as ‘recognition’ an individual receives from the others and he distinguishes two forms of recognition: on an intimate plane, where an individual is recognized by people personally important to him, and on the social plane, where an individual is recognized and accepted by society.²⁸ It is recognition on the social plane that is the main issue pursued by immigrants. The problem of identity is more acute with the second generation- children who were born in Britain, and therefore, feel that they should fit the culture, but still experience a sense of estrangement. Unlike their parents, who at least had their identity formed by their homeland, these children grew up confused, caught between two cultures and two influences, and inevitably have to set on the quest of searching for whence they came and where they belong.

The fact of being both the child and the orphan of Empire is the position of the second generation of immigrants who came to England in the 1950's. They were Black and born in UK with the feeling of being strangers in their land of birth. This was perpetuated by the treatment they received from the white man; perhaps this is what led Andrea Levy to write in her essay "This is my England" (2000)

I'm English doesn't mean I want to be assimilated; to take on the white culture to the exclusion of all others.....I cannot live without rice and pears. I now dance when Jamaica wins anything.....And being English will not stop me from fighting to live in a country free from racism and social divisiveness.²⁹

2-1-The Influence of the Generation Gap on One's Identity:

A conflict between parents and children's generations is a naturally occurring fact that can be found in any society or any time; it is a consequence of continuously changing and developing lifestyles. In the case of immigrants, the gap tends to be even more pronounced as the migrants of the first generation are, in terms of lifestyle, considerably different from their white British counterparts. The gap between the two generations is accentuated by the children's adoption of the British way of life. While the parents are forever acutely aware of being in another country, in exile, and they often dream of returning to their motherland, the children grow up feeling Britain as their home. Unlike the parents, for whom it is easier to stay away from British influences as they often live in communities and neighbourhoods of other immigrants, and work in family businesses, the children are more exposed to British culture. They meet and mix with white children at school and grow up with different cultural background from that of their parents. Andrea Levy refers to this problem in her autobiographical essay "*This is my England*" (2000): "I wanted just to fit in be part of everything that was around me and these strange parents were holding me back."³⁰

To the first generation of immigrants, the assimilation of their children seems dangerous and worrying. In their eyes, the children are being corrupted by British way of life and are

abandoning their traditions. In the first novel of Andrea Levy *Every Light in the House Burnin* (1994), she gives an excellent example of the generations' gap. In it, the narrator Angela describes her parents' "strategy....to keep as quite as possible in the hope that no one would know that they sneaked into the country"³¹, while Angela feels more at home there: "I had grown up in English ways. I could confront it, rail against it; fight it, because it was mine_ a birthright."³² This birthright to feel at home in England and to be part of the country, not just a visitor, also belongs to Faith in *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). Thus, since early childhood, she had white friends and this never seems out of the ordinary to her; therefore, she does not understand her parents' uneasiness when they ask her "Faith your friends, any of them your own kind?"³³ She does not even know at first what is meant by the question and her father had to ask directly whether any of her friends are coloured, to which she answers: "No. Why?"³⁴ To Faith, the fact of being of Jamaican origin is so insignificant that when her parents tell her they are "thinking of going back home"³⁵, Faith thinks they want to return to their old council flat in Stoke Newington. Even after she is told that they mean Jamaica, she cannot comprehend "why Jamaica? Why is Jamaica home?"³⁶; and her unhappy conclusion is: "my parents had told me they were leaving me to live in another country."³⁷ According to Bhikhu Parekh, "national identity is about whether we identify with a community, see it as ours, are attached to it, and feel bonded to our fellow-members in a way in which we are not bonded to outsiders."³⁸ While Faith seems attached to the English community, her parents do not. We can see the difference in the way Faith's parents divide society: they distinguish between white people and "our kind"³⁹, whereas Faith already thinks in terms of class and education.

2-2-The Importance of Roots and History in Searching for an Identity:

Andrea Levy deals with the importance of history in her novel *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999). The novel is concerned with personal and family history and its importance in shaping one's identity. We find two kinds of "history" in the novel. The first part, set in England, focuses mostly on Faith's childhood, school and college days and the beginning of her career. The second part, set in Jamaica, is a narration about Faith's holiday with her big family.

At the beginning of the novel, Faith knows almost nothing about her family's history and is ignorant of many generations of ancestors that influenced her personality. Her personal history has nothing to do with Jamaica, but starts at a point when her parents came to England "on a banana boat."⁴⁰ Faith is not interested in her parents' past and she is not encouraged to ask about it; "My mum and dad never talked about their lives before my brother Carl and I were bornThere was no 'oral tradition' in our family... As I got older Mum begun to throw me little scraps of her past....which I would piece together."⁴¹

When Faith starts working, she is faced with racism and hostility which leads to her identity crisis, and she begins to feel the negative side of being an immigrant. Her parents want her to go for a holiday in Jamaica, hoping that learning about her roots might help her because "everyone should know where they come from."⁴²

Maria Magdalena argues that we cannot move forward into the future without understanding our past.⁴³ Faith realizes the absence of her family background by her inability to answer simple questions asked by her friend Simon's mother, such as: "Do you have a big family in Jamaica?Are your grandparents still alive? Do you have a lot of aunts and uncles?"⁴⁴ Faith replies: "I'm not sure. I don't think so.....I don't know really."⁴⁵

The second part of the novel, which is set in Jamaica, reveals the dominant British side of Faith's identity. Her first impression of Jamaicans is ironically equal to that of a colonizer:

I was halfway through the lounge making my way to the Jamaican Airlines check in when I saw them. Shabby-looking black people, with men dressed in

baggy trousers held up at the waist with belts.... Women with huge bottoms in tight-fitting skirts with no tights and sandals on their feet There were only about twenty of them but they looked so out of place in the plush setting of an American airport. They looked too poor to fly.⁴⁶

When Faith lands in Jamaica, the first thing she notices is the Black faces: “The large arrival lounge was packed with Black faces. Everywhere I turned Black faces. Black faces of people in uniforms. Black faces waiting for luggage. Black faces behind counters.”⁴⁷ Faith explains her initial response as culture shock. Her cultural chock is the result of her identifying with Englishness: “I felt out of place everything was a little familiar but not quite. Like a dream. Culture shock is how the feeling is described. A name made up by someone with a stiff upper lip who wanted to deny the feelings of panic and terror.”⁴⁸

In Jamaica, Faith meets her Aunt Coral and Cousin Vincent who belong to the Jamaican side of her family. Aunt Coral represents the Jamaicans who are proud of the way they were, while her cousin Vincent and his wife Gloria represent the new generation, who admire or prefer the English way of life. Through all this, Levy represents the debates which Ashcroft summarizes as follows:

Some of the most vigorous debates in post-colonial societies have centred on exactly what.... Decolonization implies and how it should be achieved. Some critics have stressed the need vigorously to recuperate pre-colonial languages and cultures. For the most resolute of these critics, colonization is only a passing historical feature which can left behind entirely when full independence of culture and political organization is achieved (Ngugi 1986). Others have argued that not only is this impossible but that cultural syncreticity is a valuable as well as an inescapable and characteristic feature of all post-colonial societies and indeed is the source of their peculiar strength.⁴⁹

In their quest for identity, Black immigrants turned to their past because knowing one's personal history and the need to know where one comes from and who his ancestors are is an important part of self-understanding. Since it is more difficult for these immigrants to define themselves by the host English society and culture, history is an image from the past which

they can find their likeness. Frantz Fanon stresses in “On National Culture” (2004), on the importance of history for the Blacks:

In order to ensure his salvation and to escape from the supremacy of the white man’s culture the native feels the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost in his own barbarous people. Because he feels he is becoming estranged, that is to say because he feels that he is the living haunt of contradictions which run the risk of becoming insurmountable, the native tears himself away from the swamp that may suck him down and accepts everything, decides to take all for granted and confirms everything even though he may lose body and soul. The native finds that he is expected to answer for everything, and to all comers. He not turns himself into the defender of his own people’s past; he is willing to be counted as one of them, and henceforward he is even capable of laughing at his past cowardice.⁵⁰

In such a way, the Jamaican Aunt Coral is Faith’s window to the past. She narrates the history of generations of family. Faith recovers what Stuart Hall refers as “Hidden histories”⁵¹ through her dialogues with her family in the Caribbean, particularly with her Aunt Coral who serves in effect as a family archivist. Faith’s cultural hybridity reinforces the Jamaican side of her identity. As a sign of her transforming identity, Faith changes her style of dress a few days after her arrival to Jamaica and after hearing her maternal grandmother Grace’s story as told by her Aunt Coral:

I changed my clothes. Out of my jeans and into a cotton blouse and a skirt that I could flap at my knees. I put sandals on my feet and pull my hair back tight off my face and into a bun on the top of my head. When Auntie Coral saw me, she gave me that look I had wanted before the misty-eyed tearful look. She gasped; threw her hands into the air, clapped and she shouted, ‘Ahh, my Faith, but now you look like a Jamaican!’⁵²

Madan Sarup describes the importance of the past in the immigrant’s self representations “because it is through recollections of the past that people represent themselves to themselves.”⁵³ He also makes reference to the role memories have in the construction of identity and how the discourse of the past in the present takes the immigrant to integrate in a different way to the new reality. From her aunt’ stories, Faith returns from Jamaica feeling proud of her being a Black Jamaican from slaves origins:

I am the granddaughter of Grace and William Campbell. I am the great grandchild of Cecilia Hilton. I am descended from Katherine whose mother was a slave. I am the cousin of Africa. I am the niece of Coral Thompson and the daughter of Wade and Mildred Jackson. Let them say what they like. Because I am the bastard child of Empire and I will have my day.⁵⁴

The past is a powerful motif for illustrating a Black immigrant's search for self. Finding out her heritage not only promotes a greater understanding of herself, but also creates a sense of strength and pride in being black, being what she is. In doing so, she is able to confront and overcome the trauma of modern racism in Britain.

Endnotes:

¹ Carter Bob, Harris Clive and Sirley Joshi, "The 1951-1955 Conservative Government and the Racialization of Black Immigration" (London: Routledge, 2000), 21-63.

² Toplu Sebnem, "Home(Land) or 'Motherland': Translational Identities in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*" (Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal) Viewed 16 May 2020. <http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/anthurium/vol3/iss1/7>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 08.

⁵ Ibid., 10,

⁶ Gilroy Paul, *'There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack': The Cultural Politics of Race and Nation*, 207.

⁷ Ibid., 227.

⁸ Ibid., 239.

⁹ Ibid., 230.

¹⁰ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 32.

¹¹ Ibid., 01.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid., 04.

¹⁴ Ibid., 02.

¹⁵ Ibid., 01.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Toplu Sebnem, "Home(Land) or 'Motherland': Translational Identities in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*" (Anthurium: A Caribbean Studies Journal) Viewed on 16th May 2020. <http://scholarlyrepository.miami.edu/anthurium/vol3/iss1/7>

²¹ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 70-71.

²² Ibid., 71.

²³ Fanon Frantz, *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto. 1986.

²⁴ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 160.

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- ²⁶ Janet, M. Bennett. "Identity Negotiation Theory": *The Sage Encyclopedia of intercultural Competence*. Sage Publications. May 2015, 418-422. Viewed on April 2020. <http://www.ReseaechGat.net>
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- ²⁸ Ibid., 106.
- ²⁹ Levy Andrea, "This is my England" (The Guardian, 19 February 2000). Viewed 03 April 2020. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2000/feb/19/society1>.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Levy Andrea, *Every Light in the House Burnin* (London: Routledge, 1994), 78.
- ³² Ibid.
- ³³ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 28.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 29.
- ³⁵ Ibid., 48.
- ³⁶ Ibid., 49.
- ³⁷ Ibid., 52.
- ³⁸ Parekh Bhikhu, *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity qnd Political Theory* (Massachusetts: Harvard University press, 2000), 67. Viewed
- ³⁹ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 06.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., 01.
- ⁴¹ Ibid., 162.
- ⁴² Ibid., 50.
- ⁴³ Magadaleña, Maria G. "The Construction of Identity in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon*." (NewYork: Cambridge University Press, 2010. Print.)
- ⁴⁴ Ibid., 153.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid., 154.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid., 194.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid., 197.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back; theory and Practice in post-colonial literature* (Routledge, London and New York, 1989).29.
- ⁵⁰ Fanon Frantz, *On National Culture*. (Oxford UP 2004), 375.
- ⁵¹ Stuart Hall. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. Chapter 06, 275
- ⁵² Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 280.
- ⁵³ Sarup Madan, *Identity,Culture, and the Postmodern World*(The University of Georgia Press), 40.
- ⁵⁴ Levy Andrea, *Fruit of the Lemon* (Great Britain: Headline Review.1999), 385.

Chapter Two: The Muslim Immigrants' Experience in Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006):

This chapter analyses and discusses the Muslim immigrants' experience in Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) focusing on the protagonist, Khadra. we intend to look onto the way Kahf's characters experienced racism and discrimination in a so-called "promised land". Moreover we will study the effects of racism and generations' gap on the second generation of Muslim immigrants' identities; and the importance of roots and history in one's identity and self realisation.

1-The Muslim Immigrants Facing Racism and Discrimination:

Since its creation, the United States of America has been a destination for many waves of immigrants from different origins and backgrounds. Muslim Arabs are among the many groups that came to seek for better life conditions. Although Muslim Arabs represent a minority group in the American society, they have managed to succeed in many areas of the American life. The former president George Bush asserts, in one of his speeches (2001) that Muslim Arabs were able to make a valuable contribution to America. He further declares that "America counts millions of Muslims amongst our citizens and Muslims make an incredibly valuable contribution to our country. Muslims are doctors, lawyers, law professors, and members of the military, entrepreneurs, shopkeepers, moms and dads."¹ As mentioned, Muslim Arabs were able to contribute valuably to America through their economic, professional and educational achievements.

At first, these immigrants seemed to be integrated and assimilated very well into the American society. But as the time progressed they found out that America was not the heavenly place they craved for. They were always meant to be considered, by the American mass media, as alienated others who belong to another place and practice, another type of religion, mainly after the events of 11/09. In fact the events impacted negatively Muslim

Arabs relations with other Americans. Tensions increased between the two sides as a result of the falsified image that the Americans have drawn in their mind about Islam and Muslims. According to Edward Said, the Westerners depict “Oriental cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver ought to be.”²

The belief that Islam promotes violence led to the emergence of what is called Islamophobia. The term refers to the irrational fear towards Islam and Muslims. Islamophobia was accelerated in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks creating the impression that all Muslims are terrorists. Dr. Abduljalil Sajid, Chairman of the Muslim Council for Religious and Racial Harmony UK, defines Islamophobia as follows:

Islamophobia is the fear and/or hatred of Islam, Muslims or Islamic culture. Islamophobia can be characterized by the belief that all or most Muslims are religious fanatics, have violent tendencies towards non-Muslims, and reject as directly opposed to Islam such concepts as equality tolerance, and democracy. Islamophobia is a new form of racism whereby Muslims, an ethno-religious group, not a race, are, nevertheless, constructed as a race. A set of negative assumptions are made of the entire group to the detriment of members of that group. During the 1990's many sociologists and cultural analysts observed a shift in racist ideas from ones based on skin colour to ones based on notions of cultural superiority and otherness.³

Media reports have constantly stereotyped the image of Muslim Arabs through distorting Islam's concepts and identity. Arab Muslims are often referred to as terrorists, backwards, and veiled women as oppressed and controlled by patriarchy. The veil is seen as a symbol of inferiority. More recently and particularly in the aftermath of 9/11, the veil has become associated with terrorism because it is claimed to be used by terrorists so they can conceal their identities. In Hollywood, actors who play the role of terrorists share the same characteristics notably a dark skin, a long beard, and an Arabic accent. In *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said criticizes the way the West has represented the East. He writes “it is Europe that articulated the Orient; this articulation is prerogative, not puppet master, but of a genuine creator, whose life giving power represents, animates, constitutes the otherwise silent and dangerous space beyond familiar boundaries.”⁴

Mohja Kahf's novel highlights the challenges faced by Arab Muslim Immigrants in America. *the girl in the tangerine scarf* centres on the Shamy family who represents a large group of Muslim intellectuals that moved to the US in the 1970's as the migration policy was centred on the need for skilled workforce, thus, favouring professionals and students.⁵ Despite the welcoming government policy, Kahf's narration paints a picture of difficulties that were faced by this generation of immigrants. They were often subjected to public and political opinions that were shaped by the unstable diplomatic relationship between America and the Muslim world. Kahf throw light on the Iranian hostage crisis (1981); when the Iranian revolutionaries took the American embassy workers as hostages. The event as Amra Abdu Elmajid asserts in his dissertation (2015) proved to be a turning point after which Muslim Arabs were viewed as enemies.⁶ The impact event was narrated in Kahf's novel as follow:

(The hostage crisis) made America hopping mad. America was mad at Khadra personally, the Shamy family, and all the other Muslims of Indianapolis. Simmonsville resident who didn't know the Shah of Iran from Joe Schmoie yelled "Long live the Shah!" as their Muslim neighbours got out of their cars and went into the house on New Harmony Drive. Vandalism of the Dawah Centre with soap and white spray paint was something the police couldn't seem to stop; they only came and took pictures every time it happened.⁷

Amra Abdul Majid claims that "the negative impact of the hostage crisis, however, does not end at a societal level, as Khadra also experiences similar attacks in school."⁸ As a veiled Muslim woman, Khadra faces discrimination and humiliation at school. In one particular incident, Khadra is harassed by her schoolmates. Two boys attacked her, one of them took her Malcom x book, and then asked her to take off her veil in order to take back her book. When Khadra refuses, the boys tore off her veil and left her bareheaded:

A ripping sound. Brent stepped back, waving a piece of scarf. Khadra lunged-trying to grasp it _ her scarf was torn in two, one strip in Brent's hand, the other wound tightly around her neck. "I hate you!" she screamed. 'I hate you!' Brent mimicked in falsetto. "it's just hair, you psycho!" "What a psycho" Curtis echoed. The two boys ran down the hall, the thump of their Adidas'd feet merging with the clatter of the pep rally..... "I hate you! I hate you! I HATE you!" She screamed at their receding figure. She would not cry in this hateful school. She never should have let them get to her. Hated herself for that. The scarf. It was a mess. She didn't want anyone in this building the satisfaction of seeing her bareheaded. She shoved her dishevelled hair under.⁹

Brent and Cutis represent western extremists who reject the Islamic culture. The fact that they call Khadra 'reaghead' shows clearly their view on the veil, as sign of backwardness. Moreover Khadra is faced with the indifference of the teachers. In fact a school teacher does not sympathize with her after being harassed by her classmates: "Mr. Eggleston came out of his room down the hall. Silhouetted by the daylight streaming from the double doors at the end of the hallway, he shook his head, gave her a look of mild disapproval, and went back inside."¹⁰ In the same context, Amra Abdul Majid asserts that:

For Khadra, this is a personal attack that deliberately targets her faith that is marked by the hijab. Here, the hijab creates a large gap between her and her American classmates....The hijab is of extreme importance for Khadra as it is a symbol of not only her venture into adulthood as she starts wearing it when she first has her period, it is also a sign of her pride and identity as a Muslim. Thus, having it being ripped off by the two boys is symbolic of the stripping off of her own dignity. There is no respect and acceptance of her devotion to religion which she sees as a sign of their hostility towards her Muslim identity.¹¹

The Shamy family' humiliation started in their first day in Indiana. When they were still unpacking their luggage some boys threw glass bottles at their doorstep. From this, the Shamy family realized that they were not welcomed. Hansul Djohar argues that the boys' attitude towards Khadra and her family was not really surprising since they held falsified information about Islam.¹²

Along with the discriminatory practices that were committed against Muslim veiled women, Kahf draws her reader's attention to the fact that there are cases in which some women were raped and even killed, yet such incidents are completely overlooked. The most shocking act of racism in the novel is killing one of Khadra's friends, Zuhura, the African-American Muslim, by a Ku Klux Klan member who was never caught. Killing her friend was the first event that changed Khadra's life and views about her identity. Zuhura is described by the narrator as a clever, "strong, independent, and free- thinking young woman. She used to argue everything with the grownups. She once reminded the zoning inspector that "zoning law has often been used as a tool to keep people of other races out."¹³ Khadra tells us, "Zuhura was not

accustomed to being brushed aside... She was likely to question you, man or woman, even if you had an air of authority, and she did so with an attitude that assumed her objections would be addressed.”¹⁴ Zuhura is murdered and raped few days after her engagement party. There were “Cuts on her hands, her hijab and clothes in shreds.”¹⁵ Although it was a case of rape, the attack is not sexual as much as it is political and religious against an African and a Muslim woman. It was an act of racial and religious bigotry:

Clearly it was religious bigotry, the Muslims said... It was related to [Zuhura's] vocal espousal of Muslim causes on campus, it was political. The *Indianapolis Freeman*... said it was about race, said how could it not be, in light of the Skokie80 affair and recent area rumblings from the Klan? It called Zuhura “a young black woman” and didn't mention that she was a Muslim at all. On the other hand, the *Indianapolis Star* pretended like race wasn't there at all, calling Zuhura a “foreign woman” and “an IU international student,” as if her family didn't live right there in town. The *Indianapolis News* article treated it like just some random crime, giving it one tiny paragraph in the back pages.¹⁶

As it is mentioned in the above quotation, the national media describes Zuhura as a “foreign woman” rather than a Muslim-African, and as an “international student” rather than an American resident. Moreover, instead of going after racist, anti-Muslim ‘protectors’, Zuhura's death is looked at as an honor crime; they accuses her fiancé Eyad and describes it as an act of “oppression of women in Islam.”¹⁷ Abdellatif and Ottoway claim that western discourse has generally projected a negative Image of the relationship between Islam and Muslim women, who they are depicted as living in oppressive patriarchal societies.¹⁸

In fact, Khadra's community is no less racist than the Indiana society. They condemn Zuhura silently and doubt her when she disappeared. Before finding her, they think that if she is still alive, she is ruined.¹⁹ Khadra hears people of her community criticizing Zuhura's parents for allowing her to attend a college in a different town, “she had been asking for trouble. Her family should have given her more guidance.”²⁰ In the same way, Khadra's parents break down with their daughter after her abortion, Although she is in the first months of her pregnancy and abortion is allowed in these months by the Islamic law.²¹ Racism within

the Muslim community is also seen when Eyad wants to marry a very religious, educated, beautiful, and a clever young woman. However, the bride is deemed not suitable for his family just because “she's black as coal!”²²

2-Muslim Immigrants’ Identity search:

Previously, we have defined the term ‘identity’ through many perspectives mainly by Stuart Hall; likewise, we have used his arguments to explain its changing process. James Fearon defines identity as “the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture.”²³ The different aspects of identity all work to divide human beings into groups: men and women, Arabs and Americans, Christians and Muslims, etc. Identity is, therefore, what you are and how people look at you. To fit in, people must be part of their group and be able to put themselves into specific categories. If people consider themselves to be part of two intersecting groups, they may clash with their society and not be accepted by either group. For instance, Khadra, the protagonist of *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) encounters a similar confusion because she experienced living in two paradoxical environments Syria (a part of the East), and the United States of America (the West). Khadra is not “Arab enough” to be considered an Arab, or “American enough” to be an American, and is shunned by both societies. In this context Vijay Agnew asserts that: “The individual living in the Diaspora experiences a dynamic tension every day between living 'here' and remembering 'there', between memories of places of origins and entanglements with places of residence, and between the metaphorical and the physical home.”²⁴

2-1 The Influence of Generation Gap on One’s Identity:

Khadra Shamy is an American Muslim woman of Syrian origin struggling to build a strong unique personality for herself after she grew up among a diverse group of Muslims in Indiana. Khadra emigrated from Syria in her early years with her family in the early 70s and

settled in Indiana, US. Kadra's family is a devout Muslim family consisting of the father Wajdy, the mother Ibtehaj, Eyad, Khadra's older brother and a younger brother Jihad. The family was a part of 'Dawah Center', a community whose mission was to spread the "correct" Islam. From the first moments when she arrived to the US, Khadra realizes that there were many differences between the place she came from and the new place. These differences appear in all sides of a person's life, different thoughts, behaviours and even religious practices. For example, Kahf points out that unlike in Syria, America pork is everywhere. Since her arrival to the country when she was a child, Khadra's parents told her that she had to be cautious when eating something given by others, because according to the Islamic religion, pork is 'haram' and when someone eats it he will commit a great sin. "Pig meat was filthy. It had bugs in it, Khadra's father said. That's why God made it haram, her mother said. "If you ate pig, bugs would grow and grow inside your stomach and eat your guts out. Always ask if there is pig in something before you eat anything from kuffar hands."²⁵

Growing up, Khadra's parents, Wajdy and Ebtihaj, did not give her the space to find her own identity and her true self. They tried to simplify everything for her and her brothers by putting things in two categories: 'halal and haram'. Her parents forbade her from having relations with Americans, because according to them Americans are "Kuffar," Ebtihaj and Wajdy insisted on distancing their children from the American culture's influence. This idea is illustrated through Ibtihaaj's following words:

Do you think we are Americans? Do you think we have no limits? Do you think we leave our children wandering in the streets? Is that what you think we are? Is it?" Then she burst into sobs. She marched Khadra up the stairs and pushed her into the bathtub. ("Don't go anywhere!" she yelled at Eyad. "You're next!"). With the water running hot and hard she scrubbed and scrubbed her daughter with an enormous loofah from Syria. "We are not Americans!" she sobbed, her face twisted in grief. "We are not Americans!"²⁶

Khadra's parents constantly insist on presenting their Islamic culture as pure and untainted as opposed to the American one. In this context, Ismet Bujupaj argues that Khadra's

parents act of romanticizing their Islamic culture is a tendency to preserve their children from outer pressure and influences.²⁷ Khadra's parents as the first generation of immigrants grow increasingly worried about their children in America. Ebtihaj's repetition of the expression "We are not Americans!"²⁸ shows to the reader that being an 'American' means having 'no limits', and she fears her children will lose their inherited Islamic identity.²⁹ In fact, for them the "Americans" are considered as a threat for their children as they "cussed, smoke, and dranknumber of them used drugs...Americans dated and fornicated and committed adultery. They had broken families and lots of divorces; Americans were not generous or hospitable...."³⁰

Khadra is raised to view the Americans as "the other" and is afraid of having anything in common with them because, to her parents, "the other" are kuffar. She is influenced by her parents' extremism and is portrayed as a conservative girl, who looks down on those who do not share her views.

As part of the first generation in her family to go to college, she had enough to deal with, without some little Arab girl from a privileged college-educated family trying to tell her what was acceptable and what was not in the 'Islamic lifestyle.' As if Islam was a lifestyle. Instead of a faith.³¹

As a result she lost many friendships along her life. Khadra chooses to stop spending time with Livvy, a conservative Christian, and then Hanifa, a Muslim teenager who becomes pregnant out of wedlock, because they do not behave according to her to the "Islamic lifestyle". In addition, she is uncompromising in her friendship with an American born Muslim Joy Shalaby. According to her, Joy belongs to "the assimilated kind, second and third generation Americans descended from turn of the century Arab immigrants ...who had failed to preserve their identity as they had caved in."³² Khadra accuses her friend of being a 'McMuslim'. In fact Khadra considers her friends as an extension of herself and wants them to share her values: "I've never been a real friend, or had one. I've demanded that my friends

conform to what I approve and disapprove.”³³ She thinks that, by ending these friendships, she is a good Muslim.

Khadra becomes more extremist and conservative even more than her parents, mainly after Zuhura’s murder. Khadra observes her religious beliefs more than ever before. During her teenage years Khadra wears a black veil which is a revolution against “traditional Islamic scholarship, with its tedious, plodding chapters on categories of water purity and how to determine the exact end of menses....Islam is action in the world!”³⁴ For her, there had to be a “revolutionary path” instead of “the moderate Islamic revival movement” of her parents.³⁵ Khadra’s black scarf makes her like “one scarf-wearing woman who took some American hostage during the revolution.”³⁶ In fact her first hijab is very shocking to her own parents:

[Her parents] exchanged looks but didn't say anything. What could they say? They were the ones who had introduced Khadra to the works of Islamist revolutionary Sayid Qutub, after all, and his multivolume *tafsir* of the Quran sat on their rickety bookshelf in the living room. She seemed only to be taking his rhetoric a step or two further along the path of its own logic.³⁷

Moreover, when Khadra’s father decides to apply for the American citizenship, as their Syrian passports expired, all the family cried “like a family in mourning.”³⁸ For Khadra, “taking citizenship [is] like giving up, giving in. After all she’d been through school, defending her identity against the jeering kids who vaunted American’s superiority...”³⁹ Khadra’s misunderstanding of some Islamic practices and the misconception she had that Islam gives more importance to the common good more than the self, caused her identity crisis.

2-2 Khadra’s Identity Crisis and Self Realisation:

Stuart Hall argues that identity undergoes changes through time. It is obvious, then, that identity construction is a dynamic process which brings change through time according to historical events.⁴⁰ This is the case with Khadra. After visiting Mecca during hajj, her veil and perspective to life changes completely. In Mecca, Khadra feels a sense of belonging that is

missed in Indiana: “At last [...] someplace where we really belong. It’s the land of the Prophet. The land of all Muslims.”⁴¹ Ironically though, throughout her stay in Mecca, Khadra comes to realize that she, who believes herself to be an Arab Muslim woman, is in total conflict with this place and is considered as an “American” by the Saudis. The first clash happens when one early morning, upon hearing the call to prayer coming from the mosque right next to her mother’s friend’s house, she decides to go to the mosque to pray fajr:

Thirty minutes later, with a tear streaked face, Khadra was back, escorted by two burly policemen [...]. “Is this one of your womenfolk?” they asked Uncle Zaid, Saweem’s husband, his face freshly washed. “We found her try house, she decides to go to the mosque to pray fajr :

Thirty minutes later, with a tear streaked face, Khadra was back, escorted by two burly matawwa policemen [...]. “Is this one of your womenfolk?” they asked Uncle Zaid, Saweem’s husband, his face freshly washed. “We found her trying to get into the mosque.” They said it as if she was a vagrant or something.⁴²

After this, Khadra’s parents explain that women are not allowed to pray in Mosques in “most Muslim countries.”⁴³ This contradicts her beliefs about the teachings of Islam: “What about the Prophet saying ‘You must never prevent the female servants of God from attending the houses of God?’”⁴⁴ In fact, Khadra is too angry from the way the policemen treats her: “[H]e said ‘this woman’ – it was like the police thought she was some kind of a bad woman, out in the street at that dark hour, alone, face uncovered.[...] And then the expression on Uncle Zaid’s face when he wouldn’t look at her at first and then when he recognized her: it was that look again. For a minute, she actually *felt* like a bad woman.”⁴⁵

Moreover, Khadra’s sense of alienation and estrangement is increased after her experience with her cousin’s, Afaaf, Saudi friends. Afaaf, who used to “throw off her veil and Abaya”⁴⁶ in front of her boyfriends, introduces Khadra to them as an “America” cousin. For them, Khadra as a girl brought up in America is liberated and sexually available although she doesn’t take off her veil. she is “othered” with “internalized negative stereotypes concerning

American women,” with “the assumption that she is American and therefore immoral and sexually permissive.”⁴⁷ One of the men points at Khadra’s veil and said:

“Surely you don’t wear that thing in America” A few minutes afterwards, he pulls her veil down and “pushes his other hand up against her breast and his mouth was grazing her new exposed neck” and, as she tries to get him off of her, he asks her, “What is it- what is the big deal-we’re not doing anything you have to worry about, don’t tell me you never do stuff like this in America.”⁴⁸

These encounters in the land of Hajj bring Khadra to an awareness of the vulnerability of her idyllic world: “And even though she was in a Muslim country at this moment, and not just any Muslim country but the Muslim country where Islam started, she had never felt so far from home. There was a nip in the air all of a sudden.”⁴⁹ As Khadra becomes aware that the wider practice of Islam is, in fact, far from her idealized vision, she begins a quest for her Islamic identity and starts the self realisation of her true self. Moreover, she recognizes Indiana as her home, for the first time:

Khadra was glad to be going home. “Home” _she said, without thinking. 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.⁵⁰

All these facts led Khadra to go through various stages of religious transformation. She changes her dark scarf to a white one with tiny flowers, and replaces the Jilbab with blouses and skirts. It is the beginning of what she calls ‘neoclassical phase’, when “she thirsted ...to study traditional Islamic heritage. It seemed to her the answer lay in there somewhere.”⁵¹

Always concerning Khadra’s process of identity’s discovery that goes hand in hand with Hall’s definition of identity, Huda Ahmad Ulayyan and Yousef Awad state that it was only after several journeys that Khadra undergone, when she started to sense her real self.⁵² As a married woman, Khadra goes through the most dramatic crisis in her life. She marries a Kuwaiti student Juma. Khadra wants to marry a proper Muslim man, focusing mainly on his religious identity. For Juma, Khadra is an Arab Muslim strict girl that “had not lost her Arab

identity despite being raised entirely in America.”⁵³ However, when they go deeper into the relationship, Khadra realizes that she “can't go on in the marriage without killing off the 'me' that I am.”⁵⁴ Juma worries about reputation and how other Arabs perceive him and his wife, while Khadra does not want to be seen as only “his wife.” Therefore, Khadra’s marriage was one step forward toward building her identity. This idea is asserted by Abbasali Bolran and Alireza Anusliravani who claim that Khadra’s self-fashioning began with her rebellion against her husband’s patriarchy.⁵⁵

Khadra’s marriage is followed by her abortion experience that causes her divorce. For Khadra everything collapsed the day she discovered she was pregnant and her “life in danger.”⁵⁶ Khadra decides to abort her child even though her parents reject. For Khadra, her family didn’t want her to have rights over her body, she began to question her identity that she did not even know and that was unfairly forced upon her:

No, enough, no. Her back was up against the wall, the bathroom small, mewing her in. She beat the floor with the Ajax canister over and over with the force of her will, no no no, no no no no, scattering the powder seven times. Where was it, this will of hers, this misshapen self? She needed to know it. (...) Herself was a meagre thing, scuttling behind a toilet, what she hadn't given over of it to Mama, to Juma. Too much, she has given away too much. She will not give the last inches of her body; will not let them fill her up with a life she does not want. Feral, it was not a word but a spasm, the snarl of a fanged thing gnawing at a trap: no. No, no, no, no, no, *no*.⁵⁷

Khadra has an abortion against all expectations. Areen Khalifah argues that Khadra’s reaction towards her parents’ demands came from her complete rejection of Islamic gender roles she was supposed to apply as a Muslim woman, which lies on being a good woman and a good wife that sacrifices her own life for the sake of her own family.⁵⁸ By doing this:

She wanted to abort the Dawah Centre and its entire community.twenty-one years of useless head-clutter. It all had to go.All that smug knowledge. Islam is this, Islam is that. Maybe she believed some of it, maybe she didn't-but it needed to be clear out so she could find of herself this time. Not as a given. Not ladled on her plate and she had to eat it just because it was there.⁵⁹

After all the incidents that caused her identity crisis, Khadra decides to visit her homeland, Syria, in order to find answers to all her questions and reconstruct her own

identity.⁶⁰ Stuart Hall asserts that the best solution to identity crisis, in modern societies, is to refer back to older traditions of thought in addition to the new ones. For Khadra, Syria is the place that will provide her with the opportunity to know her true self.⁶¹

“And then what? Where do you go when the first part of your life is coming to an end, and you don’t know what is yet unborn inside you? Where do you go when you’re in a free fall, unmoored, safety net gone, and nothing to anchor you?” (p. 265) The divorce hits Khadra hard, leaving her lost and confused, until she finally understands that, in order for her to find answers, she must go “back where she came from: Syria.”⁶²

2-3 The Importance of the Past in Searching for an Identity:

Khadra realises that she cannot go forward the future without understanding her past; as memory is an important aspect in one’s identity. Stuart Hall argues for the importance of history in shaping one’s identity: “[people] contained within themselves, from the moment of their origin, some fixed and unchanging meaning or value.”⁶³ In fact, Khadra has no clear memories of Syria, during her childhood years in Indiana, just “flashes of words and tastes.”⁶⁴ Unlike her brother Eyad who “remembered Syria in complete sentences.”⁶⁵

In Syria, Khadra meets her father’s aunt, Teta; a strong woman with moderate attitudes. Teta interacts with different people and has non Muslim friends. She is a telephone operator who is from “the first wave of working women.”⁶⁶ Teta provides Khadra with stories about her family’s past, the thing that led her to undergo many transformations. In fact the biggest step towards becoming a progressive Muslim is her redefinition of the veil. When she was a teenager, Khadra wore the headscarf because it was what others expected her to do, and more importantly, it was the mark of her belonging to the Islamic community. However, Khadra renews her perspective towards wearing hijab. In Syria and for the first time Khadra becomes unaware about being veiled or not. She even enjoys being unveiled when her scarf accidentally falls:

A yellow butterfly fluttered by. The scarf was slipping off. She shrugged. The chiffon fell across her shoulders. She closed her eyes and let the sunshine through the thin skin of her eyelids, warm herbody to the very core of her. She opened her eyes, and she

knew deep In the place of yaqin [a Quranic word which means certainty] that this was all right, a blessing on her shoulders. *Alhamdullilah, Alhamdulillah.*⁶⁷

Teta leads khadra to new experiences that made her more understanding, away from her parents' conservative belief and the racism of the Indiana people. From her stories, Khadra learns about her mother's rape and understand her being overprotective.

From the traditional *Hamadiya* market in Damascus, Teta buys a tangerine scarf for Khadra. Although the scarf stands for heritage and tradition since it is a gift from Teta and it comes from a traditional market, it also stands for her new experience towards life and the "other". The color of the scarf is the color of youth, as Teta comments, that symbolizes liberty and change. Later in the novel, Khadra confesses to her friend Tayiba that it is love above all that makes her Muslim.

Khadra's carelessness of being unveiled is because she realizes that "veiling and unveiling are part of the process, the same cycle, how both are necessary; how both light and dark are connected moments in the development of the soul in its darkness."⁶⁸ This realization is strengthened mainly after she meets the poet. In fact, he tries to get her to see her inner self and accept who she is, and figure out her true identity. "I am what I am."⁶⁹ In fact, Khadra's unveiling fits Stuart Hall's opinion since he argues that the concept of self realization begins when the individuals are freed from religious traditions and structures.

Amra Abdulmajid explains that Khadra's unveiling comes from her total belief that God would not impose on her something she doesn't want. Taking off the veil marks a new beginning toward finding her real identity⁷⁰. Nevertheless, when Khadra is on the plane for a trip to go back to America, she decides to wear her hijab again, but this time it is totally different:

On the plane, she pulled the tangerine silk out of her handbag. Pulled and pulled. And drew the head-covering out longer and longer in her hands like an endless

handkerchief from a magician's pocket. Before landing in Chicago, she draped the depatta so it hung from the crown of her head. Not tightly, the way Ebtehaj wore it. Loosely, so it moved and slipped about her face and touched her cheek, like the hand of a lover. She wanted them to know at Customs, at the re-entry checkpoint, she wanted them to know at O'Hare, that she was coming in under one of the many signs of the heritage. And she wanted her heart to remember, in the dappled ruffle and rustle of veiling and unveiling, how precious is the heritage! A treasure fire cannot eat.⁷¹

Her decision to wear hijab all over again but with a different way marks her new definition for her identity as a Muslim woman and shows her hybridity. Her scarf's bright colour contradicts with the dark colours she used to wear previously. Bahar and Alkarawi argue that the way Khadra's hijab is portrayed disprove stereotypes that portray Muslim women as dressed only in black, covered and oppressed.⁷²

In America, Khadra visits Zuhura's grave with the Tangerine scarf: 'her tangerine depatta draped loosely over her shoulder and fluttering over Zuhura's grave stone.'⁷³ The scarf is an important announcement of the new ideas Khadra assumed. It is like a flag expressing victory upon a castle, and that castle is none but the grave of her brave friend who was a victim of racism. Khadra becomes as strong as her deceased friend. She is even more optimistic and more open towards future. Khadra's new identity is stressed when Aunt Ayesha, Zuhura's mother, asks Khadra to forgive her and other adults for imposing their identities on her and the other children of the 'Dawah Center': "And we were idealistic, oof! Full of zeal! But we put it all on you. Too much. Wanting you to carry our vision for us, our identity – our entire identity, on your heads, imagine!"⁷⁴

After her trip to Syria, Khadra is no longer a product of her parents but a product of herself. She decides to follow her passion and pursues photography far from home in Philadelphia. Moreover, she starts to accept things in a different way. For instance, she accepts her friend, Seemi's sexual relationship with her boyfriend and considers it as a personal choice. At the same time, she refuses to have a sexual relationship with Charif

because she knows her own limits and sticks to them. In fact, Khadra has maintained most of her beliefs but she changes the way she applies them in her own life.

In addition, Khadra learns to accept different aspects of herself. Unlike, Bitsy, her Iranian roommate who changed her name when she comes to America, because: "So we could do things like order Pizza without the guy on the phone getting all confused, and job applications and such, makes things just a whole lot easier,"⁷⁵ Khadra gets to know who she is as a person, instead of just an Arab, an American or a Muslim.

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- ⁴⁹ Ibid., 177.
- ⁵⁰ Ibid., 94.
- ⁵¹ Ibid., 195.
- ⁵² Ulayyan Huda Ahmed and Yousef Awad, "The Quest for Self-Discovery: A Study of the Journey Motif in Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and Aboulela's *The Translator*" (International Journal of Arabic-English Studies (IJAES), Vol. 16 (2015-2016), 33.
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- ⁵⁴ Ibid., 242.
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- ⁵⁶ Kahf Mohja, *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (New York: Carroll& Graf, 2006), 244.
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- ⁵⁸ Khalifah Areen, "The Symbol of the Veil in Mohja Kahf's *the Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*" (International Journal of Humanities and Social Science. Vol.06. N.1 January 2016), 185.
- ⁵⁹ Kahf Mohja, *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (New York: Carroll& Graf, 2006), 261-262.
- ⁶⁰ Ibid., 262.

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- ⁶² Kahf Mohja, *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (New York: Carroll& Graf, 2006), 266.
- ⁶³ Stuart Hall, *Questions of Cultural Identity* (Chapter 06), 166.
- ⁶⁴ Kahf Mohja, *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (New York: Carroll& Graf, 2006), 15.
- ⁶⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶⁶ Ibid., 271.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., 309.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid.
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- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 369.

IV. General Conclusion:

Andrea Levy is a modern Black British writer and Mohja Kahf is a pioneering literary figure of Arab American literature. This work explored the Black and Muslim immigrants' experience in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) from a post-colonial perspective. Relying on some concepts based on Stuart Hall's view on cultural identity and Edward Said's discussion of Orientalism, we have investigated the effects of racism and the generations' gap on the second generation of Black and Muslim immigrants in the West.

In the first chapter, we have discussed the Black immigrants' experience in Britain in Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) focusing on the protagonist Faith. Faith as "Born and bred" in Britain to Jamaican parents has grown up under two different influences that led to her identity crisis. In fact, because of her skin-colour, Faith faces racism and hostility in Britain that leads to her feeling ashamed of being a Black. In fact, Faith goes through a painful experience of the second generation of Black immigrants in Britain which is the reason behind her journey to her homeland, Jamaica. Faith's journey reconnects her with her ancestral past and history that cause her identity transformations. Faith returns to Britain with a proud feeling of being a black from slaves' origins.

Similarly, in the second chapter we have explored the Muslim immigrants' experience in America through Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006). We have studied characterisation focusing on the main character, Khadra. Kahf portrays Khadra in a difficult life-changing situation that leads to a reconsideration of her life and a subsequent quest for identity. In fact, Khadra as a second generation of Arab Muslim immigrants in America faces racism and discrimination because of her religious faith and veil. Khadra undergoes a journey of identity and self realisation through her trips to Mecca and Syria.

At this final stage, we can say that our study of Andrea Levy and Mohja Kahf novels led me to conclude that the two works have more in common than a simple reader can imagine since both *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006) highlight the immigrants' experience in multicultural societies. Moreover, even though the two literary figures are of different geographical areas, cultures, languages and religions, they share common attitudes towards racism and identities' transformations.

Yet, in our memoire, we have not explored all the issues that underline Andrea Levy's *Fruit of the Lemon* (1999) and Mohja Kahf's *the girl in the tangerine scarf* (2006), though they are rich of themes that could be studied by future senior students from different directions and perspectives. Therefore, we invite students who are interested in the two novels and in the experience of the Black and Muslim immigrants in the West to study other themes, for instance those of ethnicity, gender discrimination, prejudice, religionetc.

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