

Cosmopolitanism Barriers in Samira Ahmed's *Love, Hate and Other Filters* (2018)

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Abstract

This study explores how racism represents an obstacle to any citizen to become a cosmopolitan in multicultural societies. Anti-racism fiction in Anglophone literature is the area of this study by exploring Samira Ahmed's narrative *Love, Hate and Other Filters*. Ahmed portrays in her debut novel how the brown, feminist, Indian-American, Muslim protagonist faces different types of discrimination in American society. Described as brown in a white society, she suffers from color discrimination. As a female, she suffers from the patriarchal authority that restricts her freedom. Moreover, she faces islamophobia as an Indian Muslim living in America. To clarify this, the research has been conducted in a qualitative method using descriptive methodology, mainly depending on textual analysis through a close reading of post-9/11 fictional text narrated by a woman. Muslim women immigrants' trauma of Islamophobia, colorism and sexism in Western societies will be examined by the feminist Indian-American, Muslim, immigrant novelist who addresses the issue of the relationship between cosmopolitanism and these different categories of racism in fiction and how these three encounters of racism act as a barrier to cosmopolitanism. Ahmed's goal is to convince the reader to regularly try to live as a cosmopolitan and communicate with others.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, racism, Islamophobia, colorism, sexism, immigration

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1- Introduction:

“I conquer, therefore I am” (Hardt 17). Racial hierarchy supposes that races can be effectively categorized as higher or lower on a specific dimension. We always suffer from having two poles that one of them must conquer. Furthermore, immigration has led to critical and often inconsistent changes: it has enlarged social variety while stimulating global homogenization. Thus, cosmopolitans confront rough periods as those immigrants suffer from resentment towards minorities.

Cosmopolitanism is the belief that everyone must have equal consideration and respect, without consideration of their citizenship status or any other affiliations. It is a philosophy that stresses the significance of global citizenship, human rights, and ethics. Racism, on the contrary, claims that some races are superior to others and that human beings should be treated individually based on their race. Thus, racism always proves to be a boundary to cosmopolitans.

Although cosmopolitanism and racism are two contradictory concepts, they are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, cosmopolitanism is believed to be a way to resist racism by stressing the idea that all people are indifferent and respectful. Nevertheless, cosmopolitanism has been blamed for being elitist and disconnected from the real world. This negative portrayal of cosmopolitans as detached and permissive elitists is triggered by the resentment towards minorities and immigrants which has aroused the spread of racism. However,

cosmopolitanism is believed to be an attitude that can moderate racism and humanize globalization.

As for critics, Jacques Derrida presents in his *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness* (2001) the idea of a “city of refuge,” which approves the principle of cosmopolitan hospitality in urban settings. Migrants are vital members of the process of cosmopolitanization or counter-cosmopolitanization (Schiller). Referring to Michel Foucault’s notions of culture and race, Ann Laura Stoler, Professor of Anthropology and Historical Studies, assures the very complicated interrelations of culture and race in Foucault’s perception by saying that the “discourse of bourgeois selves was founded on what Foucault would call a particular ‘grid of intelligibility,’ a hierarchy of distinctions in perception and practice that conflated, substituted, and collapsed the categories of racial, class and sexualized Others strategically and at different times” (11). In *Colonial Desire* (1994), the British postcolonial theorist Robert J. C. Young, too, states that the “modern anthropological sense of culture was created alongside, and indeed was developed as a part of, high culture. Both were concocted by a Western culture no longer able to contain its own inner dissensions by projecting them outwards into a racialized hierarchy of other cultures” (52). This cultural difference and racial discrimination or exclusion is certainly the real motivation of the entire narrative of Samira Ahmed’s *Love, Hate and Other Filters*.

Anti-racist fiction in Anglophone literature is the area of this study by exploring Ahmed's narrative text. Besides, the methodology used here is a qualitative approach using descriptive analysis that has been carried out through understanding and analyzing the selected novel's literary text and secondary reading materials that were accessed. The Palestinian-American literary critic Edward Said believes that texts are "protean things; they are tied to circumstances and politics large and small, and these require attention and criticism" (51). He declares that texts "are never neutral activities: there are interests, powers, passions, pleasures entailed no matter how entertaining or aesthetic the work" (*Culture* 318). Hence, the present article examines Ahmed's text to probe into the manifest and latent ideologies of cosmopolitanism boundaries ingrained in the novel. What the protagonist faces in this text portrays Samuel Huntington's concept of the "clash of civilizations" (168). The text proposes that Muslims are discriminated against because of their perceived blackness and religion. It also proposes that females are subject to patriarchal power.

Literature Review:

Miasol Holgado's "Cosmopolitanism and Strange Encounters in George Elliott Clarke's *The Motorcyclist*" (2022) article shows how the cosmopolitan stranger is othered. Clarke portrays encounters between strangers to show how othered subjectivities interact, and how these interactions are affected by colonialism, white supremacy and patriarchal power. She concludes that divisions and hostilities

among strangers are related to hierarchical oppositions of race, class or gender.

“The Problematics of Openness: Cosmopolitanism and Race in Teju Cole’s *Open City*” (2021) investigates how *Open City* depicts the results of the traumatic events of the 9/11 attacks. The narrative manifests the limitations of cosmopolitanism as related to race and religious faith categories. Souleymane and Isabel declare how Cole invites an openness despite physical cordons, police checkpoints, barriers, and detention centers that constitute a barrier to protecting Westerners against Others.

Pardis Dabashi argues in “Cosmopolitan Secrets: The Racialist Affordances of Equivocation in Henry James’s *The American*” (2020) that *The American* portrays the Euro-American cosmopolitan project as related to racialist ideals. She discusses how an intrusion of the antebellum Southern context into the French plot betrays the corruption of the cosmopolitan ideal through undeniable national racism.

In “Han Chinese Racism and Malaysian Contexts: Cosmopolitan Racial Formations in Tan Twan Eng’s *The Garden of Evening Mists*” (2019), Fiona Lee investigates Han Chinese racism in a Malaysian setting, where the Chinese constitute a minority. She examines how the cosmopolitan nature of global Anglophone literature hides the racial underpinnings of its cultural productions.

“Mr. Nobody from Nowhere”: Ethnocentric Nationalism, Cultural Cosmopolitanism, and the Reinvention of Personal Identity

in F. Scott FitzGerald's *The Great Gatsby* and Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*," MA thesis published in 2018, discusses the tension between ethnocentric nationalism and cultural cosmopolitanism which causes the ethnic 'other' in cities like New York. Hana Mohammed Smail argues the fundamental instability of identity. She examines how the two texts portray the migrant protagonist searching for national belonging but continuing to suffer, torn between numerous identities.

In 2017, Kristian Shaw examines in his study "A Passport to Cross the Room': Cosmopolitan Empathy and Transnational Engagement in Zadie Smith's *NW* (2012)" the trauma between critical cosmopolitanism and melancholia in a 21st-century urban city. The article explores how *NW* portrays the racial discrimination and socio-economic gaps that continuously disturb British life.

"No Natural Place Anywhere': Women's Precarious Mobility and Cosmopolitanism in James's Novels" (2014) Anna Despotopoulou's paper discusses women's mobility in James's texts, scanning their unsteady connection to the place, on national, international, and domestic levels, and the link between cosmopolitanism and vagrancy. She interrogates the notion of women's travel, sophistication and cultural expansion, claiming that travel and national detachment that represent the cause of alienation and a liminal, unhomely space in women, differs from men's geopolitical or ethical cosmopolitanism.

Rather, the present study discusses how three categories of racism act as boundaries to cosmopolitanism. These three categories are anti-Muslim racism (islamophobia), gendered racism (sexism), and skin color racism (colorism). It is going to discuss also how this racism represents an obstacle to any human to live as a cosmopolitan. This will be represented throughout the feminist Muslim immigrant protagonist and narrator of Ahmed's text. Therefore, in what follows this article will first overview the conceptual framework for each category and cosmopolitanism. Then, there will be a discussion of how Ahmed portrays these three categories of racism and how they are boundaries to cosmopolitanism in her narrative text. The supposed conceptual framework here should cover the assumption that cosmopolitanism is difficult to reach because of racism.

2. Conceptual Framework:

2-1 Racism

Conflict theory confirms that social problems take place when superior groups mistreat, exploit or oppress inferior ones, and thus urge a balance of power between any two poles. In this sense, the British feminist geographer Doreen Massey presents in 'Imagining Globalization: Power-Geometries of Time-Space' (1999) the term "power geometry" to indicate how spatiality and mobility are both formed by and reproduce power distinctions in the community. As a theoretical framework, Critical Race theory explores the "unequal and unjust distribution of power...along political, racial,

and gendered lines” (Taylor 1). Hence, racism can be defined as “the belief that human races have distinctive characteristics which determine their respective cultures, usually involving the idea that one’s own race is superior and has the right to rule or dominate others” (RacismNoway).

Race as a categorizing term signifying humans was first used in the English language in the late 16th century. Shakespeare’s literature, occasionally, pointed to a “race of bishops” or a “race of saints.” By the 18th century, race was expansively used for ranking and sorting the individuals in the English colonies (Europeans who sorted themselves as free people, Amerindians who had been subjugated, and Africans who were enslaved) and this usage is still in use. In the late 19th century, there was an unlimited fear of termination of society; socially, morally and biologically. Westerners fear degeneration. They think that the human race was about to degenerate because people from dissimilar races migrated and mixed. Subsequently, people of low rank are becoming greater in number compared to those of high rank to the extent that Western scientists encouraged the breeding of racially superior people while preventing inferior people from breeding. Westerners, still, greatly fear immigration.

Charles Darwin, the father of the theory of evolution, claims that different races of people are mixed in an evolutionary chain. He argues that life is a conflict between races, where some will dominate and others will be subjugated. Certainly, the lower race is

the humiliated one. Similarly, Terry Eagleton and Raymond Williams confirm that culture achieves race discrimination or endless social divisions. Williams defines culture as “a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual...a word which often provoked either hostility or embarrassment” (iii). Eagleton, too, claims that culture is “what most profoundly shapes our lives;” it is “what you are prepared to kill for...you can be burnt to death because of culture,” and it “is the foundation of the world” (48-58). Yet, racism has spread all over the world. Societies started to be defined in racial terms and to designate ‘higher’ and ‘lower’ races. Discrimination against low-status races has become a common motive in the world.

According to what the Peruvian sociologist Anibal Quijano calls the “coloniality of power,” prescribed value is given to certain individuals while disenfranchising others (215). Thus, humiliating inferior races includes acts of frequent insults, physical violence and verbal expressions of contempt, disrespect and subjugation all of which have severe effects on self-esteem and social communication. Broadly, critics claim that each work of American literature is about race. In this sense, this study analyzes racism into three different categories islamophobia, colorism and sexism as manifested in Ahmed’s narrative text.

2-2 Islamophobia

There is a “long-durée entanglement between Islamophobia and racism,” (Mielants 39). The 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York in

2001 fiercely converted the east-west relations into obvious binary rivals of us and them. Unfortunately, the repercussions of the bombings are felt by minority Muslim communities living in the larger non-Muslim standard society like America. The profound tension has magnified into a new tendency termed Islamophobia which regards Islam as “a source of intolerance, extremism and terrorism, one whose adherents are out to destroy Western values” (Ihsanoglu vii).

The founder of psychoanalysis Sigmund Freud claims that ‘phobia’ is a type of anxiety where we form “a relation to external danger but in which we must judge the fear exaggerated out of all proportion” (774-5). This phobia or anxiety is represented here as America fears the threat of the Islamic Other all the time. Moreover, ‘Islamophobia’ is a term that derived in the 1980s and started to be widely used in response to the 11th September attacks. The term is formally fabricated and defined in Runnymede Trust’s report *Islamophobia: A Challenge For Us All* (1997), which was established in 1968 “with the stated aim of challenging racial discrimination, influencing legislation and promoting multi-ethnicity in the UK” (2). Runnymede claims that Islamophobia is “unfounded hostility towards Muslims, and therefore fear or dislike of all or most Muslims” (Berkeley).

Islamophobia is a policy of othering Islam and Muslims since Islam has been regarded as the first enemy of the West. Islam has continuously been considered the ‘Other’ that should be controlled,

humiliated and marginalized by Westerners. The Swiss-German sociologist Jörg Stolz defines Islamophobia as a “rejection of Islam, Muslim groups and Muslim individuals on the basis of prejudice and stereotypes. It may have emotional, cognitive, evaluative as well as action-oriented elements” (548). Moreover, Esra Mirze Santesso and James E. McClung define Islamophobia as “a means to binarize and polarize groups in society, and in so doing, it potentially marginalizes Muslims further” (134). Islam is viewed as evil in the West’s eyes. America never accepts altering its policy which was regarded by Michael Fanon, an American law enforcement analyst and one of many victims of the January 6 United States Capitol attack, as a symbol of domination, a centralized system based on the strength of knowledge, media, and subjecting the Muslim world.

Islam and Muslims have even been represented in Western writings as weak, violent, ignorant, irrational and uncivilized. In ‘Islam Through Western Eyes,’ Said assures that Westerners are ignorant of Islamic history, civilization and culture. They disdain the principal Muslim writers because Islam is drawn to the Westerners only in the image that sustains the West’s agenda which was illustrated by Said as a “new style of imperialism without colonies” (*Islam* 7).

September 11 bombings were America’s chance to declare war on Islam. The French and political scientist Olivier Roy and the specialist in Islamism, religion and politics, Sara Silvestri, state that despite multiculturalism in the West, “Muslims faced different forms

of discrimination and experience differing disadvantages depending on a wide range of characteristics including perceptions of race, ethnicity and gender” (93). Consequently, Islamophobia has aimed to enable justified imperial rule over the Islamic other.

2-3 Colorism

The Cambridge Dictionary defines discrimination based on skin color which is known as colorism as dislike and mistreatment of the members of a specific racial group who have a darker skin color than others in the same group. Westerners maintain white superiority through the humiliation of others so that all black people are treated as inferior. For example, the German novelist Gustav Frenssen says in his very colonialist and racist story *Peter Moor's Journey to Southwest Africa* (1908):

These Blacks have deserved death before God and man...they have built no houses and dug no wells...God has let us conquer here because we are the nobler and more advanced people...To the nobler and more vigorous belongs the world. That is the justice of God...we must be hard and kill but at the same time as individual men, we must strive toward higher thoughts and noble deeds so that we may contribute our part to mankind. (233-4)

Similarly, the Scottish author John Buchan states in his novel *Prester John* (1910) that white men “will rule not in Africa alone but wherever there are dark men who live only for the day and their own bellies” (238). Thomas Jefferson, the 3rd U.S. president, too,

confirms that “the blacks...are inferior to the whites in the endowment of body and mind” (Gould 393). Moreover, Abraham Lincoln, the 16th U.S. president, declares that “there is a physical difference between the white and black races, which I believe will forever forbid the two races living together on terms of social and political equality,” (Thompson 2) and, thus, always hinders cosmopolitanism.

Color, particularly the color brown, is assumed to be a symbol that intensifies the notion of the ‘Other.’ Color acts as the spark to arouse universal socio-political hostilities and this color is now directly related to Islam and Muslims. The color brown is regularly thought to be the color of an ‘undesirable’ in many literary contexts (Semati 256-7). It turned out to be a signifier of inferiority. Therefore, color which is a main pathology of racism, has now been used to extend the pathologies of racism and to establish identification strategies to perpetrate intentional prejudice, intolerance and discrimination in an Anglo-American world where “multiculturalism and diversity operate to conceal white supremacy” (Grosfoguel). Western thought contemplates a category for colored people as “less than human” which justifies the discriminatory treatment people of color are subjected to (Mills 3) as it will be declared through the analysis of the given narrative text.

The American critic Richard Dyer explores, in his book *White* (1997), how white people are represented in Western culture. He assumes that “white people create the dominant images of the world

and don't quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image" (9). Dyer claims that Westerners often consider whiteness the "default" race, a pattern that does not entail consideration. Dyer is influenced by the deconstruction and modification of white culture in literature and history as depicted well by former critics such as Said in *Orientalism* (1978), and by Toni Morrison in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (1992), where they both assume that white Western culture interprets itself as contrasted with its non-white others. Dyer proposes that this justification "is indeed characteristic of white culture, but it is not the whole story and may reinforce the notion that whiteness is only racial when it is 'marked' by the presence of the truly raced, that is, the non-white subject" (14). Accordingly, Islamophobia is usually directed at colored people and white Muslims do not tolerate this humiliation a bit similar to their non-white Muslim counterparts.

2-4 Sexism

Sexism is "Discrimination based on gender, especially discrimination against women. The belief that one gender is superior to the other, especially that men are superior to women" (Houghton 1606). Conflict theory demonstrates that society is always exposed to a conflict for dominance among social rivals who struggle for rare resources. Regarding this theory, men, as the superior gender, subjugate the inferior women to preserve power and authority in society. The theory claims that gender is manifested as men trying to subjugate and humiliate women. Hence, men are viewed as the

dominant rival and women as the subordinate one. Whereas specific gender roles may have been suitable in a hunter-gatherer society, conflict theorists confirm that these roles persist just because the superior group continuously insists on keeping their power over the Other.

In most cultures, men used to be superior. For instance, women in Western cultures were not able to vote or owe their inheritance, making them completely dependent on men. Many social changes and the Women's Suffrage Movement in the 19th c. were the results of the instant struggle between the two groups. Friedrich Engels, a German sociologist who studied the family structure and gender roles from a Marxist viewpoint, suggests in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) that the owner-worker connection seen in the workforce is similar to that in the household, with women bearing the role of the proletariat because they depend on men to attain wages. Consequently, contemporary conflict theorists argue that women gain power when they earn their living.

As inferior to men, women are supposed to obey, follow and respect them. They are seen as weak housekeepers who rely on strong men to protect them (Nieuwkerk). In Islam, the Quran states that "men are the maintainers of women," (The Holy Qur'an, An-Nisa 34) as they protect their family and not as a restricting reliance. However, as stated in *Islam, Gender, & Social Change* (1998), the Qur'an

gives the man the right of ‘superiority’ over the family structure to prevent dissension and friction between the spouses. The equity of this system lies in the fact that God both favored the man with the necessary qualities and skills for the ‘guardianship’ and also charged him with the duty to provide for the structure’s upkeep. (Haddad 20-38)

The Quran declares that Muslim men can marry non-Muslim women as long as those women are followers of Abrahamic religions, Christians or Jews. Whereas, to protect religion, a Muslim woman is prohibited from marrying a non-Muslim man unless he converts in order to keep her away from things that may threaten her faith. As the husband takes the powerful and superior side, the non-Muslim husband can prevent his Muslim wife from performing her Islamic rituals that may seem inconvenient to him. The almighty Allah says, “Do not marry (your girls) to idolaters until they believe” (The Holy Qur’an, Al-Baqarah 221). Hence, the protagonist of the novel cannot marry her non-Muslim beloved.

2-5 Cosmopolitanism

Where is your home?

My home is where I am. (Alejandro, Journalist)

In the soles of my feet. (Santiago, Journalist)

I carry my home on my back, like a snail. (Cristina,
Physical therapist)

Home was my suitcase. (Sofía, Filmmaker) (Lejeune 17)

The cosmopolitan ideal (the kosmopolis) is sparked by the Greek Cynic philosopher Diogenes who rejected tradition and local loyalties and determined a sense of belonging to a much larger community. He is the first person to state that he was a “citizen of the world” (Warf). Likewise, *The American Heritage Dictionary of English Language* defines a cosmopolitan as one who is “so sophisticated as to be at home in all parts of the world or conversant with many spheres of interest” (414). There is a continuous clash between nationalism and cosmopolitanism. Locals (nationalism) cannot imagine life elsewhere, while cosmopolitans are always ready to live everywhere. To be a cosmopolitan is to feel at home in a place where you do not belong, or more accurately, that you feel like you belong to a place you have not come from and to always feel at home.

Whereas they might seem similar, cosmopolitanism is not the same as globalization. The first is a frail personal attitude, the other is a stubborn and strict socio-economic force. One does his best to humanize the different, while the other homogenizes it. One praises curiosity and inconvenience, the other accommodation. One is easy to lose, the other is ceaseless. Cosmopolitanism is embracing, while globalization is expansive. Globalization and nationalism are more similar to each other than to cosmopolitanism. Therefore, cosmopolitanism might help us humanize globalization and resist nationalism. It acts as a vehicle of equivalence and opportunity for most, not just a superior few.

Cosmopolitanism is closely related to complex “geometries of power” (Massey). In recent postcolonial and gender approaches, cosmopolitanism has a basic cultural meaning, referring to heterogeneous cultures that rise from colonial empires. It is closely related to relations of domination in colonial orders and their aftermath. Cosmopolitan cultures and practices are part and parcel of the postcolonial condition. Postcolonial writers have altered the meaning of cosmopolitanism to be embedded in hierarchies of race, religion, gender, color, etc. Cosmopolitanism should uncover and contemplate the hierarchies and power relations of the globalized world, besides its hybridity and fluidity (Pollock 1-14).

Cosmopolitanism means learning to live in and accept a world of difference. It is also an invitation to all individuals to admit that others have dissimilar values and that they should accept them as well. Acceptance does not mean conformity or conversion, but awareness of one’s responsibility to all humans. Trying to balance the contradictory values of humanity and neglect cultural and religious bonds, the British-born, Ghanian-American philosopher, Anthony Kwame Appiah introduces an all-embracing ideal. He enhances human dissimilarity and the importance of varied traditions, customs and religions while transcending them all to live in harmony everywhere. Cosmopolitanism helps us to get rid of capitalistic ambitions and racial discrimination.

3- *Love, Hate and Other Filters*

Samira Ahmed (1968-) was born in Bombay, India, and grew up in Batavia, Illinois (the setting of place of the novel). She is the *New York Times*-bestselling and award-winning author of young-adult novels. She is the first South Asian Muslim writer of the well-known Marvel Comics superhero, Ms. Marvel. Samira's work reflects her encounters with racism, the alarming rise in Islamophobia throughout the U.S., and her firm belief in the power of ambition, human connection and cosmopolitanism. Reading no book with a Muslim protagonist, Ahmed feels that every child should have the right to see him/herself as a hero in fiction. The first time she can see herself in a book that is not written by an Indian in Hindi or Urdu and then translated is Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* (1999). Finally, Ahmed could admit, "Yes, this is a piece of me here."

Ahmed introduces her narrative text to the reader and informs him that she and her family were "the only Muslims, the only South Asians" who live in a small Midwestern town. She confesses that one day when she was a child, she was attacked by a Western man who brutally yelled, "Go home, you goddamned Iranian." She complains that Westerners "hold me responsible for the actions of individuals thousands of miles away." Ahmed claims that cosmopolitanism is shattered and lost by racism. She tells readers that she hopes to "show them the power of their own voices. Every child deserves to see themselves as a hero on the page – I hope to

help create a world where that is possible.” She states in her author’s note that she has written this text for all those out there.

My experiences of Islamophobia and bigotry are mild compared to the violence many others have faced, will face. In this time of political uncertainty, we’ve seen hate speech emerge out of the dark corners to which it was once relegated. Worse, we’ve seen horrific violence. But all around us, we’ve seen people rise up to speak, not merely against the forces of hate, but for equality and justice. This is the world we are fighting for.

And for those who bear the brunt of hate because of the color of your skin or the sound of your name, for those who are spat upon, for those who are told to “go home,” when you are home: you are known. You are loved. You are enough. Let your light shine.

Racial discourse is continuously evident in the novel. Ahmed’s text narrates the story of 17-year-old Maya Aziz, the only Muslim girl in her Batavia, Illinois, high school whose Indian-born parent, Asif, restricts her freedom. Maya is the book’s narrator and main protagonist. She suffers existential angst as she is torn between two worlds. The first is the convenient one her parents anticipate for their Indian daughter: joining a college near their Chicago home and being paired off with a Muslim boy Maya’s Mum, Sofia, believes to be suitable. The second is the world of her dreams: attending film school, living in NY City, and mating a white Western boy. She also

struggles against a background of rising Islamophobia. She secretly applies to NY University to study film. She dreams “to be the first Indian American to win an Oscar” (29).

Exposing the novel, Ahmed starts the text with a somewhat overview of Maya’s expected life (while attending a traditional Indian wedding). Ahmed slowly unfurls to reveal the undertones of being a young Muslim in America today. Showing the Eastern and Islamic culture, Ahmed uses the title “auntie,” the title granted to all mom-aged Indian women, relation or not. As well as, the Islam greeting phrase, “*As-salaamalaikum*” (2). The novelist tries to depict an Islamic picture for the reader portraying the ethnic clothing of women in India. They wear “intricate *ghagra choli*—a ball skirt and short blouse of cherry-colored silk embroidered with gold threads and encrusted with tiny beads and pearls” (3).

Ahmed wants to show how masculine and feminine are discriminated against in Eastern society and culture even in the way of treatment. What is prohibited and forbidden for feminine is not for masculine. Kareem, an Indian-American, Muslim sophomore engineering student at Princeton, is allowed to drink wine, unlike Maya. Maya struggles against cultural expectations around dating and marriage. Sofia always fears that Maya might be a spinster. She does not want Maya “to end up alone.” Maya speaks on the tongue of all Eastern girls who suffer from this culture “I’m in...the twenty-first century. I don’t have to get married by the time I’m twenty-two or risk becoming an old maid” (47). Ahmed, influenced by the

Western culture, criticizes the Indian Eastern culture. She portrays Maya wishing to get rid of all these restrictions for the feminine gender “I step into the shower, hoping to wash away my anxiety. It doesn’t work. If I don’t make NYU happen, I might doom myself to the stay-close-to home-become-a-lawyer-and-marry-a-suitable-boy life that my parents dream of” (60). Even Phil, Maya’s white mate, wonders and warns her not to expose herself to Islamophobia in NY “being the only Muslim girl in school” (67). Maya is humiliated and asks Hina, her aunt, to rescue her if her parents “try to ship me to India and marry me off to a distant cousin.” She narrates how many Indian women are subjected. They “live at home until they get married” (71).

Premarital sex is forbidden in Islam. It is disapproved in general. Islam imposes some binding religious rules on women as well as men not to indulge in sexual intercourse till marriage with their partner. One must not indulge in any sexual relationships except through marriage, any other relationship is classified as one of the major sins in Islam, ‘Zina’. However, affected by the Western culture, Maya wishes to live freely like Westerners. She admits that all she wants is “to be the normal girl, with parents who let her date and a house that smells of seasonally appropriate candles and not fried onions” (73).

Muslim women have the right to education, to marry the person they choose, to keep their maiden family names after marriage, to divorce, to owe their inheritance, to seek protection by the law, to

work, to participate in civic and political engagement and to vote. These rights are mentioned in the Islamic texts. However, Ahmed here seems to criticize the denial of Islam to women's right to marry non-Muslims and stresses the need to have this right. It seems that she is affected by the professors of the History of Islam and Christian-Muslim relations, Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad, Jane I Smith and Kathleen M Moore, who reflect their view to Islam and address in their preface to *Muslim Women in America The Challenge of Islamic Identity Today* (2006) that "Muslims are guilty not only of violent behavior but also of treating women as inferior to men" (v).

As a Christian, Phil does not dare confess his love for Maya. He even prevents himself from falling in love with her. "I know who I am and I know who you are" (74). It is odd for members of different races to marry; in addition to their different religions, the Indian Muslim Maya is portrayed as a "bawling brown girl," just like Ahmed herself and most Eastern Muslims. Maya is discriminated against as the other non-white. On the contrary, Lisa is similar to Phil. Maya hates these obstacles between her hopes and fate. She envies Lisa "even though none of this is her fault" (75). Maya hates this difference between her and Phil. As a Muslim girl, she cannot marry the Christian Phil, whereas a Muslim boy can marry a Christian girl. Influenced by the Western culture, Ahmed expresses disapproval of women's subjugation and discrimination. In 2017, Tunisian women were announced to be free to marry non-Muslims as a result of the 5th Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi's call for

lifting the marriage restriction regulation that was set up in 1973. The Tunisian governorate hence announces that Tunisian women are free “to choose one’s spouse”. This might encouraged Ahmed to announce her thoughts and hopes.

Maya despises her own culture and hates being Indian. She hates the “smell of onions and garlic on my clothes” (77). She claims that she sacrifices by belonging to this Eastern culture. Fascinated by the Western culture, Ahmed stresses the defects of the Indian culture, while appraising the Western one. For example, when Kareem’s family visits Maya’s family they stick to the appointment and come on time. Asif jokes, “They’re not on Indian Standard Time.” Maya adds, “Somehow they’ve adapted to the strange American custom of arriving when asked” (79).

Maya’s Indian family subjugates her. They control and guide even the emotions and feelings of their daughter. They try to convince her to marry Kareem with whom she is not in love. Maya fails to love the Eastern-colored Kareem

I wish my heart would pound for him as it does for Phil. Life would be so much easier. I know that he’s a lot more than the suitable boy trifecta — Indian, Muslim...I will never have to explain so many basic things to him. Explain why every adult is called *auntie* or *uncle* despite familial link (a sign of respect), why we always take off our shoes at the vestibule (we pray in the house, so the home is holy), or why the major Muslim holidays are on

different days every year (Islam follows a lunar calendar). There will be a big wedding where Kareem rides in on a white horse and I will be garlanded in gold and roses and jasmine. (81-2)

However, Maya tries to resist and choose how to exist in society “I’m not trapped. I’m still living in the world of the possible, and I actually have the power to make the possible real” (84). She suffers from existential angst. She is anxious about her choices. She hopes to be superior and not to be treated as inferior anymore. Refusing to marry Kareem, Mom attacks her, “You’re not sure of anything...You should be so lucky as to get engaged” (87). The daughter’s marriage overwhelms Sofia’s mind.

Referring to what is mentioned above about Dyer’s claim that in the West whiteness is often taken to be the ‘default race’, Easterners are fascinated by the Western culture and lifestyle even if they don’t suit them. Maya is not fascinated by Kareem despite being an Indian Muslim, however, she is fascinated by Phil. Not because Phil is more handsome or successful than Kareem but just because he is White. Maya claims “My heart belongs to Phil” (82). But honestly, she is admired by the claimed default race and hopes to belong to it, despite her complete awareness that “Phil and I are totally different” (83). Her fascination with the other race confuses her choices. She likes Phil just because she wants to elevate herself and stick to the white superior race as she believes, despite her belief that Kareem is much more suitable for her. However, perplexed, she fears the future

in which Kareem is “getting married but I am not the bride... I’m jealous of a future that another girl will have with the guy I rejected” (Ahmed 85).

Asif blames himself for giving Maya some sort of freedom. He believes that women should only work in specific fields, stay indoors like a house cat and must obey a strict separation of gender. Saleemah Abdul-Ghafur, an African-American Muslim author and activist who focuses on faith-based initiatives and gender equality in Islam, says, “Various interpretations of the role of Muslim women in sacred Islamic texts and in contemporary society give rise to the biggest misconceptions of all—that we are oppressed, relegated to secondary status, and often placed on a pedestal similar to the suppressed women of the Victorian era” (3). The Quran even states that both women and men are equal, “Those who do good, whether male or female and have faith will enter Paradise and will never be wronged” (An-Nisa 124). However, men grant themselves the right to control decision-making in the family.

Maya starts to rebel and resist the patriarchy’s dominance over her. “I’m in the twenty-first century. In America. And I want to make movies” (90). Parents, however, show their worries, “always hearing stories of *our girls* who live far from their parents and go with these boys and...get...into...trouble. Some of them even eat pork.” Moreover, they fear the community, “How will it look if we send you away by yourself, *a girl*” (91). Sofia even criticizes Hina who is a spinster and fears that Maya may face the same fate. Hina

appears here to be a rebellious who opposes Eastern patriarchal traditions and sticks to her needs and hopes.

Contrary to Maya, Sofia could travel and live abroad because she is married and will not travel alone; a man accompanies her. Eastern women should always be dependent. Finally, parents agree. Sofia asks Maya to make friends in the U.S. but just with “girls. And maybe you can join the Muslim Students Association... You need to be careful... Especially with... boys.” Maya is so happy. New York represents a “New life” for her. Criticizing the Desi-Muslim traditions, Ahmed portrays how fearing that anyone gives Maya the evil eye, Sofia has to “take the *nazar* off” her daughter. Maya narrates that throughout her whole life, sometimes preemptively, any time she has any sort of school achievement, or even when she gets what her mom refers to as “compliments of envy,” or especially when she suddenly gets sick, her Mom would take the *nazar* off (95).

One day while Maya is at school in the morning, there is a terrorist attack. It has been said to be in Springfield. Thus, the school is on lockdown. Television starts to broadcast information and misinformation. A bomb explodes at the Federal Building in Springfield. Homeland Security issues a red alert for the whole state of Illinois. They claim that there is a shooter or a suicide bomber. There are several victims and decedents. The National Guard is being called up and the army has been deployed. The president is safely relocated. All government buildings and schools are on

lockdown. Nobody is permitted in or out. Police are stationed at the entrances of schools while parents hurry to schools to fetch their kids. News and innuendo flow and it is difficult to detect the truth (102-3).

Maya is frozen. Her fingers curl tightly around her phone. Her stomach lurches. She fears this terrorist tragic attack which seems endless. There is one piece of information she hopes not to hear. She and millions of American Muslims, both religious and secular, pray that no more lives are lost to hate and not to “let it be a Muslim.” Maya is worried about the subsequent Muslim ban. She is scared of taking her dad to Secondary Security Screening at the airport for random questioning. She is agitated for the veiled girls she knows getting their scarves pulled off or assaulted. She is scared of being always suspected. Maya’s life is turned upside down as a result of this terrifying crime committed hundreds of miles away. The community is consumed with bigotry, fear and hatred. These terrorizing attacks motivate American Muslims to struggle for their belonging and their Americanness. Maya holds not to give in to fear (Ahmed 103).

Islamophobia has created different challenges for Muslims living in the West. They even face the hostile media coverage of Islam, repeatedly portraying Muslims as terrorists and hence causing extra marginalization for them in the West. Fred Halliday, one of the very few authors who, after 9/11, understood the synthesis between struggling radical Islam and opposing the brutal inequities of the

neoliberal global order asserts, “The attack now is not against Islam as a faith but against Muslims as a people, the latter grouping together all, especially *immigrants*, who might be covered by the term” (898 my italics). Even before announcing the attacker, Americans started to speculate that the terrorist must be Muslim. Brian Jennings, one of the students, yells “It’s a Muslim terrorist...They hate America” (105). The American media claims that “an Egyptian passport was found at the scene” and “it appears to belong to one Kamal Aziz” (Ahmed 106). Authorities look into any possible connections between Aziz and popular terrorist organizations or splinter groups. They, also, wait for any terrorist group to take credit for the bombing.

The Western Media publicly practices the policy of othering Islam. In this context, Akbar S Ahmad, a Pakistani-American academic and professor of International Relations at American University, assures that “nothing in history has threatened Muslims like the Western media” (223). In his book, *Covering Islam* (1981), Said considers Media as a tool of power to control and subjugate the Muslim world. He claims that the West has fabricated a bad image of Islam. It has portrayed Muslims as terrorists and has linked Islam with violence and fundamentalism to justify the ‘War on Terror’. In his book, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* (2005), Amin Malak explains the colonial discourse in depicting Islam claiming that “many Western, so-called experts sometimes make presumptuous claims about Islam and Muslims, projecting often

negative, stereotypical images and labels that are deployed regularly and systemically” (152). Western media associates Muslims with illiteracy, terrorism, brutality and “Religion of the Sword” as claimed by the prominent Islamic leader of the U.K., William Henry Quilliam or Abdullah Quilliam as known after changing to Islam.

Islam has had a long history in America, however, in the wake of 9/11, both Islam and Muslims were depicted as Others. The media stresses an incompatibility between Muslims and non-Muslims in America (Panagopoulos). It argues that Muslims are intolerant (Schaffner). American Muslims are regarded as disloyal to their host home America (Selod). Moreover, Said claims that they are portrayed to foster hostile intentions and are believed to be violent and treacherous (Sides & Gross). Orientalists always consider them enemies. They not only consider Muslims as the other group but also an ideological and even physical threat. Terrorism is part and parcel of media stories about Islam, and this representation reinforces the connection between Islam and violence (Green 236). Such images trigger a massive wave of Islamophobia and racial discrimination in the U.S.

Ahmed portrays how the media broadcasts the damage caused by such terrorist attacks. Death is everywhere:

Carnage leaps, bleeding, from the television screen. Over and over on the news, it’s the same image: the massive neoclassical building that used to take up an entire city block. One-third of it has been sheared off by the strength

of the bomb. It looks like a giant meteor crashed through the roof, obliterating stone into dust. Bent steel beams and the pulpy ends of impossibly twisted floors are all that remain.

In a terrible moment like this, Maya feels that Americans are selfish and horrible. All that she wants is

to be a plain old American teenager. Who can simply mourn without fear. Who doesn't share last names with a suicide bomber. Who goes to dances and can talk to her parents about anything and can walk around without always being anxious. And who isn't a presumed terrorist first and an American second. (108)

She tries to abolish the self-hate and the doubt. She fears going to school, hates to be an outcast and fails to live as a cosmopolitan. Racism acts as an obstacle and hindrance to human connections.

Maya is so frustrated. She yells while her hands shake "I'm not Miss Mary Sunshine, but a so-called Muslim sociopath attacked us...If these jerks hate America so much, why don't they stay in their own countries? He killed little kids...I don't understand that kind of hate." Maya believes that it is a tragedy and a sin. She remembers what the Quran says, "whoever takes the life of an innocent, it's as if he has killed all of mankind...And if anyone saves a life, it's as if he's saved all of mankind." Asif tells Maya that these "terrorists are the antithesis of Islam. They're not Muslim.

Violence has no place in religion, and the terrorists are responsible for their own crimes, not the religion and not us” (109).

Maya wonders why there is so much fighting in the Middle East, and why so many suicide bombers are Muslim. Sofia tells Maya that terrorism is associated with no religion. “Think about Dylann Roof and that church in Charleston or the attack at the Sikh gurdwara in Wisconsin. Terrorists have their own ideology. Who knows what hatred compels them? They’re desperate and unthinking and ignorant followers” (Ahmed 109). Maya laments that all of them are labeled as un-American and terrorist sympathizers though they condemn terrorism and describe it as un-Islamic and guilty.

Maya confesses that she uses the camera all the time in her life as it is the documentary of her life. The audience of her documentary films is only her as if she wants to notice defects and anxieties in her life and try to change them and form her existence in this Western society to suit her needs. In his book *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots* (2004), Mahmood Mamdani, an Indian-origin specialist in the study of African and international politics, colonialism and post-colonialism, states that “President Bush...distinguish between ‘good Muslims’ and ‘bad Muslims’...Bad Muslims were clearly responsible for terrorism” (15). Therefore, Maya tries to reshape her existence to prove that she and her family are good Muslims who reject and refuse what bad Muslims do.

Some scholars and the media in the West regard the Third World as the humiliated Other. The Western racists subjugate Easterners so that they will remain the powerful race in the world. At first, the terrorist is thought to be a Muslim with the same surname as Maya, which results in a wave of Islamophobia against Maya and her family. Shame and guilt start to strike Maya. She suffers listening to her peers in school talking about the Muslim terrorist as they claim. Brian bullies her as he and others think that the terrorist might be her uncle. He attacks the Muslim Maya, “Why don’t you people leave America if you hate it so much?” She calls him a racist and tells him that she is in America and the terrorist is said to be Egyptian while her family is Indian (111-12). Aggressively, Brian utters, “Egyptian? Indian? What’s the difference? You’re both *ragheads*.” He uses the term ‘raghead’ which is often used to abuse an Arab or Muslim. However, Maya is humiliated and admits that one has “to have a thick skin if you happen to be Muslim and live in America” (112).

Brian, too, throws a brick through the window at Maya’s parents’ clinic. Asif gets a gash on his forehead. There is a note wrapped around the brick. “You’re dead—you fucking terrorists” (119). Contrary to when the victims are Americans, Maya notices that when Mayor Graham comes to check the clinic attack, “there are no cameras, no press. Nothing but policemen and an aide...The aide leaves with him.” Even Violet just tells Maya’s parents that when they find the attacker, “there will be a line of people who will want to kick his ass” (118). How is it indifferent to terrify Muslims!

Maya's family wants to leave their home and find a safe place in a hotel or with Hina.

Lately, Brian bullies Maya physically and accuses her of coming to live in his country. She defends herself claiming that she "was born here." Brian declares his anger and hatred for Maya. He says, "I don't give a fuck where you were born. My brother lost his leg in Iraq because of you...people" (143). Brian thinks that Maya has to pay for this. Therefore, Asif decides that it is too dangerous for Maya to go far away from her family. She has to stay close to him. Maya feels frustrated as she now knows that she has lost both Phil and her dream to study and live in New York. Maya feels that everything in her life "is a fight...My parents' fears shrink my universe to the four walls of this house. The world outside paints us all as terrorists. I'm blamed for events that have nothing to do with me" (152). She hates to "be under total house arrest" (158), like a house cat. She starts to feel that her father suppresses her. Maya complains that after all these troubles she cannot blend into the crowd of students in her school because she is Muslim. She claims that "you can't blend in when you're the only brown kid in a swell of white students" (124).

Finally, the terrorist proves to be a white supremacist. Aziz is cleared. He is an Egyptian who has the American dream of citizenship and is killed in the carnage before even achieving his dream. Ironically, "*Mr. Aziz was in the Federal Building that day to take part in a citizenship ceremony. He and fifty others were to take*

an oath to swear allegiance to the United States, to become our nation's newest citizens, when a suicide bomber cut that dream short" (128). Ahmed advises the brown Eastern Muslim reader that the solution to racism is not to swear allegiance to the USA. This may reversely end your life. On the contrary, we have to end racism completely in all cultures, religions and communities. Maya argues that the result of this supremacist attack is "Over a hundred people are dead, and there have been dozens of attacks on Muslims in retaliation for a crime no Muslim committed" (126). To be safe we should live as cosmopolitans and believe that our home is where we are.

All this stuff happened when they only suspected it was a Muslim. Imagine if the next time it actually is a Muslim... My parents told me all these stories about things that happened after 9/11—people getting beat up or harassed because they were brown—some of them weren't even Muslims. (127)

Now Maya fears that her parents can take a lot more away from her than just NY University. They can take away Batavia. They can insist on escaping and starting over. They worry about the state of their lives as Muslim immigrants in a white society that believes in Islamophobia. Since the bombing, Maya's parents have daily gone to prayers to feel peaceful. They are scared and want to go to "a place to belong when no other place feels welcoming" (130). Sofia argues that Muslims will "always be the scapegoats. Even though it

was one of their people who did this.” Despite this terrible racist stuff, they still feel like part of this place, and it is a part of them. “We are American and Indian and Muslim” (171). Islamophobia acts as an obstacle to cosmopolitanism.

Despite all that Maya faced during the last few days, she did not hate the USA or Americans. She did not hate Phil or Violate. Instead, she hates being a Brown Indian Muslim girl; the cause of her degradation. She terminates a romantic relationship with Kareem because he is non-white. She notices that lovers and friends are “separated by war and continents and the *rat-tat-tat* of machine guns” (161). Maya, as well as Phil, now considers patriarchal authority, Islamophobia, Muslim traditions, racism and religion as hindrances to their love; and to their life. Maya feels that she has to choose between her dreams and her parents. “In that way, it’s not a real choice at all. It’s an imperative” (169). Maya is abused by her father who practices men’s control over female behavior and uses his power to decide on important decisions in the life of his daughter. She tries to resist her parents and face them with a kind of composure. She says that she is legally emancipated and has the right to live her life how she wants, “It’s my choice. It’s my life, and I have a right to do what I want.” Her father considers her objection and resistance as disrespect and blames and suppresses her. He regrets raising Maya with American values. Hina bystands Maya and tells her parents that they subjugate her to be “pigeonholed into a life she doesn’t want” (171).

Maya is totally fascinated by American independence. She wishes to be independent just like Violet. Having the opportunity to choose between NY and her parents, she chooses NY; she chooses the West. She dreams of being westernized. Asif considers her an emancipated girl who is dead to them. Maya believes that her problem is that she is a “*girl*, and this is my story” (177). Ahmed portrays the white friends Phil and Violet protecting and saving Maya in key moments. Maya hates blackness and feminism which are considered the cause of her humiliation. Finally, Maya travels to NY. She abandons Phil. Both of them finally believe that there is “no tomorrow for us if we were going our own ways, to different places and different futures” (185).

She feels happy to behave like the superior Americans. She mimics Westerners as if they enslave her “I’m smiling wide, like the American I am, showing off every tooth” (184). Maya now feels emancipated. She walks in NY streets and passes by the Statue of Liberty. She remembers an old framed photo of her parents standing and the Statue of Liberty in the background and how they must have had hopes and ambitions when they migrated to America. She breathes the American air “thinking of the first deep breath thousands of immigrants once took as they sailed into New York Harbor, dreaming” (187).

Ahmed adds to her plot a parallel narrative, synchronized with the one narrated by Maya. Each chapter closes with a short, italicized addendum, third-person narrative about Ethan Branson,

an American teenager who is finally proven to bomb the federal building in Springfield. Branson is from Indiana, connected to white supremacist groups, and has acted alone. He is part of the story, but he is not. He is part of Maya's life, but he is not. Ahmed adds the bomber's life, childhood and possible motives for his crime. This fictional bombing is supposed to be an intentional allusion to the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing.

Ahmed narrates that Branson's father terrorizes him and that this rasp of the father "demands to do something with his life" (31). She narrates, too, how the terrorist is preparing for the carnage and how those victims of the bombing were having a normal life and each one has future ambitions, like, a teacher who overdressed for a day spent with toddlers in Springfield. Other victims are Kamal and his wife who have a small grocery and are celebrating his coming home from Springfield to Dearborn. There is also Officer Evan and Kelly who decide it is the last winter they would spend in Springfield. Branson's classmate describes him as a racist. The FBI finds in the motel room, that Branson stayed in the night before the attack, diaries that describe a violent Aryan revolution in the US that overthrows the government and seeks to take over the world. "*Tell my mother I died for my country. I did what I thought was best. — John Wilkes Booth*" (Ahmed 140).

Both Maya and Branson experience disappointment and rejection in their lives. Yet they make different decisions based on those experiences. Maya who is used to fighting in society as a

non-white chooses to face her problems, while Ethan, the white who used to live peacefully and be always powerful, is frustrated and ends his and others' lives. The first used to be subjugated, while the second used to be superior and not accustomed to this humiliation by his father.

Finally, Maya opens to reconciliation with her parents. After asserting her independence and accepting her mixed identity (American, Indian and Muslim) she comes into her own and pursues her dreams. Therefore, the reader should try to live as a cosmopolitan and communicate with others like Maya. Maya tries all her life to prove what Dyer argues in his book *White*, that it is unfair to admit and act accordingly that “black people can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race,” whereas, “white people are something else that is realized in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial” (14-5). For Maya, whiteness and darkness (spiritual or physical) are relative and should not govern one's life; blacks also have minds and should not be defined by material and bodily properties. She believes that color, religion and race should not restrict human life. Claiming that racism acts as a restriction for humans to live as cosmopolitans, Maya argues that “We must build bridges, conquer hate with love, and meet intolerance with a renewed commitment to education and open-mindedness. From many, we are one” (Ahmed 173).

3- Conclusion

Racial hierarchy and continuously having two poles that one must conquer represent a hard barrier to living as a cosmopolitan whose home is where he lives. Samira Ahmed problematizes the experience of being a brown female Muslim minority in American society. Like Ahmed, the protagonist is an Indian American who tries to exist and choose her fate as a feminist brown Muslim immigrant relegated to second-class citizenship. She and most Muslim immigrants face the Islamophobia ideology as a sentence uttered before a crime is even committed.

The brown Muslim immigrant is treated as a homegrown terrorist who reinforces Islamophobic tendencies in America. She is treated as a disloyal Muslim intending to betray the USA. This idea of home-grown terrorists reflects the central argument feeding the Islamophobia discourse of disloyalty. Muslim Americans are supposed to be not loyal to the U.S. which is reckoned as one of the core components of Islamophobia. Hence, brown Muslim immigrants must find the strength within to determine where they truly belong. Moreover, as a feminist, the protagonist is restricted and controlled by the patriarchal power of her father. All these restrictions are boundaries for her and put pressure on anyone to live as a cosmopolitan.

The Muslim novelist defines the relationship between the Empire of America and Muslims; the superior white opposing the inferior non-white; and the powerful patriarch confronting the powerless and

subjugated daughter, due to the racial hierarchy. Ahmed claims that cosmopolitanism is difficult to achieve because racism dictates that different races should be segregated from one another and that it is unnatural for members of different races to marry. The narrative reflects the point of view of a feminist Muslim immigrant author. Thus, she sympathizes with Muslims. She depicts colored female Muslims as victims. Ahmed advises the brown Eastern Muslim reader that the solution to racism is not to swear allegiance to the USA like Mr. Aziz. We have, instead, to end racism completely in all cultures, religions and communities. To be safe we should live as cosmopolitans and believe that our home is where we are. This is the message that Ahmed wants to tell to the other world; the white other, the male other and the non-Muslim other, hoping that all these barriers dissolve one day and living as a cosmopolitan becomes de facto.

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ملخص

تقوم هذه الورقة البحثية على توضيح كيف للعنصرية بأشكالها المتنوعة أن تمثل عائقاً أمام الكوزموبوليتانية في المجتمعات متعددة الثقافات. و يتمثل مجال الدراسة في روايات مناهضة العنصرية بالأدب الأنجلوفوني من خلال التحليل النقدي لرواية سميرة أحمد "حب وكرهية و أشياء أخرى"، حيث تصور الروائية الأمريكية ذات الأصول الهندية من خلال روايتها كيف تواجه بطلة الرواية (الأمريكية الهندية أيضاً) أنواعاً مختلفة من العنصرية في المجتمع الأمريكي حيث وصفتها سميرة بأنها ذات بشرة سمراء في مجتمع غربى أبيض، تعاني من التمييز العنصرى بسبب لون بشرتها الداكن و أيضاً تعاني كأنتى من تقييد والديها لحريتها. و علاوة على ذلك، فكونها مسلمة تعيش في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية يعرضها لمواجهة ظاهرة الإسلاموفوبيا. و يتبع البحث المنهجية النوعية بإستخدام التحليل الوصفي، عن طريق تحليل النص الروائى لتوضيح كيف سردت كاتبة الرواية صعوبات عيش الأقليات فى أمريكا خاصة بعد أحداث ١١ سبتمبر من وجهة نظر امرأة أمريكية مسلمة ذات أصول هندية. و بذلك فإن البحث يناقش كيف لكاتبة مسلمة تعيش في أمريكا أن تقوم من خلال الأدب الأنجلوفونى بعرض ما تلمسه هى و غيرها من الأقليات من عنصرية وكيف تمثل هذه العنصرية عائقا لفكرة العيش بحرية فى مجتمع كوزموبوليتاني. و لكنها فى النهاية تنصح بمحاولة التعايش و التكيف مع هذه الظواهر السلبية و مقاومة أى عائق أمام العيش بحرية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكوزموبوليتانية، العنصرية، الإسلاموفوبيا، التحيز الجنسى، لون البشرة، الهجرة