

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND THE EXPERIENCE OF IMMIGRANTS: A CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF FATIMA FARHEEN MIRZA'S A PLACE FOR US (2019)

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ABSTRACT

This research analyses the novel "A Place for Us" (2019) by Fatima Farheen Mirza to investigate how intergenerational difficulties are portrayed in a Muslim American family. It also explores the effects of Islamophobia and the process of navigating religious and cultural identities for Muslim immigrants in the United States. This study utilises qualitative analysis and incorporates Peter Morey's theoretical perspectives on Islamophobia and identity to emphasise the intricate experiences of Muslim Americans as they navigate their identity in the face of social pressures. The book provides a complete exploration of the immigrant experience by examining family relationships, the widespread impact of Islamophobia, and the intricate task of preserving cultural and religious identities in a mostly non-Muslim country. This examination highlights the importance of literature in connecting different cultures, and its role in conversations about identity, belonging, and the difficulties experienced by Muslim immigrants. From this perspective, "A Place for Us" stands out as a pivotal story in current dialogues about Islamophobia and immigration.

Keywords: Islamophobia, Immigrants, Identity, Fatima Farheen Mirza, A Place for US

INTRODUCTION

Islamophobia, a word gaining popularity in modern language, originates from an intricate combination of historical, political, and socio-cultural factors. The word's origin may be traced back to the late 20th century, when it combines "Islam" - the second-largest religion globally, established in the 7th century - with "-phobia," a suffix borrowed from Greek that signifies an irrational fear or aversion. The word "Islamophobia" acquired significant attention in the 1990s, especially with the release of the Runnymede Trust's study in 1997. This report played a crucial role in defining Islamophobia as a kind of racism that targets Muslims or those who are seen to be Muslim (Runnymede Trust, 1997). This concept was a significant change in seeing the phenomena, moving away from viewing it just as individual biases and recognising it as a broader problem deeply rooted in cultural, political, and institutional norms.

Throughout history, the encounter of immigrants, namely those who follow the Islamic faith, has been closely intertwined with the development of Islamophobia. The immigration patterns in the 20th and 21st centuries, influenced by wars, economic prospects, and globalisation, have often resulted in the movement of Muslims to nations where the majority of the population is non-Muslim. Immigrants in these unfamiliar settings may face difficulties that span from assimilating into the local culture to experiencing blatant prejudice and animosity. Edward Said's influential book, "Orientalism" (1978), offers a comprehensive framework for comprehending the impact of preconceived ideas and preconceptions about the 'Orient', which encompasses Muslim countries, on Western perspectives and policies. Said's argument highlights the role of Orientalist tropes in fueling

present-day Islamophobia, as Muslims are often seen as foreign and dangerous.

The events that occurred on September 11, 2001, served as a pivotal moment in the worldwide conversation around Islam and Muslims. The subsequent 'War on Terror' resulted in a heightened manifestation of Islamophobic attitudes and measures, both inside the United States and beyond. Scholars such as Mahmood Mamdani(2005) have thoroughly examined and criticised the security-focused attitude used towards Muslim communities, as shown in his book "Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror" . Mamdani demonstrates the prevalence of the binary categorization of Muslims as either 'good' or 'evil' in public discussions, which further strengthens oversimplified and biased perceptions of the Muslim community.

Regarding immigration, the period after the 9/11 attacks saw the implementation of strict immigration measures, heightened monitoring, and a significant surge in hate crimes against Muslims. This period highlighted the intricate interaction between immigration, identity, and national security, with Muslims often at the centre. The accounts of Muslim immigrants during this era, as described in books such as "The Islamophobia Industry: How the Right Manufactures Fear of Muslims" by Nathan Lean (2017), emphasise the difficulties encountered in manoeuvring through a society characterised by apprehension, mistrust, and often antagonism.

The phrase and concept of Islamophobia have undergone changes in recent decades, reflecting wider historical and geopolitical events. The encounter with Muslim immigrants, specifically, provides a perspective to comprehend the intricate and diverse character of this phenomena. This experience encompasses not just a story of being victimised, but also one of displaying resilience and taking action, as Muslim communities persistently negotiate, question, and transform the environments in which they exist. The scholarly discussion about Islamophobia and immigration is extensive and constantly developing, reflecting the dynamic and intricate character of both interconnected issues.

Fatima Farheen Mirza, an American author, made her entrance into the literary realm with her first book "A Place for Us" (2019), a heartbreaking and nuanced examination of the intricacies of family,

identity, and the concept of belonging. Mirza's work has been greatly influenced by her upbringing and experiences, since she was born in California in 1991 to Indian parents. "A Place for Us" explores the life of an Indian-American Muslim family, revealing the complexities of their relationships within the context of their cultural and religious identity. The work, acclaimed for its articulate writing style and deep understanding of human emotions, explores the timeless concepts of love, grief, and self-discovery, while also providing a unique perspective on the Muslim American journey (Mirza, 2019).

Mirza's work has significant relevance within the framework of Islamophobia and the lived encounters of immigrants. She sheds light on the daily reality and difficulties experienced by Muslim immigrants, as they navigate a social environment sometimes tainted by prejudice and misunderstanding. The narrative of the family in "A Place for Us" takes place against the larger socio-political backdrop of post-9/11 America, where there is a growing concern and prejudice towards Islam, known as Islamophobia. The work fearlessly portrays the influence of these cultural beliefs on the personal and communal lives of its protagonists, providing an intimate viewpoint on a prevalent phenomena.

The significance of Mirza's work in comprehending Islamophobia is in its portrayal of a group that is often portrayed as a single entity in media and public discussions, hence humanising them. Mirza's portrayal of the family's problems and goals shows profound understanding and compassion, effectively countering the stereotyped stereotypes that contribute to Islamophobia. The author's portrayal of the characters' voyage, effectively navigating their Muslim identity with their American existence, reflects the encounters of several immigrants who encounter the intersection of diverse cultures. The intersectionality of identity plays a crucial role in the immigrant experience, especially in a socio-political environment where being Muslim might be unjustly associated with extremist views.

Moreover, "A Place for Us" also illuminates the disparities across generations in immigrant households, emphasising the varying degrees of integration and adjustment experienced by various age cohorts. The younger folks' attempts to harmonise their cultural background with their American upbringing resonate with the encounters of

several second-generation immigrants, who often confront issues of identity and affiliation in a manner that is apart from their parents.

"A Place for Us" by Fatima Farheen Mirza makes a substantial literary contribution to the discussion on Islamophobia and the experience of immigrants. Mirza's representation of an Indian-American Muslim family is very comprehensive, providing valuable insights into the nuances of these situations. Additionally, her work promotes a deeper understanding and empathy among readers. The novel's examination of identity, inclusion, and the consequences of social biases makes it a captivating and pertinent read in the present-day milieu.

Research Questions

How does "A Place for Us" illustrate the intergenerational challenges and dynamics within a Muslim American family?

What role does Islamophobia play in shaping the characters' experiences in "A Place for Us"?

How does the novel depict the negotiation of religious and cultural identity among Muslim immigrants in the United States?

Research Objectives

To analyze the portrayal of intergenerational dynamics within a Muslim American family in Fatima Farheen Mirza's "A Place for Us."

To examine the representation and impact of Islamophobia on the characters in "A Place for Us."

To assess the negotiation of cultural and religious identity among Muslim immigrants as depicted in "A Place for Us."

Significance of the Study

It is crucial to analyse Fatima Farheen Mirza's "A Place for Us" in the context of immigration and Islamophobia as it offers a thorough understanding of the challenges faced by Muslim American families. This study deepens our comprehension of the many facets of immigrant life in America after 9/11 by analysing how Mirza portrays intergenerational relationships, the impact of Islamophobia, and the challenges of bridging religious and cultural identities. In addition to improving our understanding of the many interactions that occur within the Muslim American community and encouraging more empathy and

awareness in a multicultural society, this research provides insightful viewpoints on how literature may reflect and affect societal attitudes.

Delimitation of the Study

This research examines the novel "A Place for Us" by Fatima Farheen Mirza, utilising Peter Morey's theoretical framework to analyse how the book portrays intergenerational problems, Islamophobia, and identity negotiation in a Muslim American family. It does not include wider literary or social examinations outside Morey's viewpoints, nor does it incorporate other theoretical frameworks or books that explore comparable issues. The research focuses only on the background and topics given in Mirza's tale, specifically exploring the American Muslim experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on immigration and Islamophobia presents a variety of perspectives, all of which are helpful in developing a complete understanding of these complex phenomena. An interesting interplay between cultural identification and flexibility characterises the experience of Muslim immigrants, particularly those in Western countries. These immigrants often struggle to maintain their cultural and religious traditions while still adjusting to their new environment, according to Moghissi et al. (2009). Zine (2007) noted that age differences among immigrant families complicate the process of constructing identity, as she investigated with Muslim teenagers in Canadian schools. Zine highlights the challenges these people have in balancing their cultural and religious identities.

For certain immigrant groups, Islamophobia has serious consequences, both as a social phenomenon and as an individual experience. Allen (2016) significant study provides a basic understanding of Islamophobia by highlighting its many manifestations and effects. Esposito and Kalin (2011) have carried out an extensive examination of this kind of institutionalised and deeply rooted bias and discrimination. They contend that in addition to undermining social cohesion, Islamophobia endangers the variety of ideas that characterise Western culture.

The media significantly shapes societal perceptions of Islam and Muslims. In his investigation of how

Islam and Muslims are portrayed in the British media, Poole (2002) emphasises how media narratives shape public opinion and may even reinforce Islamophobic sentiments. Similar to this, Said's (2008) "Covering Islam" offers a critical examination of American media portrayal, highlighting the propensity of Western media to persistently propagate misconceptions about the Muslim world.

One of the most important aspects of Muslim immigrants' daily lives is the socioeconomic challenges they confront. Abbas (2005) investigates the challenges faced in the United Kingdom, focusing on issues pertaining to the integration of diverse populations and the creation of social cohesion. According to studies on Muslim immigrants transitioning from temporary residents to citizens, Haddad et al. (2002) found that the economic aspect of the immigrant experience plays a critical part in their assimilation into society.

In "The Muslims are Coming!" Kundnani (2014) examines how the post-9/11 era has complicated the lives of Muslim immigrants. In recent times, there has been a rise in scrutiny and erroneous suspicion directed against Muslim communities, resulting in a climate of fear and misunderstanding.

Islamophobia and the experiences of immigrants in the post-9/11 era have intensified the scrutiny and struggles faced by Muslim communities. It is this phenomenon that Kundnani (2014) skillfully illustrates, highlighting the ways in which the 'War on Terror' has led to increased surveillance and stereotyping of Muslims. As Muslim immigrants navigate a culture that is often characterised by mistrust and anxiety, this enhanced scrutiny has significant ramifications for their social and personal lives.

The discussion also centres on the sociopolitical landscape of Western countries, specifically with regard to immigration policies. Poynting and Mason (2007) examine how popular discourse and governmental measures in Western countries contribute to the marginalisation of Muslim communities. Their research highlights the interface between Islamophobia and broader political and socioeconomic issues, showing how these policies may exacerbate the challenges faced by Muslim immigrants.

Understanding the experiences of the younger immigrant Muslim cohorts requires an understanding of the field of education. The studies conducted by Ghaffar-Kucher (2015) explore how broader cultural ideas on Islam and Muslims impact the scholastic experiences of Muslim students in American schools. Understanding this point of view is essential to understanding how Islamophobia affects younger Muslims because it influences how they define themselves and how inclusive they feel.

Another hot subject is the investigation of religious activities and their visibility in public spaces. In this research, Meer and Modood (2009) examine how Muslims express their identities in public and how Western culture views them. The issue stems from the desire of the Muslim population to exercise their faith freely and the public's sometimes contentious acceptance of these activities. This conflict draws attention to how difficult it is for Muslim immigrants to negotiate their identities.

The literature goes into great detail on the unique challenges faced by Muslim women in Western nations, as well as their vital role in society. Fine & Sirin (2008) provide insightful analyses of Muslim American women's experiences, especially in the wake of 9/11. They look at how their experiences are influenced by their immigration status, religion, and gender.

The academic conversation around Islamophobia and immigrant experiences offers a complex viewpoint on the many challenges and complexities faced by Muslim communities living in Western societies. Together, these studies broaden our understanding of the many facets of life as a Muslim immigrant in the aftermath of 9/11, including identity construction, financial challenges, governmental regulations, and educational opportunities.

Theoretical Framework

Peter Morey's theoretical approach provides a critical viewpoint for analysing how Muslim identities are portrayed in contemporary literature and media. It is particularly relevant in the context of Islamophobia and the immigrant experience. His approach is grounded on the understanding that the way Muslims are portrayed in Western nations is sometimes simplistic and narrow-minded, leading to misunderstandings and stereotypes that feed the spread of Islamophobic sentiments. Morey's

scholarly work examines the nuances of how Muslims are portrayed and understood in Western countries, especially in the wake of the September 11 attacks.

The concept of "framing," which Morey extensively explores in his book "Framing Muslims: Stereotyping and Representation After 9/11," is central to his argument (Morey, 2011). He argues that political discourses and the media in Western cultures tend to categorise Muslims into small groups based on stereotypes, conflating them with radicalism, oppression, and other negative attributes. Morey argues that the framing process is deeply entwined with the political and cultural context of the West, rather than just being an instance of misrepresenting facts. Wider historical and geopolitical factors, such as the ongoing ramifications of colonialism and the current repercussions of international conflicts impacting countries with a majority of Muslims, have contributed to this issue.

Furthermore, Morey emphasises the need of counter-narratives in challenging and weakening these dominant frameworks. He advocates for a more complex and multifaceted representation of Muslim identities, highlighting the diversity of Muslim communities and the complexity of personal experiences. According to Morey, these portrayals are crucial for encouraging greater understanding and empathy across cultural divides as well as for providing a more accurate picture of Muslims.

Furthermore, Morey's methodology explicitly investigates the interdependencies of Muslim identities, particularly in relation to immigration. He admits that a variety of factors, including their cultural background, the sociopolitical climate of their host countries, and their individual circumstances, have an impact on the experiences of Muslim immigrants. Understanding the varied and complex ways that Muslim individuals and communities deal with Islamophobia and the challenges posed by immigration requires an understanding of intersectionality.

Theoretically, Peter Morey's theory provides an important perspective for understanding how Muslims are portrayed in Western contexts, especially after the September 11th attacks. His main points of emphasis include the negative stereotypes about Muslims, the value of truthful and nuanced

representations, and the interdependence of Muslim identities. This offers a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and complexities faced by Muslim communities, especially with relation to immigration and Islamophobia.

Morey's method also takes into account how framing affects policy formation and public awareness. He contends that stereotypical portrayals of Muslims influence public perceptions of the community as well as government policy towards Muslim communities, particularly in the areas of immigration and counterterrorism (Morey, 2011). Understanding the true influence that media and literary representations may have on the genuine experiences of Muslims, especially within Western culture, is a crucial component of Morey's argument.

Apart from exploring the overarching cultural and political topics, Morey also explores the particular facets of Muslim identity in Western cultures. In their 2011 study, Morey and Yaqin explore the inner struggles Muslims have in attempting to balance their cultural and religious identities with Western standards and expectations. The importance of individual and subjective experiences is crucial to comprehending Muslim identities. This methodology enables an appreciation of the distinct and personalised nature of these identities, beyond the standardised and often negative representations frequently seen in popular discourse.

Morey emphasises the value of using literature and the arts to communicate these alternate narratives. He advocates for the use of storytelling in dispelling myths and developing a deeper comprehension of Muslim viewpoints (Morey, 2011). Literature provides a venue for representation that transcends the limitations imposed by the framing of mainstream media, elevating and amplifying a broad variety of viewpoints and tales.

The theoretical framework developed by Peter Morey offers a comprehensive approach to understanding how Muslims are portrayed in Western culture, especially in the aftermath of 9/11. He provides insightful perspectives for assessing and addressing Islamophobia and the complexities of the immigrant experience via his attention on the problematic image of Muslims, the necessity for comprehensive and diverse portrayals, and the investigation of individual and subjective Muslim identities.

ANALYSIS

"That night Baba told them that they had to go to school the next day but that Hadia and Huda could not wear their hijabs. 'We don't know how people will react,' he said. 'We don't know where they will direct their anger if they are afraid'" The text effectively portrays the dread and uncertainty experienced by Muslim families in a country characterised by pervasive Islamophobia. This scenario corresponds to Peter Morey's analytical standpoint about the portrayal and interpretation of Muslims in Western societies. Morey's research highlights the pervasive nature of Islamophobia, which extends beyond its public manifestation and into the everyday lives of Muslims on a personal level. The father's apprehension over his daughters wearing hijabs to school demonstrates a tangible anxiety about potential negative consequences, which is a clear indication of the increased attention and possible hostility that Muslims often encounter in Western society. The individual's worry demonstrates the internalised consequences of Islamophobia, where the simple act of wearing a headscarf - a representation of religious and cultural identity - is filled with the dread of eliciting negative responses from others.

This chapter also addresses Morey's discourse on the difficulties encountered by Muslim families in navigating their identities in a society that has been shaped by the events of 9/11. The choice to abstain from wearing the hijab is a momentous decision, exemplifying the concessions Muslim families often make to guarantee their safety and avoid conflict. It highlights the conflict between preserving one's cultural and religious customs and adjusting to a society where these customs may be misinterpreted or faced with hostility.

The father's assertion, "The direction of their anger remains uncertain if they experience fear," addresses a fundamental concept in Morey's thesis - the notion that Islamophobia often originates from apprehension and disinformation. This apprehension may result in illogical reactions and bias towards Muslims, affecting even the most ordinary parts of their life, such as their clothing preferences.

Through Peter Morey's theoretical framework, this extract from Mirza's book exemplifies the intricate interaction of personal identity, family choices, and wider society perspectives. This emphasises the

pervasive nature of Islamophobia in the everyday experiences of Muslim families, compelling them to negotiate a social environment where their religious and cultural practices are continuously evaluated in relation to the need for acceptance and security.

The examination of the scenario from "A Place for Us" provides more evidence of how Islamophobia significantly affects the personal choices and relationships inside Muslim households, which is a crucial element of Morey's analytical framework. The father's instruction to his daughters not to wear their hijabs to school, motivated by apprehension of public response, underscores a crucial convergence of individual religious beliefs and public persona, a fundamental subject in Morey's examination.

According to Morey, these situations demonstrate the process of marginalisation that Muslim populations often encounter in Western cultures. The apprehension over negative responses is not just focused on the immediate physical well-being of his girls; it also encompasses a more profound unease about social exclusion and the possibility of his family being seen as fundamentally distinct or menacing. This concern is not unwarranted but is a sensible reaction to the persistent aura of dread and mistrust that frequently accompanies Muslim identities in the West.

This excerpt demonstrates the internal tensions that Muslim families confront in reconciling their religious activities with the desire to integrate or at least not to attract attention. This is a striking illustration of the sacrifices and adaptations that Muslim households undertake in response to external forces. Choosing not to wear the hijab, which is a visible representation of Muslim identity, may be seen as a means of self-protection. However, it also prompts inquiries about the potential suppression of religious and cultural manifestation as a result of social influences.

The father's assertion, "We are uncertain about the potential reactions of individuals," also alludes to the capricious and unpredictable nature of Islamophobic sentiments. This highlights how the Muslim experience, especially in a post-9/11 era, is often influenced by external opinions and prejudices that are outside of their influence. Morey's thesis emphasises the vulnerable status of Muslims in Western society, where their acceptability and safety

may depend on adhering to the norms and expectations of the dominant culture.

Through Morey's theory, Mirza's work portrays the anxiety and adaptive tactics used by Muslim families in response to Islamophobia. It also highlights the wider social forces at play. This work effectively depicts the pervasive impact of Islamophobia, extending beyond public discussions and policies to influence personal and family domains, influencing choices, relationships, and individual identities.

"Why don't you go back to your own country?" Brandon snarls. "This is my country," [Amar] responds"

Morey focuses on the depiction and recognition of Muslims in Western society, particularly after the 9/11 attacks. It emphasises the difficulties encountered by Muslims in being seen as eternal outsiders, irrespective of their nationality or place of origin. The conflict between Amar and Brandon in this extract exemplifies this phenomena. Brandon's inquiry, "Why don't you return to your country of origin?" is a clear demonstration of Islamophobia, whereby the Muslim identity is mistakenly associated with being foreign or different. This kind of speech is not only a direct affront to an individual, but also exemplifies a more encompassing cultural disposition where Muslims, even those who are native to Western nations, are often seen as outsiders. Amar's assertion, "This is my homeland," serves as a compelling counterargument to the prejudiced belief that Muslims are perpetually seen as outsiders. It highlights a significant challenge faced by Muslim immigrants and their offspring: the battle to gain recognition as valid and equal participants in the culture they consider their own. Morey's work highlights the fact that this fight encompasses not just individual identity but also serves as a confrontation against the overarching narratives and stereotypes that portray Muslims as foreign to Western society. This conversation also underscores the defensive stance that many Muslims are compelled to adopt, as they are continuously required to affirm their sense of belonging and allegiance to their nation. Amar's reaction not only presents a factual truth, but also asserts his entitlement to inclusion, therefore confronting the Islamophobic narrative that aims to marginalise and alienate him due to his religious and cultural background.

Examining this concise interaction in Mirza's work from the perspective of Peter Morey's thesis, reveals the fundamental difficulties encountered by Muslim immigrants and their families in Western countries. This statement highlights the conflict between the exterior imposition of a 'outsider' label due to Islamophobic sentiments and the internal affirmation of belonging and identity by those who are unfairly subjected to such prejudices. The exchange effectively portrays the continuous challenge Muslim communities have in seeking acknowledgment and approval among prevalent Islamophobic discourses.

"I don't believe in heaven or hell. I'm not a Muslim," Amar reveals, shocking his family – profoundly illustrates the negotiation of religious and cultural identity among Muslim immigrants in the United States. At this point in the narrative, Amar's explicit rejection of core Islamic principles and his detachment from the Muslim religion symbolise a crucial instance of negotiating his own identity. According to Morey's view, Muslims, particularly those residing in Western civilizations, engage in an ongoing process of balancing their religious identity with the cultural expectations of their host nations. Amar's comment might be seen as a manifestation of his negotiation, as he navigates the complexities of his religious ancestry within the framework of his American upbringing.

Amar's family's reaction to his confession exemplifies the intricate and arduous struggles that Muslim immigrant families often have while attempting to uphold their religious and cultural customs in an unfamiliar and distinct cultural setting. Morey's research highlights the challenges faced by these families as they negotiate a cultural environment where their religious beliefs and practices may not correspond with the prevailing norms. This may result in disputes across generations and conflicting viewpoints on matters of religion and identity within the same family.

Amar's grappling with his Muslim identity and subsequent renunciation of it might be seen, from Morey's perspective, as a reaction to the societal pressures and preconceived notions often faced by Muslims in Western cultures. The perpetual need to uphold and protect one's religious beliefs, along with the encounter with prejudice or bias, might result in an intricate connection with one's own religious

identity. Amar's disassociation from Islam in this instance might be seen as a coping mechanism in response to external influences, illustrating the wider influence of society views on the development of personal identity.

The excerpt from "A Place for Us" examined within the framework of Peter Morey's thesis underscores the intricate and often challenging process of navigating religious and cultural identity for Muslim immigrants in the United States. Amar's epiphany and the ensuing response from his family epitomise the internal and external obstacles encountered by Muslim persons in harmonising their religious convictions with their personal convictions and encounters in a primarily non-Muslim culture.

"I hate them, Amar thought, picturing the terrorists they showed on TV, I hate them more than I've ever hated anyone"

The work effectively portrays the impact of Islamophobia on the characters, namely Amar. This topic aligns with Peter Morey's idea on the portrayal of Muslims and the consequences of Islamophobia. Amar's introspective thoughts reveal his profound repulsion against the terrorists shown in the media. Morey's argument implies that this attitude is closely connected to the wider context of Islamophobia. The pervasive depiction of Muslims in the media as mostly terrorists constructs a narrative that not only impacts the perception of Muslims by outsiders, but also influences their own self-perception and the perception of their community. Amar's animosity against these radicals demonstrates his awareness of the role these unfavourable depictions have in perpetuating stereotypes and instilling fear towards Muslims as a whole.

Morey's argument highlights that Islamophobia transcends personal biases and is instead a structural problem that moulds public dialogue and impacts the development of Muslim identities inside Western nations. Amar's emotional turmoil and his animosity towards these radicals illustrate how the external pressures of Islamophobia may precipitate a profound identity crisis among Muslims. Frequently, individuals find themselves in a situation where they must disassociate from these unfavourable perceptions and, in some instances, from their society, in order to prevent being linked with extremism.

Amar's response further underscores the assimilation of Islamophobic tropes inside the Muslim community. The strong animosity he feels towards the terrorists, intensified by their portrayal in the media, highlights the influence of these narratives on his own self-image and his connection to his religious beliefs. It exemplifies the wider challenge faced by Muslims in defining their identity in an environment that often exhibits hostility and oversimplification in its depiction of their faith.

Through Peter Morey's thesis, this passage from Mirza's book demonstrates the influential impact of Islamophobia on the lives and identities of Muslim immigrants. Amar's inner conflict and his response to the media's depiction of Muslims underscore the widespread influence of Islamophobic narratives, which shape the perception of Muslims by both outsiders and their own self-perception within the larger social framework.

"It was the most unexpected result I could have imagined." The verse that is particularly unsettling—We will give them signs and they will still deny—has now become my own son, clearly depicting the complex intergenerational struggles and interactions inside a Muslim American family. This portrayal aligns with Peter Morey's theoretical ideas on Muslim representation and the negotiation of identity. The parent's contemplation of Amar's renunciation of Islam highlights the deep-seated intergenerational discord often seen among Muslim immigrant households. Morey's thesis elucidates the intricacy of these interactions, especially within the framework of assimilation and cultural preservation. The parents' astonishment and incredulity towards Amar's renunciation of Islam highlight the divergence in ideas and values that may arise across generations within immigrant households. This division is often intensified by the contrasting encounters and stresses encountered by immigrants who are the first in their family to settle in a new country, and their offspring who are born and raised in that country.

The line mentioned in the scripture, "We will send them signs and they will still deny," symbolises the challenge faced by the parent in reconciling their strong religious convictions with their child's other direction. This disagreement exemplifies Morey's insights on the process of negotiating one's identity within Muslim households residing in Western

societies. The parents, who often preserve a strong affiliation with their cultural and religious legacy, may have difficulties comprehending and embracing their children's distinct perspectives on religion and identity, which are influenced by their upbringing in a primarily non-Muslim environment.

Additionally, Morey's research highlights the significant influence of external cultural forces and the phenomenon of Islamophobia on these dynamics. The children's experiences and identities are influenced not just by their family ancestry but also by the broader social milieu in which they reside. Amar's rejection of religious beliefs may be attributed to the difficulties of reconciling a multifaceted identity that includes their cultural background and the experiences of living in a culture that often misinterprets or criticises their religion.

Examining the quote from "A Place for Us" using Peter Morey's theory, emphasises the complex intergenerational difficulties experienced by Muslim American families. The parent's contemplation of their son's abandonment of Islam exemplifies the emotional and cultural divisions that may arise among families as they navigate their identities in the face of the dual demands of preserving their history and assimilating into their new social environment.

"Huda wore one of Baba's old faded baseball caps" Huda's decision to don a baseball hat instead of her headscarf serves as a powerful representation of her family's reaction to the pervasive climate of Islamophobia. Morey's thesis emphasises the crucial role of Muslim people in adjusting to society influences and the apprehension of being categorised or singled out based on obvious indicators of their Muslim identity. The family's choice to substitute the hijab, a conspicuous and customary representation of Islamic belief, with a baseball hat, a very American item, conveys a strong message about their endeavour to assimilate and mitigate the risk of Islamophobic hostility.

Morey's research focuses on the influence of external perceptions and social attitudes on the process of identity development and decision-making among Muslims residing in Western nations. Huda's decision to wear a baseball hat might be seen as a means of safeguarding oneself in a setting where open demonstrations of Muslim identity could potentially be treated with animosity or bias. This judgement exemplifies the overarching predicament

encountered by many Muslim immigrants: the delicate equilibrium between upholding their religious and cultural identities while guaranteeing their security and integration into society.

This incident exemplifies the nuanced but significant impact of Islamophobia on the everyday experiences of Muslim households. The act of modifying one's physical appearance to evade prejudice is evidence of the widespread influence of Islamophobia and its capacity to control even the most intimate aspects of life, such as dress preferences.

When analysed using Peter Morey's theoretical framework, the selected passage from Mirza's book emphasises how Islamophobia influences the daily choices and adjustments made by Muslim immigrants. It highlights the ongoing process of balancing one's cultural and religious identity with the expectations of a society that may see these identities negatively or with distrust.

CONCLUSION

This research has shown that "A Place for Us" serves as both a depiction of a family's internal dynamics and conflicts, as well as a thorough analysis of the wider social problems of Islamophobia and the difficulties faced by immigrants. Mirza adeptly weaves together personal and societal experiences, emphasising the profound influence of Islamophobia on individual lives and the cohesiveness of communities. This study has shed light on the complex experiences of Muslim Americans as they navigate their identity in the face of social scrutiny and persecution, using qualitative analysis and Peter Morey's theoretical ideas.

The novel's portrayal of the protagonists' voyage—managing their Muslim identity with their American existence—parallels the real-life encounters of several immigrants who encounter the intersection of diverse cultures. The intersectionality of identity plays a crucial role in the immigrant experience, especially in a socio-political environment where being Muslim might be unjustly associated with extremist views. The intergenerational disparities within the family further highlight the intricate process of assimilation and adjustment, elucidating the manner in which identity and affiliation are negotiated across distinct age cohorts.

Fatima Farheen Mirza's literature, characterised by its compassionate depiction and intricate plot,

confronts the conventional tropes that perpetuate Islamophobia. Mirza's portrayal of a community, which is often represented as a single entity, humanises it. This creates a deeper comprehension and compassion among readers, so adding to a more intricate conversation on identity, belonging, and the difficulties encountered by Muslim immigrants. The book plays a significant role in current conversations about Islamophobia and immigration, providing unique perspectives on how literature may mirror, shape, and connect different segments of society. "A Place for Us" makes a substantial literary contribution to the discussion surrounding Islamophobia and the challenges faced by immigrants. This book offers a captivating examination of the complexities of family, identity, and social expectations, making it a pertinent and emotionally powerful read in the present-day setting. This research emphasises the significance of literature in promoting empathy and comprehension across cultural barriers, emphasising the function of narrative in questioning biases and improving our knowledge of the many experiences within the Muslim American community.

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