Western Muslims: Migration and Identity in Aboulela's Minaret*

Batılı Müslümanlar: Aboulela'nin Minare Romaninda Göç ve Kimlik

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Abstract

This paper discusses the depiction of Western Muslim immigrants in Leila Aboulela's novel Minaret. Using a postcolonial and diasporic framework, the study investigates how the protagonists in the novel manage their identities as Muslims living in a Western society, taking into account the obstacles given by Islamophobia in the West and the stereotyped image of political Islam. Through a close reading of the book, the paper argues that Aboulela provides a complex and nuanced picture of Muslim immigrants, one that questions fundamental preconceptions and stresses the diversity of experiences within this community. Characters in the novel are represented as battling with a range of identity-related issues, including the tension between tradition and modernity, the relevance of faith in determining identity, and the challenges of adapting into a foreign community. The essay also discusses how Aboulela's representation of Islamophobia and prejudice in the West sheds light on the realities of Muslim immigrants in Western nations and how her multifaceted picture of political Islam defies simplistic caricatures of the religion. Through her description of the challenges of identity formation and the realities of diaspora communities, Aboulela emphasizes the significance of recognizing the diversity of Muslim experiences and identities. In light of contemporary disputes about Islam and Muslims in the West, the research indicates that Minaret offers relevant information on how Muslim immigrants negotiate their social roles.

Keywords: Western Immigrant Muslims, Immigrant identity, Intersectionality, Islamophobia

Öz

Bu makale, Leila Aboulela'nın Minare isimli romanında Batılı göçmen Müslümanların temsilini araştırmaktadır. Postkolonyal ve diasporik bir çerçeve kullanan makale, romandaki Müslüman göçmen karakterlerin, Batı'daki İslamofobinin ve göçmen karşıtı ırkçı eğilimlerin yarattığı zorlukları ve siyasal İslam'ın monolitik ve tartışmaya kapalı yapısını dikkate alarak Batı'da yaşayan Müslümanlar'ın kimliklerini nasıl inşa ettiklerine odaklanmaktadır. Romandan ve alanyazında göçmen psikolojisi, İslamofobi ve Müslüman göçmenlerin kimlik ve adaptasyon geliştirmeleri konusunda yapılan akademik çalışmalardan örneklemeler yardımıyla, Leila Aboulela'nın Müslüman göçmenlerin karmaşık ve çeşitliliğe dayanan, basit klişelere meydan okuyan ve Batı'daki Müslüman göçmen topluluklarındaki deneyimlerin çeşitliliğini vurgulayan bir tasviri sunduğu savunulmaktadır. Romandaki karakterlerin, İslami gelenek ve modernite arasındaki gerilim, dini inancın kimliği şekillendirmedeki rolü ve yeni ve farklı bir kültüre adaptasyonun zorlukları da dâhil olmak üzere kimlik inşasıyla ilgili bir dizi sorunla boğuştuğu gösterilmiştir. Bu makale ayrıca, Aboulela'nın Batı'daki İslamofobi ve ayrımcılık tasvirinin Batı toplumlarındaki Müslüman göçmenlerin deneyimlerine nasıl ışık tuttuğunu ve siyasal İslam'ın Batı kültürünü hedef alan, radikal dini ideolojileri besleyen ve bir düşman üzerinden kendi varlığını sağlamlaştırmaya çalışan yapısının Batı'da İslamofobiyi nasıl beslediğini ve Batı'da yaşayan Müslüman göçmenlerin siyasal ve radikal İslam'ın monolitik tasvirlerine nasıl direndiğini tartışmaktadır. Sonuç olarak makale, kimlik oluşumunun karmaşıklığını ve diasporik toplulukların deneyimlerini tasvir ederek, Müslüman deneyimlerinin ve kimliklerinin çeşitliliğini tanımanın önemini vurgulamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Batılı Göçmen Müslümanlar, Göçmen kimliği, Kesişimsellik, İslamofobi*

INTRODUCTION

The global phenomena of human migration have been attributed to economic, societal, governmental, and individual factors. Leaving one's native country involves a degree of danger, regardless of the motivation. It indicates a break in the subject's linguistic, historical, and genetic continuity, as well as an assault on the subject's defining features and particular signifiers. Consequently, the topic of migration should be approached as a trajectory, following the immigrant through the various internal and external stages - identity withdrawal, nostalgia, depression, the myth of return, etc. - while taking into account each time its societal particularities in its various variables -relationship to the community, time and space - (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000). The way in which a migrant responds to each of these stages is highly influenced not just by the degree of schooling, prior knowledge of the host nation's language, and habits, but also by the impact of tradition on the functioning of the migrant's place of origin. since "as cultural distance increases, it impacts upon immigrants' relationships with members of the dominant cultural group as well as their own ethnic group, with the result that it influences their ethnic identification" (Nesdale & Mak, 2003: 25)

It is an oversimplification to state that deciding to migrate is a difficult experience. The immigrant family is frequently the target of xenophobic responses, loses its cultural grounding, and wanders into uncharted economic and social territory. Migrants who opt to establish a new home in a society distinct from their own are always required to undergo a period of adaptation.

> *Migrant sub-populations who are unable to speak the language of the country of settlement experience discrimination, are isolated from co-nationals, separated from their families, have experienced traumatic events and/or a drop in personal socio-economic status following migration appear to be at special risk for mental disorder (Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2000: 2)*

The Muslim families must adapt to a number of changes, some of which are little but ultimately negative. Numerous factors are involved, including the environment, such as climate, style of dress, terms of relations with neighbors, food, etc., language and communication styles like loss of social network, changing social roles, profession and social status, as well as the modification of family roles, such as man-woman, woman-elderly, and man-elderly, and finally the opportunities for religious practice, observance of religious prohibitions, etc. (Giuliani et al., 2018). The need to adjust to the sometimes prejudiced, hostile, and xenophobic responses of the host society's members is a further obstacle, as is the necessity to reconcile the migrant's idealized conceptions of the host country with the reality of life there. Additionally, the extended family and societal structure of the place of origin contributed to crisis management. Nonetheless, this protective foundation dissolves in immigrant nations. Family members are susceptible to adaptation difficulties. The family will be pushed to alter its internal norms to conform to the new behavioral patterns mandated by the host country as a result of the emergence of new limits and regulations. (Rousseau et al., 2011).

Islam would separate these immigrants and their descendants from all other foreign-born people who have assimilate into the host country to date. Therefore, Islam would be one of the greatest hurdles to the assimilation of the population in the West; it would be fundamentally dissimilar from past waves of immigration that have assimilated into the "melting pot."

As a result of Islamophobia and discrimination, Muslim immigrants face numerous obstacles. As Perocco (2018) notes, anti-migrant Islamophobia is deeply ingrained in European societies with distinct social roots and functioning mechanisms. This creates significant obstacles for Muslim immigrants attempting to integrate into the societies of their host countries. Many Muslim immigrants have successfully adapted to their new homes and made positive contributions to society despite these obstacles. Globalization causes cultures and religions to intersect on the global stage. Through this process of integration, both immigrant communities and host societies benefit from increased cultural exchange through trade, education, art exchanges among others. In September 2021, The Othering & Belonging Institute at UC Berkeley conducted a study titled "Islamophobia through the Eyes of Muslims: Assessing Perceptions Experiences and Impacts," revealing some fascinating findings about how Muslim immigrants perceive themselves within Western Societies (Elsheikh & Sisemore, 2021). Participants reported encountering a variety of forms of discrimination, including racial profiling while traveling and

difficulties obtaining employment due to misperceptions associated with being Muslim. Despite facing exclusion from mainstream society due to stereotypes related to terrorism or religious extremism unfairly attributed to them by media outlets portraying an inaccurate image of all members under one umbrella group regardless of whether they share similar beliefs - Muslim Immigrants continue to make significant contributions across various sectors, such as healthcare provision, where studies indicate foreign-trained doctors provide quality care potentially reducing health care costs. Consequently, it is essential not to undervalue the significant contributions made by Muslims who immigrate despite facing numerous obstacles. The findings of the study indicate that immigrant communities should be provided with more opportunities for societal integration. Doing so will serve two purposes: reducing the structural essence of anti-immigrant Islamophobia and fostering a broader understanding of the numerous contributions made by Muslim immigrants to their respective societies.

Long before the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, political Islam became the dominant factor in recognizing and understanding Muslim societies. Over the past two decades, political groups adopting Islamic allusions as a form of political contestation have drawn not just the political classes of the Muslim world, but also media coverage and academics in Europe and the United States. This level of interest is unquestionably due to their political dominance and the use of violence by some of their members. The outcome, however, is a unified and simplified vision that, across the Muslim territory, displays a single semantic dimension that, by leveraging the ambiguity of pictures and terms, refreshes the variety of representations already produced by violence and fanaticism. This perception leaves no room for other aspects of the Muslim world, and a citizen who only watches television news is hard-pressed to understand what is at stake in the Middle East or Africa today, and can only be alarmed by the Islamic phenomenon, as every marker for identification and mobilization in the name of Islam are never separated. (Roy, 1998).

The fear of Islam, or Islamophobia as it is sometimes known, has numerous elements. Foreign detractors of Islam and its ideology assert, among other things, that Islam lacks diversity and is dominated by a single worldview. As Green suggests regarding this understanding, which is dominant in the anti-Islamic view in the West;

> *If Islam is monolithic and unchanging, and if media coverage focuses on violence or terrorism carried out in the name of Islam by a small minority of Muslims, then it is easy to draw the conclusion that what one sees on the news is somehow endemic to Islam and all Muslims (Green, 2015: 27)*

Muslims cannot be expected to have distinctions if, as Green stated, Islam is a monophonic faith that does not allow variances. Anti-Western or extremist beliefs are not an aberration among Muslims; they are a phenomenon shared by all Muslims. Clearly, this is a problematic conclusion. Given that Islam is practiced in several unique and geographically distant cultures, particularly in the Global South, it is naive and shallow to believe that all Muslims have same and unchangeable beliefs. In addition, Islam is understood differently in each of these various cultures and autonomous countries, and its worship practices, customs, and doctrines range substantially.

Among the diverse interpretations of Islam discussed previously, extreme interpretations are evidently present. Specifically, anti-Islamic attitudes are fostered by the expansionist and authoritarian ideology of political Islam. Political Islam, which funds terrorist organizations like ISIS and uses Islam as a propaganda tool in daily life and politics, lays the ground for the use of Islamophobia as a political tool in the West. (Dubosh et al., 2015). Political Islam, which promotes and fosters Islamophobic reactions, leverages the growing Islamophobia in the West, to which it has contributed, to gather anti-Western followers in Muslim communities. In this respect, the politicization of Islam is another trigger of the negative perception of Islam in the West, because "in both Western and Muslim countries, Islamophobia arises when conservative Muslims become more visible in different aspects of social life such as in education, employment and politics, thus challenging the establishment either through civic movements or political parties" (Bayraklı et al., 2019: 16). This view labels Islam as a hostile religion that promotes violence and aggression. Because Islam is a conquering faith, it is unavoidable that Islam and the West will engage in a 'clash of civilizations' (Green, 2015).

The aforementioned "clash of civilisations" is one of the indispensable materials of imperialist Western politics, which, like political Islam, depends on polarization. The global theorization of concepts

that have been deemed solely national for a very long time, such as citizen, immigrant, and ethnicity, makes it feasible to escape the reductionist view of culture. This is also a technique of escaping the operational pattern of Western thought: that of the ego that only identifies itself via its other, another it chooses and shapes to fulfill the function of organizing its being. However, it appears that one of the repercussions of September 11 was to shake the confidence of Western countries, notably American powers, in their ability to control the global political narrative in the service of apparently universal ideals (Rousseau et al., 2011). In fact, nothing is less definite when it comes to American strategy than the triumphalism and invincibility that comes with having destroyed the Taliban in Afghanistan -especially if one recalls George Bush's address from January 30, 2002, in which he called for a war against the 'axis of evil'.

Then, how does this scenario impact Muslims in the West? This politicization, which is based on Islam from two distinct views, is especially detrimental to Muslim immigrants living in Western nations. Once the "boomerang impact" of the opening weeks has passed, the dissociation between the political adversary and the Muslim from within begins to take shape. This differentiation verifies the cultural globalization approach that highlights the rising heterogeneity of the worldwide scene, i.e. the processes of hybridization, mixture, differentiation, distinction, and resistance to dominating Western cultures. Contrary to the essentialist view of Islam, cultural heterogenization makes it possible for the first time to distinguish between Muslims based on their living environment (Goforth et al., 2014). The mobilization of European and American Muslims in favour of the distinction between the Muslim world and Muslims of the democratic world over a number of years has greatly facilitated this voluntary acceptance despite the distinction. In other words, one of the consequences of globalization is not only to make the emergence of Western Muslims possible, but also to introduce for the first time a fracture in the unifying discourse on Islam.

Western immigrant Muslims, who comprise a sizable community in the West and are likewise determined to make the classic Islamic philosophy polyphonic, exhibit specific immigrant identities that must be emphasized. Immigrant literature and the fictional characters it develops constitute one of the most essential grounds for demonstrating and reflecting on the emerging and changing identities of immigrant Muslims. Leila Aboulela, whose immigrant literature and immigrant stories have been often recognized, is a great source for illuminating Muslim immigrant identities and their psychology in the West.

Leila Aboulela was born in Khartoum and spent her childhood there. She later moved to Aberdeen, where she took care of her family and penned the majority of her works. These days, she resides in Abu Dhabi, where she also gives lectures. She was given the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2000 for her short story titled *The Museum* and her novel titled *The Translator* was shortlisted for the Orange Prize in 2002, in addition to being selected by the New York Times as a Notable Book of the Year in 2006.

In very simple and lyrical language, her 2005 novel *Minaret* describes the ethnic, ideological, and religious identities of Muslims residing in the West, as well as the difficulties these people face in adjusting to local culture. The novel focuses on the friction that arises when different cultures collide (Mohamed Abdel-Raouf, 2016), and Aboulela is constantly looking for a compromise. Aboulela's work has been placed within a literary tradition of writing back to the West to explain the novel's religious dimension in the framework of a postcolonial, cross-cultural encounter between East and West. Some have lauded the novel as one of the most persuasive endeavors in English-language fiction to convey a life of Islamic faith (Morey, 2017), and it also delves into the challenges faced by Muslim Arab women as they attempt to forge a contemporary, yet religiously traditional, sense of self.

Najwa, the novel's protagonist, is a Muslim immigrant who, at various stages in her secular and religious lives, contends with and ultimately overcomes liminal situations. Islam is a vital element of Najwa's identity; it provides her with comfort and guidance in times of stress. Najwa's experiences as a Muslim immigrant are exacerbated by her unusual background as a former member of the Sudanese elite who is forced to flee to London following a military coup. As a Muslim immigrant, she must contend with the challenges of being a refugee in a new nation while simultaneously adhering to her religious and cultural traditions, so adding another dimension to her identity.

The novel's depiction of Western Muslims underscores the intricacies and difficulties faced by persons who straddle cultural and religious identities, ultimately underlining the importance of tolerance, understanding, and acceptance in a globalized society. The novel's depiction of Western Muslims

underscores the intricacies and difficulties faced by persons who straddle cultural and religious identities, ultimately underlining the importance of tolerance, understanding, and acceptance in a globalized society. As stated by Ahmet T. Kuru, "In Europe...the situation is different from that in Muslim countries because there Muslims are minorities. Being part of a minority group means that individuals have to face a variety of issues that majority members do not" (Kuru, 2013: 120). The main character Najwa faces these exact issues as she struggles to balance her faith with the secular lifestyle she leads while living in London. This battle is visible throughout Najwa's voyage, as she struggles with her newly acquired independence after abandoning her protected existence. Additionally, leaving home generates both a desire to cling to the familiar and a desire to reject everything. This phrase aptly encapsulates Najwa's inner conflict; on the one hand, she fervently desires to adhere to her roots, but on the other, she feels suffocated by them. Najwa's experiences offer light on how Western Muslims negotiate cultural norms that frequently clash with tradition or religion; this phenomenon has also been observed in many other European nations. This phrase aptly encapsulates Najwa's inner conflict; on the one hand, she fervently desires to adhere to her roots, but on the other, she feels suffocated by them. Najwa's experiences offer light on how Western Muslims negotiate cultural norms that frequently clash with tradition or religion; this phenomenon has also been observed in many other European nations. Such experiences demonstrate the importance of tolerance and understanding when interacting with varied groups such as Western Muslims; attitudes regarding Islamophobia have improved in recent years, but there is still more work to be done. In order for individuals like Najwa to feel at ease in their own skin, the story eventually emphasizes the necessity for greater tolerance and comprehension in today's globalized society.

Najwa's inability to reconcile her traditional Muslim upbringing with her new life in Britain is indicative of her status as an immigrant. Najwa reveals numerous facts about her life before she became an immigrant on the very first pages of the novel. She describes these events as "I would remember pain like a wound that had healed, soundless sadness like a forgotten dream" (Aboulela, 2005: 15). In contrast to her comfortable lifestyle in Sudan, Najwa works as a maid in a London estate. She attempts to convince herself that where she lives is her home and that she belongs there. She desires ardently to feel at home and says "it still takes me by surprise how natural I am in this servant role" (Aboulela, 2005: 129).

Since her arrival in England, she has met numerous difficulties as she struggles to adapt to her new life and culture. Although she did not have a conservative identification in Khartoum and did not fully identify as a Muslim, as a Muslim immigrant she felt uncomfortable in England. The Islamophobic and xenophobic sentiments experienced by Najwa and other characters in the story are great illustrations of the causes that make immigrant integration difficult.

> *Laughter from behind me... I hear footsteps come up behind me, see a blur of denim. He says, Your Muslim scum', then the shock of cool liquid on my head and face. I gasp and taste it, Tizer. He goes back to his friends – they are laughing. My chest hurts and I wipe my eyes (Aboulela, 2005: 126).*

In schools and communities, many young Muslim immigrants were subjected to daily discrimination. In addition, there were disparities between the experiences of Arab immigrant girls and boys, with hijab-wearing females experiencing more discrimination (Goforth et al., 2014). Immigrants are exposed to drastically diverse relational patterns, behaviors, time and space management strategies, language, and cultural ideals. They are unable to regain control of their conversations as they confront the immense difficulty provided by this new experience. This relinquishing of control, which is typically accompanied by emotions of alienation and rejection, will further erode their already fragile sense of self. Their essential adaptation needs will be abandoned in exchange for an outright rejection from the host nation and a retreat into a rebuilt community of origin. In addition, they endeavor to lay an inordinate amount of attention on their society norms. Their cultural norms are depicted as more empathic or compassionate, whereas Western ideals are portrayed as the antithesis of adaptability and openness. All sorts of great traits linked with what they left behind are recalled and desired, but the homeland is recalled and felt for all the negative reasons.

In the novel, Najwa demonstrates the same mindset. Despite the fact that she had previously lived a very Western and modern lifestyle before being forced to migrate to London and was not very acquainted with Islam, she found herself drawing closer to her religious identity and states "I guess being

a Muslim is my identity" (Aboulela, 2005: 110) as an immigrant in the city. She converts to Islam and, after spending time with practicing Muslim women at the mosque, asserts that she has not encountered any discrimination based on her nationality, ethnicity, language, or race.

> *I close my eyes. I can smell the smells of the mosque, tired incense, carpet and coats. I doze and, in my dream, I am small back in Khartoum, ill and fretful, wanting clean, crisp sheets, [and] a quiet room to rest in (Aboulela, 2005: 75).*

This distortion is evident in what could be dubbed a preoccupation on the nation's image or the psychopathology of space. Being simultaneously present and absent is a spatial contradiction that migrants must suffer. This contradiction describes an impossibility: being physically present here while absent there and being physically absent there while completely present here.

Clearly, this contradiction does not psychologically effect all immigrants in the same manner. There are also a large percentage of immigrants who favor complete assimilation or Westernization, as opposed to the preference for their own country and culture. *Minaret* features a minor character named Lamya. She is Najwa's employer and is portrayed as a strong, modern lady who is not constrained by Islamic norms. Najwa, who is more conventional and conservative, is shown as the antithesis of Lamya. The character of Lamya is important because she exemplifies the variety of Muslim women and the myriad ways in which they negotiate their religion and identity in today's secular world. Despite being a minor character, Lamya is significant in delineating a distinct Muslim immigrant identity. Her description of the hijab in the novel as "a uniform, the official outdoor version of us" (Aboulela, 2005: 186) is a scathing critique of the way Islam views women in general.

As previously mentioned, Lamya, who is troubled by the monophonic and uncritical nature of Islam, which is one of the primary sources of Islamophobia, emphasizes criticism and the harmlessness of polyphony despite having a limited voice in the novel by stating that "We don't make fun of our religion, but just today, just once today" (Aboulela, 2005: 223).

The novel focuses mostly on the protagonist Najwa's experiences as a Muslim immigrant. Tamer, a Sudanese expatriate like Najwa, is one of the other immigrant characters in the narrative. Tamer is shown as a successful trader who is able to manage the difficulties of living in the West while maintaining his cultural and religious identity. Tamer, like Najwa, suffers with the contradiction between his Muslim faith and the secular society he lives in, particularly in his connections with women. Tamer, unlike Najwa, is able to find prosperity and stability in his new home, allowing him to negotiate his identity as a Muslim immigrant more effectively.

Najwa describes Tamer as a man who is "tall, young, Arab-looking, dark eyes and the beard, just like a terrorist" (Aboulela, 2005: 100). Tamer, like other Muslim immigrants, struggles with acculturation. Even though he is more adaptable to living in Western society than others, ostensibly simple factors he encounters on a daily basis as a Muslim prevent his complete adaptation. Even dining, which is an everyday occurrence for Tamer, a devout Muslim, serves as a reminder that he is separate from others. Halal food is possibly one of the most significant challenges faced by Western Muslims. In the novel, Tamer's mother makes reference to this situation.

> *I wouldn't mind if he ate out, McDonald's or at his college, but none of that is halal here and he's always been strict. He will only eat halal meat. I don't know where he got his religiousness from, none of us is as observant as him (Aboulela, 2005: 131).*

Anwar is one of the various Muslim immigrant characters in the novel. Anwar, who can be described as a radical communist, is an immigrant character who is estranged from his native identity and even engages in Islamophobic behaviour in order to acclimate to Western culture. Najwar describes him as "a very pragmatic and non-religious man" (Aboulela, 2005: 228), and she adds "he smoked only cigarettes and didn't pray. He never fasted in Ramadan; he did not see the point of it" (Aboulela, 2005: 57). Even though Anwar lacks a religious identity, he conveys a strong sense of nationalism. However, this too is merely an appearance, as it takes advantage of all the Western opportunities while promoting anti-imperialist ideas.

He solely represents the ambivalence of Western immigrants. This is also true of his place in Najwar's life. Najwar has an affair with Anwar and loses her virginity, despite the fact that Anwar is politically one of her father's enemies and characterizes her father as "corrupt" (Aboulela, 2005: 69). This results in tremendous regret for Najwar, who oscillates throughout the novel between the Muslim identity she is attempting to establish and Anwar. As an immigrant, Anwar demonstrates to other characters, particularly Najwar, his in-betweenness.

In conclusion, the novel *Minaret* by Leila Aboulela examines the identities of Muslim immigrants in the West, specifically Muslim women. The protagonist, Najwa, feels liminal throughout the story as she navigates crises, shifts, and ultimately finds peace with her secular and religious identities. Muslim immigrants in the city are shown negotiating and prioritizing their Islamic identity. By providing a critical lens through which to examine their religious observances, the West aids a community of Muslim immigrants in conceptualizing and articulating their sense of belonging. Aboulela bases much of her writing on the balancing act required when communicating across linguistic, cultural, and religious boundaries. In light of the above character analysis and theoretical discussion, the novel also reveals how diverse and different Western Muslim views can be in contrast to the traditional Muslim perception, that they experience adaptation problems from very different perspectives and give very different psychological and social responses to these problems, and that they can only find common ground in the problem of identity and belonging.

In addition to these factors, the Muslim immigrant presence in the West plays a significant role in the construction of a new multicultural and polyphonic Muslim perception, as a result of their interaction with the host culture, in contrast to the monophonicity of political Islam.

The novel also delves into the complex experiences of Western Muslims who must navigate both cultural and religious identities. The portrayal of these characters highlights the intricate challenges they face in reconciling their faith and traditions with the Western world around them. The novel explores the protagonist Najwa's journey from a wealthy Sudanese family to her life as an immigrant in London. Her struggles with identity are further complicated when she turns to Islam for solace after experiencing trauma. However, even within her newfound community, she faces judgment and discrimination due to her past. Through Najwa's story, Aboulela emphasizes that there is no monolithic experience of being a Muslim in the West. Each individual has unique circumstances that shape their views and practices of Islam. This recognition underscores the importance of tolerance and understanding towards those who may appear different on the surface but share common values at heart. Moreover, *Minaret* also sheds light on how Muslim women often bear additional burdens related to their gender roles within both Islamic and Western societies. They must navigate societal expectations while staying true to their faith - a daunting task given preconceived notions about what it means to be Muslim or liberated. Future research could explore further how literature can challenge stereotypes surrounding Islam by portraying its adherents as complex individuals with diverse backgrounds and beliefs. Additionally, examining how cultural intersections impact gender-based power dynamics would add valuable insights into this ongoing discussion about diversity and inclusivity in a globalized world.

Yazarlık Katkısı / Authorship Contrubution

Bu araştırma tek yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür. / This research was conducted by a single author.

Etik Kurul Beyanı / Ethics Committee Statement

Bu araştırma için etik kurul izni gerekmemektedir. / Ethics committee approval is not required for this research.

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