

**BEING AN IMMIGRANT AND A MOSLEM : A SOCIAL IDENTITY  
ANALYSIS OF HENA KHAN'S *AMINA'S VOICE***

A GRADUATION PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Gaining the Bachelor  
Degree in English Literature



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## A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

I certify that this graduating paper is definitely my own work. I am completely responsible for the content of this graduating paper. Other researcher's opinion or findings included in the graduating paper are quoted or cited in accordance with ethical standards.

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## **BEING AN IMMIGRANT AND A MOSLEM : A SOCIAL IDENTITY**

### **ANALYSIS OF HENA KHAN'S *AMINA'S VOICE***

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#### **ABSTRACT**

*Amina's Voice* is an American novel by Hena Khan. It tells about a social life in Milwaukee, Washington. The story is dominated by Pakistani-American Muslim girl, named Amina. As Pakistani Muslim Immigrant, Amina and her family always try to maintain their own culture while they live with Americans who have their own culture. They use Urdu instead of using English. They also spend more time with people from their community. Amina's family does not have any significant changes in language, accent, or behavior despite they live in America for a long time. The background of the cases above encourages the researcher to analyze how Pakistani muslim immigrant adapts to American culture. The researcher uses social identity theory by Henri Tajfel to conduct the analysis. Theory of social identity is divided into three process, social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. However, the process of adaptation shapes the perspective how the group must behave. The group behavior itself involves intergroup discrimination and stereotype perception in-group and out-group. The researcher concludes that the process of the adaptation of Pakistani Immigrant Muslim to American culture has influenced Amina's family thought. They believe that their community is better than the others. They strictly defends their group in the first place which means that they have the commitment to protect the group.

**Keywords:** *Amina's Voice*, Social Identity, Pakistani American.

## **BEING AN IMMIGRANT AND A MOSLEM : A SOCIAL IDENTITY**

### **ANALYSIS OF HENA KHAN'S *AMINA'S VOICE***

Oleh : Umi Kulsum

#### **ABSTRAK**

*Amina's Voice* adalah sebuah novel Amerika yang ditulis oleh Hena Khan. Novel ini menceritakan kehidupan sosial di Milwaukee, Washington. Cerita dalam novel ini di dominasi oleh seorang anak perempuan Muslim Pakistan Amerika bernama Amina. Sebagai Imigran Muslim Pakistan, Amina dan keluarganya selalu berusaha mempertahankan budayanya sendiri selama mereka tinggal bersama orang Amerika yang memiliki budayanya sendiri. Seperti menggunakan bahasa Urdu daripada menggunakan bahasa Inggris, menghabiskan lebih banyak waktu dengan orang-orang dari komunitas mereka. Amina dan keluarganya tidak mengalami perubahan yang signifikan pada bahasa, logat, ataupun perilaku meskipun mereka sudah tinggal di Amerika dalam waktu yang lama. Latar belakang kasus tersebut mendorong peneliti untuk menganalisis bagaimana seorang imigran Muslim Pakistan yang tinggal di Amerika dalam beradaptasi terhadap budaya Amerika. Peneliti menggunakan teori identitas sosial dari Henri Tajfel dalam menyusun analisis. Teori identitas sosial dibagi menjadi tiga tahap, yaitu kategorisasi sosial, identifikasi sosial, dan perbandingan sosial. Akan tetapi, dalam proses adaptasi tersebut membentuk sebuah perilaku kelompok. Perilaku kelompok tersebut adalah diskriminasi antarkelompok dan stereotip persepsi dalam kelompok sendiri dan kelompok luar. Peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa proses adaptasi pada tokoh Amina telah mempengaruhi cara berfikir dari Amina dan keluarganya. Mereka yakin bahwa kelompoknya lebih baik dari kelompok lain. Mereka sangat mempertahankan kelompoknya dan berkomitmen untuk melindungi kelompoknya.

**Kata kunci:** *Amina's Voice*, Identitas Sosial, Pakistan Amerika.

## MOTTO

*Adapt yourself to the things among which your lot has been cast  
and love sincerely the fellow creatures with whom destiny has  
ordained that you shall live.*

*Marcus Aurelius*



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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this graduating paper to

My beloved father and mother



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*Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.*



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# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of Study

*Amina's Voice* is an American novel written by Hena Khan. The novel was published in 2017 at Washington. *Amina's Voice* won the best children's novel at the Washington Post in 2017. Therefore, it was nominated as the good reads choice of Best Middle Grade and Children's Awards, A Washington Post Best Book of 2017, A NPR Best Book of 2017, A Chicago Public Library Best Book of 2017, A Kirkus Best Book of 2017, and A Texas Bluebonnet Award Master List Selection. (<http://www.simonandschuster.com>).

*Amina's Voice* is inspired by the real experiences of Hena Khan who is a Pakistani American Muslim that also lives in America. This novel is interesting to be analyzed because it introduces how the immigrant Muslim lives in America. The researcher uses Amina's family to represent Pakistani Muslim Immigrant because they have a relation with a social identity about how they remain a part of their own culture while they adapt to the others.

Generally, *Amina's Voice* tells about a Pakistani-American girl who starts middle school at Greendale Middle School named Amina. Amina's parents are from Pakistan. They have moved to America and become the citizens since Amina was young. Amina and her family try to balance their family life, friendship, religion, and aspiration to be Pakistani American.

The researcher chooses *Amina's Voice* novel as the object of analysis because the novel has many moral values. It tells about the struggle and life of Amina's family to get a better and peaceful life within race-segregation condition. Through the novel, the readers can learn about the importance of tolerance and can respect each other. Besides, this novel becomes more interesting because it does not only tell about some groups such as Pakistani American, Pakistani, Native American, and Korean American, but also tells about the condition of multiracial society in America.

As Pakistani Muslim Immigrant, Amina faces a complex adaptation. The school that Amina and her brother attends have many aspects of Western culture. Soojin who is Amina's best friend changes her name to the name that is more American. It occurs because people mess up her name every single day. In other cases, Amina confuses about her uncle from Pakistan that forbids Amina to sing and play music because he thinks that music is forbidden in Islam. Besides, Amina and her community get a serious attack of vandalism and arson at the Islamic Center of Greater Milwaukee. It comes from anti-Immigrant/anti-Islam that sends a message of fear, and it is aimed for all Muslim.

In this research, the researcher finds that Amina's families do not have any significant changes in language, accent, or behavior although they live in America for a long time. The background of the cases above encourages the researcher to analyze how Pakistani Muslim Immigrant adapts in American cultures. In fact, American and Pakistani come from completely different culture, language, and religion. The

adaptation, however, is defined as the process of unceasing interaction between man and the ever-changing world within which he evolves (Jakubowitez, 2002: 247). In other words, it is a behavior that responds to new situations. An adaptability is necessary for individual to have social resilience in new environment.

Moreover, *Amina's Voice* depicts Amina's struggle for living and adapting with their group of society. In the process of adaptation to new situations, the individuals bring the identity of their group before. Individuals need an identity in order to be accepted by the society where they live. The identity is important to live in new situations. It can help individuals to figure out what they are and to know what others are. Besides, individuals should know about their identity to decide what place or group they belong to.

Since the identity is part of the process adaptation, the researcher applies social identity theory to find how Amina and her family adapt to the American culture. According to Tajfel (1978: 63) a social identity defines as a part of an individual's self-concept. It derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership.

The social identity is formed through categorization. Individuals categorize people in order to understand and identify them. By knowing what categories they belong to, they can understand things about themselves. Individuals will claim in a group which has more similarities to them. Moreover, they adopt the identity of the

group, and they have categorized themselves as belonging to. It is called social identification. After the individuals claim and behave as in the category group member, another processes is called a social comparison. It is the process which the individuals compare their group with the out-group in terms of prestige and social standing.

### **1.2 Research Question**

Based on the explanation above, the writer formulates the following question to answer in the analysis:

How do Amina and her family adapt to American culture as explained in *Amina's Voice* novel?

### **1.3 Objective of Study**

This research aims to find out how Amina and her family adapt to American cultures explained in *Amina's Voice* novel using social identity theory by Henri Tajfel.

### **1.4 Significance of Study**

In this research, there are two significances of study. The first is theoretic, and the second is practice. Theoretically, this research aims to give an understanding about social identity in *Amina's Voice* novel. Practically, the significance of this research in real life is a part of knowledge. First, this research can be used by teachers



as teaching material to teach about social identity theory. Second, this paper also helps students of English Department by using this research as a reference.

## **1.5 Theoretical Approach**

### **1.5.1 Social Identity theory**

The research of *Amina's Voice* novel is aimed to analyze how Amina and her family adapt to the American culture using social identity theory. Social identity theory was proposed by Tajfel (1978, 1979) and later by Turner (1979). It is a social-psychological theory that attempts to explain cognitions and behavior with the help of group-processes. Social Identity theory assumes that an individual shows all kinds of "group" behaviors such as solidarity, within his/her groups and discrimination against out-groups as a part of social identity processes, with the aim to achieve positive self-esteem and self-enhancement (Abram & Hogg, 1988:21)

The social identity theory proposes that a part of a person's concept of self comes from the groups to which that person belongs. An individual does not just have a personal selfhood, but multiple selves and identities associated with his/her affiliated groups. A person might act differently in varying social contexts according to the groups he/she belongs to, which may include his/her family, country, and the neighbourhood he/she lives in, among many other possibilities. (Turner & Tajfel, 1986:24)

According to this theory, the Social Identity attributes possessed by an individual where an individual is a part of social group. The attribute, however, is used to represent social groups and differentiates the social group with other social groups. Fellow members inside some social groups have a sense of closeness and some characteristics or different characteristics from other social groups. The closeness built in this group is not only in the form of physical closeness for example differences in meetings, but also psychological closeness with other members in a group that have the same goals and efforts. According to Tajfel (1974:66) there are three mental processes involve in social identity. The first is social categorization, the second is social identification and the last is social comparison.

a. Social categorizations

Social categorizations are cognitive tools that segment, classify, and order the social environment, and thus enable the individual to undertake many forms of social action (Tajfel and Turner, 1979: 40). According to this processes, individuals categorize people in order to understand and identify them. By knowing what categories they belong to, they can understand things about themselves, and they can define appropriate behavior according to the groups that they and others belong to. Moreover, Social categorization occurs when the individuals put themselves in a group as object that can be categorized an named in a certain way in relation with other categories in the social environment.

b. Social identification

Social identification is the identity of the group which individuals had categorized them as what they belonging to. According to Smith and Henry, social identification reflects a sense of oneness with the group, where the self is defined in terms of membership in, and characteristics of the group (1996: 640). In this process, individuals categorize themselves as being members of that group, they adopt the identity of the group that they belong to. They act in ways that they perceive members of that group act. As a consequence of their identification with that group, individuals will develop emotional significance to that identification, and their self-esteem will be dependent on it.

c. Social comparison

Social comparison which is the first type of behavior that is triggered by social categorization. Social comparison is process to compare the quality of an individual or group to other group. (Maryam, 2010: 31). According to Festinger, individuals need to compare their opinions and abilities with others, particularly if there are no objective standards that they can refer to (1954: 120). In this process, individuals tend to compare their group (in-group) against another group (out-group). To maintain their self-esteem, individuals and their group favorable against other ones. It helps explain prejudice and discrimination, since a group will tend to view members of competing groups negatively to increase self-esteem. Social comparison makes individuals learn about themselves and obtain confidence in the veracity and utility of their beliefs.

## 1.6 Literature Review

The researcher finds no research and graduating papers relate with *Amina's Voice* as the object. Thus, this is the first research that uses *Amina's voice* as the research object but the researcher finds some of researches that use the same theory.

The first research that uses the same theory is "*Social Identity formation of Tris prior in Divergent movie*". This research was written by Fajri Nur Handini from State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (2017). This research focuses on how Tris prior struggles for her life to find her social identity. The researcher uses social identity theory by Henry Tajfel and Interpellation by Althusser.

The second research is a graduating paper entitled "*Social Identity Formation of Eva in Freedom Writers Movie*" by Ulfa Puspa Sari from State Islamic University Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (2015). This paper focuses on the social identity formation of Eva in *Freedom Writers* movie. The writer focuses on the character of Eva since the social identity is important for Eva who reaches the teen age. The writer uses Social Identity theory by Henry Tajfel and Psychology of Literature approach.

The third research is paper by Umu Maryam from University of Indonesia (2010) entitled "*Social Identity Formation of Half-Caste Children of White and Aborigines and its Effect on Intergroup Conflict in Rabbit-Proof Fence Movie*". The paper focuses on The Identity Formation of Half-Caste Children And White in *Rabbit-Proof Fence* movie based on their point of views and social effect that may appear caused by such identification. The writer uses Social Identity theory by Henry Tajfel and Interpellation by Althusser.

And the last references is journal “*Social Identity Theory as a Framework for Understanding the Effects of Exposure to Positive Media Images of Self and Other on Intergroup Outcomes*” by Christopher J. McKinley from Montclair State University, USA. This paper concludes that based on the tenets of social identity theory, a two-study experimental design was conducted which examined the influence of exposure to positive Latino media exemplar on in-group (Latino) and out-group (white) consumers.

However, this research is different from the other researches mentioned above because this research focuses on how Amina and her family adapt to the American culture as explained in *Amina's Voice* novel by using the theory Social Identity of as the main theory.

## **1.7. Method of Research**

### **1.7.1 Type of Research**

Library research with descriptive qualitative method is applied as the method of this study. According to Creswell, Qualitative Method means for exploring and understanding the meaning of individuals or group ascribe to a social or the human problem (2007: 22). In this paper, the researcher uses qualitative method in *Amina's Voice* to answer the research question above. The researcher searches data sources in library to gain the important sources to support this research. The researcher takes the

sources from the libraries through books, journal, and other texts needed by the researcher and related to the topic and object.

### **1.7.2 Data Sources**

The source of the data is the novel *Amina's Voice* by Hena Khan. The primary data is dialogue and narration through the characters. The secondary data is chosen from other data which contain the information and ideas. They are about the concepts that the researcher needs to analyze, for instance the reference about Pakistani Muslim Immigrant adaptation to American culture. The data are also taken from books and internet materials such as journals, e-books and other related electronics resources.

### **1.7.3 Data Collection Technique**

The researcher collects the data by using documentation method. The technique of collecting data is divided into some parts. First, the researcher reads the *Amina's Voice* intensively to understand the case and the character in the novel. Second, the researcher takes notes of the information that leads to the data. Third, the researcher collects all the sentences, paragraphs, and dialogues to get the information about the novel in order to answer the research question. Last, the researcher analyzes the data based on the theory that has been chosen.

#### **1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique**

The data analysis technique is divided into some steps. The first step is done by reading *Amina's Voice* to figure the problem out. The next step is classifying the related data to the character by looking at the sentences, paragraphs, and dialogues. The last step is done by answering the research questions systematically and concluding the results.

#### **1.8. Paper Organization**

This paper consists of four chapters. The first chapter describes the general information of the research and background of choosing the subject, research questions, theoretical approaches, research method, and paper organization. The second paper is the intrinsic elements of *Amina's Voice* novel. Then the third chapter explains about the analysis according to the problem statements of the research. And then the last one is conclusions and suggestions.

## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

#### 4.1 Conclusion

A social identity defines people to categorize themselves and others to different social groups and evaluates these categorizations (Tajfel and Turner, 1985: 40). It does not begin with the assumptions considering the individual but rather with the assumptions referring to a social group. According to Tajfel (1974: 66) there are three mental processes involve in social identity. They are social categorization, social identification, and social comparison.

Through the three process above, the researcher concludes that Amina and her family are categorized as Pakistani Muslim Immigrant. They compare their group with other groups to evaluate the groups. It also influences the Amina's family thought. They believe that their community is better than the others. They strictly defend their group in the first place in which they have the commitment to protect the group. It makes them have no significant changes in language, accent, or behavior although they live in America for a long time.

Besides, the researcher analyzes the theory that relates to the Islamic perspective about the importance of human identity. In the Islamic perspective, a group life in the society is recommended. It is mentioned in the surah, as follows.



يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ  
إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ - 49:13

*“O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted”* (<http://quran.com/49/13>).

In this verse, it explains that humans are created in groups, according to sex, ethnicity and nation as well as other different groups. It makes a trait or attribute for humans. They get their identity in society.

مَثَلُ الْفَرِيقَيْنِ كَالْأَعْمَىٰ وَالْأَصْمَىٰ وَالْبَصِيرِ وَالسَّمِيعِ ۗ هَلْ يَسْتَوِيَانِ مَثَلًا ۗ  
أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ - 11:24

*“The example of the two parties is like the blind and deaf, and the seeing and hearing. Are they equal in comparison? Then, will you not remember?”* (<http://quran.com/11/24>)

Moreover, the verse above also explains that there is a comparison between two groups, namely comparison in their nature. People should take lessons from these comparisons. When there are two or more groups in society, they will also be differentiated between one another. People should be able to choose which groups have more positive sides and deserve to be followed.

## 4.2 Suggestion

*Amina's Voice* novel tells about a cross-group friendship. In this research, the researcher applies Social Identity theory by Henry Tajfel focusing on the social group which the main character belongs to. Because his research is far from perfection, the researcher opens the chance for all readers to give the suggestion to make this research better. Hence, for the next research that will use *Amina's Voice* as the object of the research, the researcher suggests to the next researcher to apply the representation theory to depict Pakistani Immigrant Muslim in American society.

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