CONFLICTING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AS SEEN IN SHELINA JANMOHAMED'S *LOVE IN A HEADSCARF*

A GRADUATING PAPER

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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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CONFLICTING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AS SEEN IN SHELINA

JANMOHAMED'S *LOVE IN A HEADSCARF*

By: Eva Elmiyah

ABSTRACT

People with various identities will likely to suffer identity conflict. They tend to experience confusion because each identity has its own perspectives, rules, norms, and motives. This research discusses the struggle of Shelina as the main character that had multiple identities in the memoir novel entitled *Love in a Headscarf*. In the novel, Shelina was described as a woman who had three different identities namely South Asian, British and Muslim identities. This research aims to identify the struggle of having multiple identities and how the main character managed three different identities in her life. The researcher applies qualitative method and uses the theory of multiple identities management by Jones and Hynie. Based on the analysis, the researcher concludes that Shelina used three management techniques to solve her identity conflict namely Reconciliation (integrating identities), Realignment (choosing one identity over the others), and Reflection (selecting identities based on the current situation/others). Shelina never employed Retreat, which means she would not resist all her identities at the same time. She would at least use one of her identities, and her Muslim identity was always applied in any category.

Keywords: *Identities, Identity Conflict, Multiple Identities Management.*

CONFLICTING MULTIPLE IDENTITIES AS SEEN IN SHELINA

JANMOHAMED'S *LOVE IN A HEADSCARF*

Oleh: Eva Elmiyah

ABSTRAK

Orang dengan identitas yang beragam kemungkinan besar akan mengalami konflik identitas. Mereka cenderung mengalami kebingungan karena setiap identitas memiliki cara pandang, aturan, norma, dan motifnya masing-masing. Penelitian ini membahas tentang perjuangan Shelina sebagai tokoh utama yang mana memiliki beberapa identitas dalam novel memoar berjudul *Love in a Headscarf*. Di novel tersebut, Shelina digambarkan memiliki tiga identitas berbeda yaitu Identitas sebagai orang Asia Selatan, Inggris dan Muslim. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi perjuangan memiliki beragam identitas dan bagaimana tokoh utama mengelola tiga identitas yang ada dalam hidupnya. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif dan menggunakan teori manajemen identitas beragam milik Jones dan Hynie. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, peneliti menyimpulkan bahwa Shelina menggunakan tiga manajemen untuk menyelesaikan konflik identitasnya, yaitu *Reconciliation* (pengintegrasian identitas)*, Realignment* (pemilihan satu identitas di antara yang lainnya)*, dan Reflection* (pemilihan identitas berdasarkan situasi/orang lain pada saat tersebut). Shelina tidak pernah menerapkan *Retreat*, yang berarti dia tidak akan menolak semua identitasnya pada saat yang bersamaan. Dia setidaknya akan menggunakan salah satu identitasnya, dan identitas Muslimnya selalu diterapkan dalam kategori mana pun.

Kata Kunci: *Identitas, Konflik Identitas, Manajemen Identitas Beragam.*

MOTTO

"Dont try to make it perfect. Instead make it interesting!"

–Haemin Sunim–

DEDICATION

I dedicate my graduating paper to:

My dearest self

My beloved parents

My lecturers in English Department

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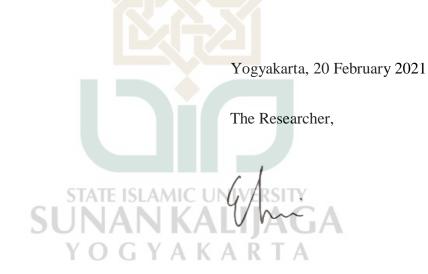precious knowledge that you have taught to me. I truly learn a lot.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

The issues of multiple identities are not startling things that people have to face in this society. The memoir novel entitled *Love in a Headscarf* (2009) by Shelina Janmohamed presents the matters of dealing with various identities. The main character in the novel, named Shelina, was placed in the intersections among South Asian, British, and Muslim identities. While having those three asserted identities, Shelina suffered the complexities of identity conflict. The multifaceted perspectives of each identity that dictated different things in her life were the main reasons why identity conflict occurs. As the consequence of the conflict, the main character experienced a quandary on the ways how she should act and decide. This paper aims to examine the conflicts of multiple identities and how those problems can be solved in *Love in a Headscarf* memoir.

In correlation to that, Memoir itself is literary work based on a true story. Memoir is from the collections of memories that include either private or public events of someone's life at some period of time (Yasmin, 2019: 332). Although memoir is constructed from a real story of the writers' experience, it is still defined as literary work. Memoir meets the requirement of what Russian Formalists called as "literariness." According to Jakobson in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* by Abrams & Harpham, literariness is *what makes a given work a literary work* (2012: 139). In a memoir, there are some elements, including plot,

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characters, point of view, and setting. Those elements can be such proofs to categorize memoir as literature.

Unlike a biography that tells about someone's life from birth to death, memoir focuses on one part of the writers' life that has unforgettable and pleasant impressions for them. People can relate more efficiently through things that truthfully occur in their lives; therefore, the real story has the ability to engage people's attention. There are some issues relatable to the character that are appointed in memoir. The issues are often about the writers' daily life. One of the issues that are elected and depicted in this memoir is about identity.

Identity is how people and communities describe themselves and are described by others based on race, ethnicity, religion, language, culture, and nationality (Deng, 1995:1). Identities can represent the characters' self-image and help them to put which groups they should belong to. Somehow, different groups have differences in how they see things, and it can be a problem for the characters that have multiple groups or identities. Characters will be rattled to make decisions or actions because each of their identities has different perspectives. As the consequences of belonging to multiple identities, they may go through the complexities of those various perspectives, and it will lead them to particular confusions.

Those confusions are the impacts of identity conflict. Identity conflict is the situation when two identities or more are involved in the same case, and each of them has different norms, values, motives, commitment, and goals for the

individual (Baumister, 1985: 407). Identity conflict occurs because people have multiple identities. Having numerous identities inevitably affects how people will take action while many different perspectives surround them.

The issues of identity conflict described above are the main reason why the researcher is attracted to this object. In addition, there are also other reasons why the researcher chooses this memoir. This novel was written based on the real journey; thus, the conflicts in the story most likely has similarities with society. The publics can relate to the conflicts or the problems because they are quite common in our environment. Next, the novel frequently mentions Islamic teaching and values in its story, so the reader can get additional knowledge about Islam along with Muslims. Last but not least, in the topic of identity itself, we can also see any other issues such as ethnic culture, power, media, patriarchal rules, and stigma.

In correlation to the reason why the researcher chooses *Love in a Headscarf* memoir, there has actually been a long search before the researcher finds this object. The researcher repeatedly looked for an Islamic novel written by Muslim women, and she finally found Shelina Janmohamed's *Love in a Headscarf*. Shelina Janmohamed herself is a British Muslim writer, journalist, and social activist of South-Asian origin. She was awarded as UK's 100 most influential Muslim women by Times Newspaper because of her big contribution to the Islamic world through her works. In addition, her debut memoir, *Love in a Headscarf*, won some awards at the Muslim Writers Award in both 2008 and 2009 (Sufyan, 2016).

Through this memoir novel, Shelina Janmohed portrays her journey as a South Asian Muslim woman that was living in Britain. Additionally, several Muslim Women writers also have this kind of experience. However, the ways of how they deal with various identities as Muslim Diaspora are slightly different. To give a brief explanation of the difference, there is a memoir entitled *The Making of Mr Hai's Daughter* by Yasmin Hai that depicts how her family prioritized their new identity as British people and alienated their Pakistani and Muslim identities. On the other hand, in Shelina's story, she was a British subject raised in a Muslim household that also still strongly implemented South Asian identity in their daily lives. Through the differences described above, other writer's journey mentioned how they firstly hide their previous identities, while Shelina had prioritized, and in fact, have always prioritized all her identities from the beginning.

In this memoir novel, Shelina, who was the writer and also the main character had three different identities. Although she was born and raised in the United Kingdom, she never forgot her identity as a South Asian, specifically an Indian. She was also a good Muslim woman that practiced the Islamic teachings well. However, bargaining with these three identities was an uneasy struggle. There was so much defiance that Shelina got. This memoir depicts Shelina's experiences of meeting the various norms, values, and perspectives of her identities and communities, along with her journey to seek a husband through an arranged marriage.

Rubio stated that arranged marriage is a process of creating alliances among two families, and it is used as a way to enter into an informal engagement that allows its members to do some importance, such as political, economic, and social status (2000: 2). As a Muslim, one of worships that can complete someone's faith is through marriage, and Shelina chose the arranged marriage process as a way to find a spouse. As the consequence of following her community's practice, Shelina must obey the regulation of her ethnicity. Having South Asian blood in her body required her to respect her community's culture and norms.

Even though Shelina's South Asian community had moved to Britain and became British people, they still tightly implemented the identity values from their origin ethnicity. However, South Asian rules seemed to be old-fashioned and extremely strict for a young modern woman like Shelina. Growing up in the United Kingdom shaped her as a critical, independent, and well-educated woman. On the other hand, as a practicing Muslim, Shelina often reflected what her religion tells its people to do. Her identity as a Muslim required Shelina to act and make choices based on Islamic values.

Those three identities controlled how Shelina managed her life. Each of her identities impacted the way Shelina took action and opinion. They frequently engaged in the same situation, yet they had various perspectives about it. When this thing occurred, it drove Shelina into confusion and complicated situations.

There were always consequences if she refused her identities' values, so she had to cogitate on what she was supposed to do sincerely. She could not be trapped in a position that made her hesitant to execute her actions. To find a balance with those multiple identities, Shelina did identity management. The multiple identities management by Jones and Hynie proposes several ways to handle the identity conflict of having multiple identities. By using these ways, Shelina found a way out of her multiple identities that dictated different things.

In addition, by using multiple identities management, Shelina could cope with the conflict that faced her as a young South Asian- British- Muslim woman. It also pointed out that Shelina Janmohamed was one of the Muslim Diaspora who successfully negotiated her identities in the new environment. She still preserved her South Asian cultures, became a British Subject, and practiced Islamic values well. This success is not out of the strategies and the management that Shelina chose to handle the issues as having multiple identities.

1.2.   Problem Statements

1. What are the conflicts that Shelina experienced because of her multiple identities?

2. What are the types of the identities management that Shelina chose to solve her identity conflict?

1.3.   Objective of Study

Based on the problem statements, the researcher focuses on explaining the kinds of multiple identities management that Shelina chose to solve/deal with the identity conflict because of having various identities.

1.4.   Significance of Study

The significance of this graduating paper is to show the reader that the issue of having multiple identities can be managed through some strategies, as it is presented in the memoir novel *Love in a Headscarf*. Additionally, the finding of this research can also be additional references for related fields such as Cultural Studies and Psychology.

1.5.   Literature Review

Love in a Headscarf by Shelina Zahra Janmohamed has been analyzed by some researchers. One of the articles entitled *Seeking Freedom in the "Third Space" of Diaspora: Muslim Women's Identity in Aboulela's Minaret and Janmohamed's Love in a Headscarf* by Md. Mahmudul Hasan discusses Muslim Women that prioritize their Muslim identity in Diaspora. Although they live as a minority, they still practice Islam faithfully. The researcher also addresses the issues of Muslim Women's discourses that are always identical to oppressed side in many writings. Through both of the novel, Hasan argues that Abulela and Janmohamed are against those Muslim Women's discourses by representing Muslim women's identity in fresh and pleasing ways.

The next is an article written by Raihana, Hashim, and Yusof entitled *Islamophobia and Muslim minorities in post 9/11 Women's fiction*. This article focuses on the discourse of Islamophobia after the 9/11. The three novels; *Rebounding, Love in a Headscarf*, and *The Size of Mustard Seed*, portray the impact of the 9/11 on Muslim's position as a minority in British Society.

Islamophobia has affected the public's perspectives on Islam and Muslims. Those three novels explain how the public poorly treats Muslims after the 9/11. The novels also present what actually Islam and Muslims are. The researchers argue that those three novels can help the public understand Islam and Muslims in the West; thus, Islamophobia discourse will be mitigated.

The third is an article with the title *Love in a Headscarf: A Muslim Woman's Journey of Finding the Self*. This article is written by Halimah Mohamed Ali in *the International Journal of Science Commerce and Humanities*. This article discusses the concepts of hijab and arranged marriage in the novel based on Al-Qur'an and Hadith. The main character is pointed as someone who joins the arranged marriage process and wears hijabs as her own choice. She does those things willingly and not because of being oppressed. This research proves that Muslim women who wear hijabs and join arranged marriages are not always oppressed because they consciously do those things. Here, the researcher also finds that the main character's journey is not the only journey to find a spouse but also a journey of finding the self. Through her experience, she finds her true self.

Next is an article entitled *Countering the 'Oppressed, Kidnapped Genre' of Muslim Life Writing: Yasmin Hai's The Making of Mr. Hai's Daughter and Shelina Zahra Janmohamed's Love in a Headscarf* by Claire Chambers. In this article, the researcher finds both novels are different from many writing texts about Muslim women that always portray them as passive and oppressed people. The novels are shaped with Islamic values but still present Muslim women who are happy being Muslims. The researcher also argues that the authors of both of

the novels adapt popular life writing conventions. Those novels present Muslim women surrounded by relatives, friends, and colleagues; thus, they live a happy life. Both of the writers successfully challenge the stereotypes about Muslims that are always related to bad people in West's perspectives.

The last is Tasnima Yasmin's article entitled *Characteristics of a Memoir: A Reading of Love in a Headscarf by Shelina Zahra Janmohamed*. This article is not argumentative research but descriptive research. This article aims to analyze the characteristic of the memoir that presented in *Love in a Headscarf*. The researcher finds that the memoir uses the first voice, uses past tense, portrays the author's life, depicts the strong relationship between the characters, has simple dialogues, and invites the reader into the author's memory.

In previous research, some researchers only focus on the character's faith and her Muslim identity. Although this research will also discuss identity, this graduating paper concerns with the character's multiple identities, including South Asian, British, and Muslim. Most of the previous researches are just interested in Character's Muslim identity; thus, her South Asian and British identity are missed in the analysis. This paper will emphasize how the main character faced different perspectives in those multiple identities and the ways she managed them.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

In this research, the researcher uses identity theory. The primary of the theory is Multiple Identities Management. The theory is created to solve the problem of having multiple identities. Multiple identities are not something new.

Every individual, whether in the real world or in fictional stories, might have this issue. This identity theory can help to cope with the problems of multiple identities. Multiple identities management emphasizes to find out several ways to solve the issues of having some different identities.

The word identity itself refers to someone's roles, relationships, and social categories that make them recognize who they are and how they should act (Tajfel, 1981: 144). It must be emphasized that people do not have an identity but they have identities. However, multiple identities can lead to identity conflict. Identity conflict might happen when several identities have contradictions to each other. Baumister stated that identity conflict occurs when two identities or more are involved in the same situation, and each of them has different norms, values, motives, commitment, and goals for the individual (1985: 407).

Because each of the identities dictates different things, an individual might experience confusion and stress. This problem could happen to anyone. It begins with a simple case, such as having different identity roles. First is being a student, and the second is being an organization member. A student's role requires him to focus on the study while being an organization member will consume a lot of time outside the college stuff. This underlying problem frequently happens in this society. If the example above seems uncomplicated, the bigger problem usually occurs with diaspora people.

People who live in diaspora have some social identities, and they are often confused with their various cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities. They are

growing in a new environment, but their back-home perspectives still haunt them. This is a complicated situation to cope with. They are unconsciously oppressed to follow all the identities that they have, but surely this is not an easy thing to deal with. They must be tired both physically and mentally. They have to face conflicts and transitions to carry out all the perspectives in their various identities.

According to Jones and Hynie, identities can be divided into roles, relationships, and social (Jones & Hynie, 2017: 198). Identities based on roles are when people are tied to positions that lead them into particular behaviors and duties, such as being a career woman and a mother. On the other side, identities based on relationships are the nature of people's relationships with others, such as family members and friends. Also, identities based on social are when people determine themselves to belong to some social group membership. The example of this kind of identity belongs to a particular ethnicity and nationality. All these kinds of identities above are either ascribed (automatic) or achieved (chosen group membership).

Besides dividing the identities into some groups, Jones and Hynie also formulated some management to cope with multiple identities. There are four ways of multiple identities management (Jones & Hynie, 2017: 225). The first is reconciliation. Reconciliation is the most known strategy to deal with various identities. Reconciliation means integrating the identities that an individual has. The perspectives of two identities or more are used and combined. The individual tries to reconcile and balances his identities.

Next is realignment. This management is used when people choose one of their identities over another. This management will be activated if people feel that they cannot integrate their identities. This strategy is taken if they think just one of their identities' perspectives can be applied in some cases. Realignment is one solution to reduce the intricacies because an individual does not have to unify his identities.

The third is Retreat. Retreat is the management when people avoid all of their identities. When somebody experiences identity conflict, and all of his identity cannot be picked, they are likely to evade all the identities. This management seems to be the easiest among the others. However, when people do not follow any rule in their identities, they might experience another confusion. This confusion can happen because they do not have any guidance and role.

The last is Reflection. Reflection is management when an individual chooses identities based on the current situation and other people. This strategy is to determine identity selection. Reflecting on how the situation and people around is a way to selectively choose what identity will be suitable. The selection of identity may change as the situation or others that surround the individuals change. The identity choices are uncertain because it always depends on the situation that the individual is faced with.

Additionally, there are some previous theories that have similarities to this multiple identities management theory, such as the theory proposed by Rocass & Brewer and also the theory composed by Berry. Jones and Hynie basically

synthesized as well modified these existing theories to create their own theory. Basically, they identified the previous theories and developed them to create the new one. They participated in giving four new strategies of identity management. The researcher chooses this theory over the other because this theory suits the case of the object very well. The definition of multiple identity management in this theory can be implemented to discover the main character's ways to solve her identity conflict.

1.7.   Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

The researcher applies textual analysis in this research; therefore, it is counted as a qualitative method. The qualitative method focuses on the narrative report or data that is not expressed numerically (Hancock, et al, 2007: 6). This method concerns with how social phenomena are explained. Interpretation of the phenomena emphasizes to find the underlying meaning behind social life. The researcher explains the problem by systematically analyzing and describing the case that are investigated. The data for this paper taken from some sources. Library research is also applied to gain many references outside the primary sources to support the analysis.

1.7.2 Data Sources

The researcher uses two data sources. Those two data sources are primary and secondary data. The primary data in this research is a memoir novel entitled

Love in a Headscarf (2009). The data in the novel that are going to be analyzed are the words, sentences, and paragraphs. As supporting data sources, the secondary data also takes a significant part of the examination. The secondary data in this research includes books, journals, and articles that relate to *Love in a headscarf* and identity theory.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

Firstly, the researcher does close-reading the memoir novel *Love in a headscarf*. This step aims to gain maximum understanding of the story. This understanding will activate the identifying of intrinsic elements such as theme, plot, setting, character, and characterization. Next is selecting the data that are related to the theory of multiple identities management. Those data associated with the theory of multiple identities management are including the perspectives of each identity. The researcher found equal perspectives in the three identities in some aspects, as well as the management to solve the different perspectives in those aspects. Besides, the researcher collects the data by reading other sources such as books and journals related to the topic to support and strengthen the analysis.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

There are some steps that the researcher does to analyze the data. First, the researcher finds and examines the data connected to the theory of multiple identities management. Secondly, the researcher divides the data based on the perspective and acts. Next is to analyze those perspectives and acts. The

perspective is the norms, values, and opinions of each of the identities, while the act is the main character's action when facing those different identities' perspectives. The perspectives are contained in some aspects. After getting the various perspectives of each of the identities in those categories, it will lead to the character's action on how to manage those differences. The character's actions signify the kind of multiple identities that she chose. After analyzing the character's actions, the way she managed her identities will be revealed. However, not all the aspects will be added in further analysis in chapter III. Only the categories that have detail and complete data of perspectives in each identity and the way to solve multiple identities will be used to represent the management. This decision aims to portray strong arguments and analysis of the problems.

1.8.   Paper Organization

This graduating paper has four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction that consists of background of the study, problem statements, literature review, objective of the study, significance of the study, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. The second chapter is the intrinsic elements of the memoir novel, includes theme, plot, settings, character as well as characterization, and summary. The third chapter shows the analysis of Love in a Headscarf's data through multiple identities management. The last chapter   is   the   conclusion   and   suggestion   of   the   research.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

4.1   Conclusion

Based on the analysis in chapter III, the main character had three different identities, which were South Asian, British, and Muslim. As a result, she experienced some issues or conflicts because she was strongly attached to these three identities. Each of her identities was frequently involved in the same matters, yet they have different perspectives. Shelina found confusion, big pressure, contradiction, sadness, emotional stress, dissatisfaction, and burden because of the various identities that she had.

Because of the several conflicts that Shelina experienced above, the research concludes that the main character used three managements to solve her identities' differences. The first management is reconciliation. In the aspect of love, Shelina reconciled all of her identities. She used the perspectives of each identity. Besides, Shelina also applied reconciliation in the aspect of women's career jobs. However, she just reconciled two identities; British and Muslim.

Then, the second management is Realignment. In the aspect of women's initiative, she just picked and prioritized her Muslim identities over the others. And, the last management that she used is Reflection. In the aspect of women's education, the main character prioritized her South Asian identity when she met her suitors, while she picked British and Muslim identities in general and to the people who underestimated her.

As we can see, Shelina never used Retreat, which meant that she never avoided all her identities simultaneously in a particular aspect or situation. Additionally, Shelina's Muslim identity was always involved in all aspects or categories. This finding indicated that Shelina generally prioritized her Muslim Identities over the others. Islam's values, rules, and perspectives always provided good options for Shelina. In contrast, Shelina's South Asian and British identity limited her in some aspects which made Shelina unable to do what she wanted.

4.2   Suggestion

The researcher fully realizes that this paper is far from what is considered perfect research. This research still needs correction and has to be improved. *Love in a Headscarf* itself is indeed a good memoir. There are many interesting things in the story that should be discussed. Because this research has limitations, the researcher just investigates a few issues in this memoir. The next researchers that want to analyze this object can examine the issues of gender using feminism theory.
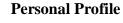
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