

## The Power of Art in Breaking Stereotypes of Muslim Women Living in the West: A Feminist Analysis of Rohina Malik's play *Unveiled*

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تاریخ قبول النشر ۲۰۲۵/۳/۲۱

تاریخ استلام البحث ۲۰۲۵/۲/۱۱

### Abstract

Drama and theatre often serve as mirrors that reflect the values, beliefs, and social issues of the societies in which they are produced. The stage is used to explore and comment on contemporary, historical, social and political issues. Through plays, playwrights can critique and comment on societal norms, inequalities, injustices, and power structures. In response to the conventionally passive and limiting portrayals of Arab and Muslim women, some female playwrights such as Rohina Malik created through their solo performances a resistance of such incorrect generalizations. Rohina Malik, the Pakistani American playwright born in 1971, presents a narrative in her play *Unveiled* (2010) that delves into the lives of five Muslim women immigrants, four residing in the US and one in the UK, highlighting the impact of the September 11th, 2001 terrorist attacks on their lives. The common thread binding these characters is their adoption of the hijab and the shared tradition of serving traditional tea from their native countries during the action of the play. This study explores how Malik's characters confront and overturn common stereotypes, emphasizing the complexity and diversity of their experiences. By focusing on themes such as identity, resilience, and empowerment, the research highlights the significance of narrative in changing public perceptions of Muslim women. The analysis seeks to enrich feminist discourses by demonstrating how the play challenges singular views and encourages a more intricate understanding of the lives of Muslim women in Western societies. Thus, anti-Muslim discrimination in America could be combated with art instead of logical arguments and debate.

**Key words:** Stereotypes, Hate crimes, Survival, Violence, Social reform.

**1.1. Rohina Malik's Biography and Literary Significance:** Rohina Malik, a contemporary American-Pakistani playwright, actress, and educator, dedicates her artistic efforts to address significant issues affecting minority communities. Her work thoroughly examines themes like stereotyping, discrimination, identity crises, resistance, and the intricate connections individuals have with their homeland. Malik's dramas challenge stereotypes by demonstrating their detrimental effects and presenting a counter-narrative that humanizes Arabs and Muslims, portraying them as individuals with universal qualities, strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations (Hassan 26).

**1.2. Stereotypes about Arabs and Muslim Women.** Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad argues that the treatment and status of women in Islam are widely debated and contentious topics. The rights of Muslim women have increasingly become a focal point in Western political discourse, often reinforcing a stereotype of widespread oppression. Since September 11th attacks, Muslim women residing in America have frequently faced marginalization and misrepresentation. Since the September 11th attacks, Muslim women residing in America have frequently faced marginalization and misrepresentation (4). Arab and Muslim women have historically been subjected to negative and sensationalized portrayals of violence, sexuality, and oppression. Women from diverse Muslim backgrounds across the globe face similar misrepresentations. These stereotypes are perpetuated by Western media, including movies and television, which frequently associate perceived gender oppression with Islam. Rochelle Terman argues that public hostility towards Muslims appears to be increasing in the United States. This negative sentiment is largely attributed to the perceived connection between Muslims and terrorism, as well as the media's role in reinforcing this perception among the American public. Researchers have shown that Muslims are frequently linked to political violence and terrorism across various forms of media. Furthermore, these media depictions shape public opinion about Muslim Americans and influence domestic and international policies concerning Muslims (1). Eric Bleich, in contrast, defines Islamophobia as a concept that emerged in the late 1990s, originally developed by political activists to draw attention to rhetoric and actions directed at Islam and Muslims in Western liberal democracies (179).

**1.3: The Inspiration for Rohina Malik's Play *Unveiled*:** The inspiration for *Unveiled* stemmed from Malik's desire to challenge the negative stereotypes and misconceptions about Muslims that spread after the September 11th attacks. In an interview, Malik explained that Muslims were frequently portrayed in the media as either terrorists or oppressed individuals. There was, and still is, a significant lack of representation depicting Muslims as ordinary people with diverse experiences and emotions. Malik highlighted that in the current climate, especially with ongoing events in the Middle East, stereotypes about Muslims and Arabs are pervasive. She believes her work serves to show that the vast majority of Muslims are normal people, a reality often overlooked in the media (Belanger 1). Malik's plays aim to counter these stereotypes; as Muslim characters are often depicted as villains rather than regular individuals. She added that if people took the time to know her community, they would discover it to be highly educated. Many Muslims are doctors, lawyers, and engineers. Others, while less formally educated, work incredibly hard in blue-collar jobs to support their families and communities (Ibid).

Malik **Explains** that she was inspired to write "*Unveiled*" after noticing an increase in hate crimes and hateful rhetoric in 2008. She mentions that the situation has evolved since then. Back then, the hatred wasn't just directed at Muslims but also affected many other communities. Hindus and Sikhs were also targeted, with Sikh men often mistaken for the stereotypical image of a terrorist because of their turbans and beards. Malik is committed to challenging stereotypes through her plays and promoting interfaith dialogue. She says that performing "*Unveiled*" has had a profound impact on her life, leading to many friendships with Jewish and Christian individuals. Since the play's debut in Chicago in 2009, she has been invited to perform it in synagogues, churches, and mosques (Bolton 1).

In her introduction to the play *Unveiled*, Malik recalls the period shortly after September 11th, a time when numerous stories emerged from various communities. These narratives came not only from Muslims but also from Sikhs, Hindus, and anyone whose appearance was perceived as different. The stories varied widely, from the trivial to the deeply disturbing. As a writer, the playwright listens intently to these accounts, mentally filing away the details for future reference. *Unveiled* is a blend of the playwright's creativity and imagination as a dramatist, interwoven with real events. It underscores the importance of studying history to learn its lessons, despite the frequent repetition of past mistakes. The playwright observes that hate crimes share a common origin: they do not start with violence but with dangerous stereotypes and degrading language. When society fails to challenge such behavior, it creates an environment where violence can thrive. The media, including movies, news, and TV, often **show** harmful stereotypes about Muslims, making the task of challenging these narratives seem daunting and sometimes futile (Malik 1).

Megan Stahl argues that growing up as a young brown girl in the racially tense streets of London, the playwright experienced firsthand the transformative power of live theater. This profound impact solidified her belief in the power of art. While media wields significant influence, so does art. Writing plays is the playwright's method of addressing and solving problems. Art, in its countless forms, possesses the potential to address global issues. This conviction drives the playwright to believe in the necessity of developing and protecting artistic expression to foster understanding and solve world problems (74).

Stahl goes on to argue that the dominant narrative surrounding the events of September 11th and the subsequent War on Terror, as created by the United States government and Western media, tended to oversimplify and stereotype the diverse peoples of the Middle East and South Asia. Arab and Muslim women were often depicted as oppressed and without a voice, serving as a justification for American military intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Rohina Malik and other playwrights, like Bina Sharif and Heather Raffo, defied these negative portrayals of Arab Muslim women through their solo performances. They created a diverse range of female characters who defy and counter such stereotypes, offering a more complex understanding of Arab and Muslim women's experiences (2).

In a talk delivered to a local audience at an independent event in Chicago, and after performing an excerpt from her critically acclaimed one-woman play *Unveiled*, Rohina Malik introduced herself as a Chicago-based playwright and a solo performance artist. She added that she enjoys the art of telling stories. Then, she referred to a verse in the Holy Quran in which God swears by the pen (The Qalam): "Nun. By the pen and what they inscribe" (Surat al-Qalam 1). It means that man should never underestimate the power of the pen. Malik argues that as a storyteller, she must do something to correct the misconceptions about Muslim men and women, especially after September 11th. Hate crimes impacted not only Muslims but also other minorities (Malik 1).

**1.4: The Hijab as a Central Symbol:** The thing that connects the stories of the five women is the hijab, a headscarf traditionally worn by Muslim women as a sign of modesty. Although the hijab displays genuine piety and great devotion, it also sparks institutional hatred and abuse from those ignorant about Islamophobia. Malik makes it apparent, both here and in the monologues of her characters, that each woman decided to wear the hijab of her own will; it is never forced upon them. It is a choice reached after much thought and one strongly rooted in deep personal and religious

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beliefs. Malik refutes popular opinions on veiling as a means of female persecution imposed by extreme Islamic traditionalists. Through her monodrama, Malik deconstructs the West's use of the veil as a means of "othering" and instead presents the veil as a physical representation of the connection between mothers and their daughters (Stratford and Deboek 88).

Malik says her play shows that Muslims cannot be categorized into one box. When it comes to covering the hair, one of her characters, a young hip-hop artist, has a very feminist perspective on why she covers her head. Another character in the play refers to the hijab as a symbol of modesty that reflects her faith in God. Even something like the veil has different interpretations and different reasons for why Muslim women wear it. Malik wanted to show that there is too much obsession with what women are wearing or not wearing, which is both disturbing and offensive. Malik adds that when she was writing *Unveiled*, she conducted extensive research on hate crimes. She discovered that hate crimes do not start with violence or weapons; they start with an environment of negative stereotypes about a group and degrading language. If these attitudes go unchallenged, they can lead to hate crimes. This is why the portrayal of her community as terrorists in the media can have serious consequences. Malik believes it is crucial for writers to address and challenge negative stereotypes through art, playwriting, and performance (Belanger 1). In the eyes of Judy Bolton-Fasman, Malik believes the hijab holds significant meaning for Muslim women as it represents various things. For some, it symbolizes modesty, while for others, it is a cultural rather than a religious practice. Malik also notes that some women wear the hijab as a feminist statement, finding empowerment in choosing which parts of their bodies are visible to others (2).

**1.5. The Plot of *Unveiled*:** The play is divided into five parts, depicting the experiences of five Muslim women immigrants—four from the US and one from the UK. The lives of these women are altered after the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001. In a series of monologues, delivered in flashback and present, each woman drinks tea while recounting her experiences. Malik delivers each story as an individual monologue, donning a shawl or jacket and altering the inflection of her voice to transition from one character to another. A unifying element among the characters is their hijab and the traditional tea from their home countries, which they serve during the play. However, what truly bonds them is their deep desire for peaceful and harmonious coexistence with those around them (McCabe 1).

**1.6. Use of Dialogue and Monologue:** The play's structure, featuring powerful monologues and dialogues, gives the characters a platform to express their fears, frustrations, and hopes. These speeches are often poignant and moving, creating moments of intense emotional resonance. Through these dialogues and monologues, Malik effectively communicates the inner lives of her characters, making their experiences vivid and compelling.

**1.7. The Connotation Behind Drinking Tea:** Each of the five women tells her story while drinking tea. In the play, tea serves as a symbol and a recurring theme. It becomes a means to encourage the sharing of stories filled with love, hurt, agony, hatred, and prejudice. Every character offers a tea associated with her place of birth: Shay bil Maramiya, Moroccan mint tea, chocolate chai, Kahwa Saide, and Kashmiri chai. Malik notes that tea is a fundamental aspect of Muslim culture. It is involved in every facet of life for Muslims, including hospitality, cultural traditions, moments of reflection, resilience, celebration, and mourning. Through this simple act, Malik enriches the play's emotional and thematic depth (Bolton 1).

### 1.8. The First Character, Maryam, and Her Effort to Preserve Her Cultural and Religious Identity:

In the first part, titled *Chocolate Chai*, Malik introduces her first female character, Maryam, a dressmaker born and raised in Pakistan who now resides in Chicago with her family. Her monologue is framed as a conversation with a potential client seeking a custom-made wedding dress. Maryam reveals that, after a traumatic incident at a wedding where she had designed the gown, she can no longer bring herself to make wedding dresses. She shares her experience of enduring racially motivated verbal abuse from a stranger shortly after September 11—a story drawn from Malik's own life (Baltimore and Tim 2). Maryam, along with others like her, became acutely aware of a harsh reality. She realized that, to some Americans, she was not considered an American citizen. To these individuals, Maryam was viewed merely as a terrorist who should be expelled from the United States.

**1.9. The Decisive Incident in Maryam's Life:** On her way to her best friend's wedding, Maryam faced insults and was nearly assaulted for wearing a hijab. She chose to wear her favorite grey hijab for the wedding, a cherished gift from her mother when she first began wearing the veil at the age of twenty. After parking her car and placing her children in a double stroller, she walked toward the entrance of the wedding hall. As Maryam passed an American white man named John, who was accompanied by a girl, he remarked, "You're in America, take that shit off your head" (Malik 9). Initially, Maryam ignored him, but when he continued harassing her in front of her children, she felt compelled to respond. She recounts:

MARYAM: And as I started to walk away, I could hear him laughing with his lady friend. Maybe it was his laughter. But I stopped and turned around. In that moment I realized everything I do, my children will do. If I let people treat me like garbage, my kids will grow up and do the same. So I looked that man straight in the eye and said. "Sir, you need to get an education, because you know nothing about my religion."

MAN: Fuck you! You're in America, take that shit off your head.

MARYAM: That's right I'm in America, where I have my constitutional right to practice my religion and dress how I like.

MAN: You Arabs are all terrorists. Go back to Afghanistan!

MARYAM: Afghanis are not Arabs. I'm not an Arab, or an Afghani, or a terrorist. I'm an American, a Pakistani-American.

MAN: If you're American, then dress like one!

MARYAM: I am dressed like one.

MAN: I know all about your kind. You people are insane.

Paradise, right? If you want paradise,  
kill all non Moslems. [sic] (Malik 10)

At that moment, John found it impossible to maintain a peaceful argument with Maryam, whom he viewed merely as an "other," objectified and insisting she was American while confronting his [jsh.univsul.edu.iq](http://jsh.univsul.edu.iq)

ignorance. Enraged, he shouted, "Don't call me stupid, you bitch!" (Malik 10). John's anger escalated, and he began acting violently toward Maryam. Suddenly, "He charges toward her with his fist getting closer and closer to her face." John intended to hit Maryam, but his companion pulled him back just in time, saying that Maryam "is not worth it" (Malik 10).

Maryam stopped making wedding dresses, resulting in lost business. However, Maryam is not concerned about the financial loss; the real issue is the diminished joy she once found in her craft. This situation is challenging for her both professionally and as a mother. Her struggle to reclaim the pleasure in her craft also speaks to the broader theme of parental influence on children's perceptions and actions. Maryam spends the remainder of the wedding at the local police station. However, remembering how her friend recited a Rumi poem to encourage her to dance, she brightens up and decides to make a wedding dress for her client after all. Following a hate-driven incident at a friend's wedding, she had initially lost her passion for designing wedding dresses, but her friend's support helps her regain it. As a Pakistani immigrant and dressmaker in America, Maryam represents the struggle many immigrants face in balancing their heritage with their new environment. Her story provides deep insights into the intersection of personal and professional identity, particularly through her encounters with hate and its impact on her craft.

### **1.10. Malik's Creation of the Romantic Plot of Her Second Character Noor to Evoke the Audience's Sympathy**

While drinking mint tea with a client, the second character, Noor, tells her story of brutal violence and unimaginable loss. As a veiled American girl, Noor endured significant mistreatment at school and often remained silent. Her classmates believed that only white people were true American citizens, viewing those who wore hijabs as outsiders. They followed Noor, calling her "towel head," and even attempted to remove her hijab by force. They nearly succeeded, if not for a white boy named Joe, who intervened, grabbing one of the boys and warning them not to bother Noor again or face a beating. Unlike her tormentors, who rejected Noor as an American with cultural rights, including the right to wear a hijab, Joe accepted her. This understanding likely stemmed from his own devastating and life-altering experience when he converted to Islam.

Noor fell into a deep depression after the tragedy of losing her loving husband and being raped by anti-Muslim gangs. Instead of resisting the criminals who raped her and murdered Joe, she isolated herself in her bedroom. When the State's attorney needed her to testify against the boys who were arrested and charged with murder, Noor initially refused, fearing that revealing the details of the crime would bring shame to her family. It was only her mother's encouragement that motivated Noor to leave her room and testify against the criminals. Her mother told her that there is no shame in the truth, only in silence, which protects murderers. She emphasized that one day Noor would stand before Allah and answer for her silence, as silence can sometimes be a crime. These powerful words convinced Noor to meet the State's attorney the next day and speak up:

**Mama:** "I will give it back one day, but not now. Now, you will leave your bedroom. Now, you will speak with the State's attorney. Now, you will tell the judge everything! There is no shame in the truth" (Malik 17).

Noor attempts to convince a hesitant hate-crime victim to testify by recounting her tragic, violent tale. A key aspect of Noor's character is her encouragement of other hate-crime victims to speak up. By sharing her own story of violence and loss, she validates her own experiences and empowers

others to break their silence. This advocacy for speaking out sends a powerful message of solidarity and support, emphasizing the collective strength found in shared experiences and the importance of giving a voice to the marginalized.

Through Noor, Rohina Malik explores themes of identity, justice, and resilience, creating a character who is both deeply personal and universally relatable. Noor's narrative in *Unveiled* serves as a poignant reminder of the power of personal stories in the fight against hate and the pursuit of justice. Malik, through telling this most inspirational and heartbreaking story, wonderfully uses romantic elements to capture the observer's empathy. As she serves a glass of Moroccan mint tea, Noor, with pride, repeats her mother's sagacious words and tells a client: "Never say, 'Why me?' Say, 'What for?' ... I have found my purpose in life" (Malik 18).

**1.11. The third character Inez, an African-American Muslim and the theme of cultural intersection:** Inez, residing in the deep South, remembers being immediately targeted on 9/11 and feeling ashamed as she was intimidated into removing her hijab to protect her unborn child. Inez, who converts to Islam, explores themes of cultural intersection, the difficulties of conversion, and the experience of wearing the hijab in a society that frequently misunderstands it. In the play, Inez wears a hijab, but unlike the other women, whose Middle Eastern or South Asian backgrounds might make their veiling more anticipated by Western audiences, the stage directions specify that Inez is African-American and has a Southern accent. She explains to her friend that she decided to "revert" to Islam at the age of twenty-one. "You heard me correctly, honey. I said revert. That's right, I'm not a convert, I'm a revert. No, it's not the same thing. I don't care if the Pakistanis say convert, your community's got it wrong. The correct term is 'revert.' Look, the 'prophet' taught us that every newborn baby is born into Islam."

This particular monologue stands out significantly from the others in *Unveiled* and remains unique compared to the other works in this project. It is the only play featuring a character who was neither born in an Arab or South Asian country nor raised in a Muslim family (Stahl 117). Unlike the other women in Malik's play, who are either immigrants or born to immigrant parents, Inez is the sole character with American roots extending back several generations. Additionally, she is an African-American woman from the South, which, as her grandmother told her early on, means she was born with "two strikes against her." In one of the many humorous moments, Inez remembers, "My grandma taught me to be tough as nails. I can still hear her saying, 'Inez, you need to be strong, because you've already got two strikes against you—you're brown and you're female.' When I turned twenty-one and told her I had reverted to Islam, she just rolled her eyes and said, 'Strike three.'" (Malik 17)

Inze's character exemplifies the inner strength and determination needed to uphold one's beliefs and identity amidst societal pressures. Through her narrative, Malik emphasizes the beauty of embracing one's faith while navigating the complexities of cultural and religious identity in modern America. After deciding to wear the hijab, Inze became certain that being a Muslim and wearing the veil would be her most significant challenge as an American citizen. Stahl argues that "By making Inez American, Malik gives herself a homegrown mouthpiece through which she can explicitly speak to ongoing issues of racism in her country" (118).

**1.12. Shabana:** While speaking to a journalist for an unnamed outlet, Shabana, a British hip-hop artist from West London and the daughter of South Asian immigrants, discusses how the media misrepresents and belittles Islamic culture. Her mother advises her against wearing the hijab, a visible

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symbol of her faith, which leads to arguments at home. Shabana argues that she wears the hijab for God and herself. She makes a powerful comparison to a nun's habit, raising the question of who is permitted to wear a veil and for which deity.

**SHABANA:** No way, I'm not taking it off. This is exactly why I didn't tell you—I knew you wouldn't support me.

**MOTHER:** Support you? I will kill you! It's dangerous! The world has changed, Shabana. It is not safe.

**SHABANA:** My hijab is between me and God. Sorry, Mum, but it's got nothing to do with you. (Malik 20).

For Shabana, the hijab is a symbol of defiance against her mother, who fears it could impact her chances of marriage. However, it also serves as a source of empowerment for her.

**I represent Islam—respect it.**

**I wear hijab—don't neglect it.**

**You can call me oppressed,**

**But I won't be undressed.**

**I'm not your Bollywood erotic!**

**Haram girl exotic? Hell no!** (Malik 20).

The misunderstanding in Shabana's case comes from her own family members in London. Wearing the hijab can be controversial, even within one's own family. She tells her mother: "Focus on my intellect, not my appearance," Shabana asserts. "This is my expression of feminism" (Malik 20).

Shabana's story underscores the conflict between her commitment to her faith and the external pressures to adopt a more secular or Western way of life. Her character exemplifies resilience and strength; despite encountering discrimination and hostility, she steadfastly upholds her beliefs and practices. Her strength lies not only in enduring these challenges but also in articulating her experiences and proudly asserting her identity. This resilience is a common trait among all the women in *Unveiled*, but Shabana's narrative may showcase unique aspects of enduring specific adversities. Shabana's character offers insight into the everyday realities of Islamophobia, highlighting the prejudices and misconceptions faced by Muslim women, especially those who wear the hijab. Through her story, the play addresses broader social issues such as stereotyping, discrimination, and the impact of global events on individuals' lives.

**1.11. Layla:** The fifth and final section of *Unveiled* is titled " *Shay bil Maramiya* ". This part centers on Layla, an American citizen of Arab descent who wears a veil. Her identity as a U.S. citizen became particularly vulnerable following the 9/11 attacks. Layla remembers praying to Allah on September 11:

**The first plane had hit. I watched in silence, and I close my eyes, and my feet are touching Holy Land. I am circling Kaba seven times, with my hands raised up to the heavens. Please, Allah, make it be mistake. Make it be accident. The second plane hits. It not accident** (Malik 29).

Layla shares the story of her brother, a medical professional, who died during 9/11 while trying to help people escape the collapsing towers. She recounts being spat on by a hostile protester outside her children's school, which is connected to a mosque in a Chicago suburb. The mob believes that

Layla and others like her, despite being American, should be expelled from the USA—her home—and forced to return to their countries of origin. The heartbreaking and terrible behavior of some of Layla’s fellow Americans did not shake her beliefs. It did not make her doubt that she is an American citizen, with the same rights as everyone else. This is likely why Layla did not hesitate to assist her friend, Imm Asad, against a young white man from the mob who began hitting Imm Asad when she tried to enter the mosque. Layla approached the young man and, instead of clashing with him, spoke to him gently. She reminded him that they are all Americans sharing one home and that they all feel the same anger over the killing of innocent people in the attack. Gazing into the audience, Layla stopped a police officer from arresting the protester and instead asked them to "remove the veil from your heart." She ignored his misconduct and requested that he forget about the veil on her head and instead try to remove the veil over his heart:

**Is this the solution? Is this helping the people in New York? Do not call me Terrorist. I am not Terrorist! I know you are angry. I am angry too! My brother, he lives in New York. I don't know if he is alive or dead! (She wipes her face.) Don't spit at me! Listen to me! Murder is haram; it is forbidden. This is not Islam. ... Remove the veil from your heart. You see, I wear veil on my head, but my heart is not covered. I can see the signs of God; they are everywhere. Remove the veil from your heart, and you will realize that we are one (Malik 29).**

The effort and tolerance Layla demonstrates by stopping the officer from arresting the young man have a positive effect on him. When she says, **“Do not arrest him. This hatred and anger must end here. Let him go”** (Malik 29), the young man's eyes look different: **“The boy’s eyes changed. They looked human”** (Malik 29). Although it is true that the young man’s eyes appear changed, this is not the end. What Layla aspires to is unveiling the young man’s heart: **“I prayed to Allah for that boy. I prayed to Allah to make his heart unveiled”** (Malik 29).

Layla ultimately shows the boy the kindness he could not initially extend to her. By telling the officer not to arrest him, she seeks to break the cycle of violence and punishment. Thus, we note that Malik employs the personal stories of five Muslim women to establish an emotional connection with the audience. By focusing on individual experiences, she brings to life complex issues such as Islamophobia, discrimination. McCabe Bret argues:

**Malik is chameleon-like enough to give each woman different accents and mannerisms, particularly the flamboyant Shabana, the British rapper, whose streetwise slang and underclass swagger make this young Muslim woman's life feel as familiar as that of any young hip-hop artist in a music magazine. It's an approach that collapses the chasm separating the proverbial 'us' and 'them,' which can elicit potent results.**

In an interview with the *San Francisco Chronicle*, Malik recounts how, after one of her shows, a young man emotionally acknowledged his previous ignorance about Islam. He confesses that, before seeing *Unveiled*, he mistakenly believed the hijab symbolized a celebration of the September 11 attacks on the United States:

**You never know who God will put in those seats. One night, a young man was still sitting in the theater, even after the post-show discussion. He had been crying and said he needed to talk to me privately. He was going to college in a small town in Ohio and was on a trip with his schoolmates. He said that he hated Muslims and thought that we wore the veil to celebrate 9/11. At this point, the tears were streaming down his face. And he apologized. That changed something inside me. It changed me as an artist. I hear from people all the time that they**

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**considered themselves open-minded but realized, watching my show, that they did hold certain stereotypes of Muslim women.** (Jones 1)

Following President Trump's election, Malik teamed up with two other women—a Jewish storyteller and a Christian theater artist—to create a new play titled *Keeping Faith: Three Sisters of Story*. Malik explains that the concept is simple: each woman shares three stories from her own faith tradition, and then they unite to tell one collective story. Malik emphasizes that the three women, including herself, are sisters who have much in common, beginning with their Abrahamic faiths, as they come from different rivers that flow into the same ocean (Michelson 1).

### Conclusion

Rohina Malik's work contributes to anti-racist theater by authentically portraying the Muslim-American experience. She uses various themes and techniques to broaden our cultural understanding. For instance, in *Unveiled*, Malik directly addresses hate crimes and racism faced by Pakistani-Indian-American women in a post-9/11 world. She presents the stories and inner thoughts of five Muslim women, revealing the horrific traumas they have endured due to Islamophobia. Malik aims to "unveil" these women, showcasing their humanity. Rohina Malik's *Unveiled* employs feminist theory to shed light on the intricate realities faced by Muslim women in the West. The play deconstructs stereotypes, highlights intersectional identities, and emphasizes themes of resistance and empowerment, presenting a nuanced depiction of its characters. It critiques patriarchal norms and reveals the widespread effects of Islamophobia, enriching the understanding of Muslim women's experiences. Through its feminist perspective, *Unveiled* not only narrates the characters' stories but also promotes broader social change and cultural awareness. Malik proves her power as a storyteller in a charming performance mixed with humor. She exposes the issues of racial prejudice, bigotry, and negative stereotyping that continue to generate aggression nationwide. Malik has toured *Unveiled* throughout the country. At the end of the night, Malik conveyed that the power of mercy, love, and forgiveness surpasses that of war, hate, and violence. We must hold onto this belief. *Unveiled* stands as a testament to the playwright's belief in the transformative power of art, highlighting its ability to challenge misconceptions, foster dialogue, and advocate for positive change in society. One of Malik's characters pleads with an attacker to 'remove the veil from his heart,' describing how his unyielding fear gives his eyes the appearance of 'a wild animal.' Through her monologues, Malik invites us to do the same, skillfully achieving this with a blend of humor, grace, and insight. "As one of the play's main characters says to an attacker, "Remove the veil from your heart," the prejudiced audience should remove the veil from their hearts, and this is the moral lesson of the play.

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ھىزى ئەدەب لە شكاندى كلىشەى ژنانى موسلمان كه له رۆژئاوا دەژين: شىكردنەوہىەكى فېمىنىستى لە

شانۆگەرى رۆھىنا مەلىك "حىجاب"

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پوختە:

دراما و شانۆ زۆر جار وەك ئاوینە كار دەكەن كه رەنگدانەوہى بەھا و باوہر و كىشە كۆمەلایەتیهكانى ئەو كۆمەلگایانە دەبن كه تىبدا دروستكراون. ئەم قۇناغە بۆ لىكۆلینەوہ و لىدون لەسەر بابەتە ھاوچەرخەكان، مېژووى، كۆمەلایەتى و سیاسىەكان بەكار دەھىنریت. لە پىگەى شانۆنامەكانەوہ، شانۆنووسان دەتوانن رەخنە بگرن و باسى نۆرمە كۆمەلایەتیهكان، نایەكسانى و نادادپەرەوہى و دىنامىكى دەسەلات بكەن. لە وەلامى نمايشە نادىار و سنووردارەكانى ژنانى عەرەب و موسلمان، ھەندىك لە شانۆنامەنووسانى ئافرەت وەك رۆھىنا مەلىك نمايشى تاكیان دروستكردوہ كه بەرەنگارى ئەم گشتاندنە نادروستانە دەبیت. رۆھىنا مەلىك، شانۆنووسى ئەمىرىكى پاكستانى لەداىكبوى سالى ۱۹۷۱، لە شانۆنامەكەيدا چىرۆكىك دەگىرپتەوہ كه باس لە ژيانى پىنج ئافرەتى كۆچەرى موسلمان دەكات كه چوارىيان لە ئەمىرىكا دەژين و يەكپىكیان لە بەرىتانىا و جەخت لەسەر كارىگەرىبەكانى ھىرشە تىرۆرىستىبەكانى ۱۱ى سىپتەمبەرى ۲۰۰۱ لەسەر ژيانىيان دەكات. ئەو توخمە ھاوہەشىە كه ئەم كارەكتەرەنە بەیەكەوہ دەبەستىتەوہ برىتیبە لە گرتنەبەرى حىجاب و دابونەرىتى ھاوہەشىە خزمەتكردى دابونەرىت. شانۆگەرىبەكە چاى

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ولاتانی خویمان نیشان دهدات به دریژایی چالاکیه کانی. ئەم توژیڤینه وهیه لیکۆلینه وه له چۆنیه تی رووبه رووبوونه وهی کاره کته ره کانی مالیک ده کات و کلپشه ی باو تیک ده دەن، تیشک ده خاته سه ر ئالۆزی و هه مه جوړی ئەزموونه کانیان. توژیڤینه وه که به لیکۆلینه وه له بابته کانی وه ک ناسنامه، خوڤاڤاڤی و تواناسازی، جه خت له سه ر گرنگی گپراڤه وهی چیرۆک ده کاته وه له گوڤرینی تیڤروانیی گشتی بۆ ژنانی موسلمان. ئامانجی شیکردنه وه که به هیزکردنی گفتوگوئی فیمینستی له ږنگه ی روونکردنه وهی ئەوهی که چۆن شانۆگه ریبه که به ره نگاری بۆچوونه سادەکان ده بیته وه و تیگه یشتنیکی وردتر له ژبانی ژنانی موسلمان له کۆمه لگاکانی رۆژئاوا به رز ده کاته وه. که واته، هونه ر ده توانیت وه ک ئامراژیک بیت بۆ به ره نگار بوونه وهی جیاکاری دژی موسلمانان له ئەمریکا، له جیاتی ئەوهی ته نها پشت به مشتومری لۆژیکی و مشتومر بیه ستیت.

ده ستها وه سه ره کیه کان: کلپشه، تاوانی رق، مانه وه و توندوتیژی، چاکسازی کۆمه لایه تی.

## قوة الادب في كسر الصور النمطية للمرأة المسلمة التي تعيش في الغرب: تحليل نسوي لمسرحية روهينا مالك "المكشوفة"

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### ملخص

غالبًا ما تعمل الدراما والمسرح كمرآة تعكس القيم والمعتقدات والقضايا الاجتماعية للمجتمعات التي يتم إنتاجها فيها. يستخدم المسرح لاستكشاف والتعليق على القضايا المعاصرة والتاريخية والاجتماعية والسياسية. من خلال المسرحيات، يمكن للكاتب المسرحيين انتقاد والتعليق على المعايير المجتمعية وعدم المساواة والظلم وهياكل السلطة. ردًا على التصوير السلبي والمحدود تقليديًا للمرأة العربية والمسلمة، خلقت بعض الكاتبات المسرحيات مثل روهينا مالك من خلال أدائهن الفردي مقاومة لمثل هذه التعميمات غير الصحيحة. تقدم روهينا مالك، الكاتبة المسرحية الأمريكية الباكستانية المولودة عام ١٩٧١، سردًا في مسرحيتها (2010) *Unveiled* التي تتعمق في حياة خمس نساء مسلمات مهاجرات، أربع منهن مقيمات في الولايات المتحدة وواحدة في المملكة المتحدة، مسلطًا الضوء على تأثير هجمات ١١ سبتمبر ٢٠٠١ الإرهابية على حياتهن. الخيط المشترك الذي يربط بين هذه الشخصيات هو تبنيهن للحجاب والتقاليد المشتركة لتقديم الشاي التقليدي من بلدانهن الأصلية أثناء أحداث المسرحية. تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيف تواجه شخصيات مالك الصور النمطية الشائعة وتقلبها، مع التأكيد على تعقيد وتنوع تجاربهن. من خلال التركيز على موضوعات مثل الهوية والمرونة والتمكين، يسلط البحث الضوء على أهمية السرد في تغيير التصورات العامة للمرأة المسلمة. يسعى التحليل إلى إثراء الخطابات النسوية من خلال إظهار كيف تتحدى المسرحية وجهات نظر فردية وتشجع على فهم أكثر تعقيدًا لحياة النساء المسلمات في المجتمعات الغربية. وبالتالي، يمكن مكافحة التمييز ضد المسلمين في أمريكا بالفن بدلاً من الحجج المنطقية والنقاش.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصور النمطية، جرائم الكراهية، البقاء، العنف، الإصلاح الاجتماعي