From Humayun Khan to Kamala Khan: Ambivalence Towards The Muslim Super Hero

In August 2013, the newest edition of *Ms. Marvel* by G. Willow Wilson was released. The edition of this comic was revolutionary because it introduced Kamala Khan, a Muslim, Pakistani, first generation American woman, as the new Ms. Marvel. Kamala was the first minority Ms. Marvel, and she not only transformed the Marvel universe, but transformed the perception of Muslim-Americans in the 21st century. Kamala has such a transformative effect on the perception of Muslim-Americans because she provides an intimate insight into her struggle of trying to fit into American society as a Muslim-American.

This paper utilizes a deconstructive and post-colonial framework to analyze Kamala’s difficulties of trying to fit into a post 9/11 society as a Muslim-American. This analysis reveals how nationalism fuels the construction of exclusive imagined communities that depict Muslim-Americans as enemies to American safety. By revealing the effects of these systems on Kamala’s life through the stereotypes and oppression that she receives and internalizes, the comic intimately depicts Kamala’s trauma as a Muslim-American in a post 9/11 society and the ambivalence society displays towards all Muslim-Americans. In addition to studying the effects of nationalism and imagined communities on Kamala, this paper will also examine how Kamala uses the trauma she experiences to foster social justice through a restorative justice framework.

By analyzing restorative justice in *Ms. Marvel*, this paper examines how exploring the trauma of Muslim-Americans can be used to assist Muslim-Americans in identifying their oppression in a constructive and liberating way that deconstructs Islamophobia. The comic also aids non Muslim-Americans in identifying how they contribute towards Islamophobic oppression. In today’s Islamophobic society, learning how to create peace and compromise from the viewpoint of the oppressor and oppressed is invaluable information, and *Ms. Marvel* teaches society how to do this.