

Cultural Representations of Muslim Women in Contemporary Arab Anglophone Poetry:

A Study of Nimah Nawwab's *The Unfurling*

Hessa A. Alghadeer

Department of English Language and Literature- College of Arts
Princess Nourah Bint Abdulrahman University
Riyadh- Saudi Arabia

Abstract

Against the backdrop of an extended history of misrepresentations of Muslim women that interrelate with Islam in a complex manner, this paper seeks to investigate diversity of contemporary poetic Arab Anglophone texts. Situating her work within a specific cultural context, the paper specifically focuses on the poetry of Saudi Anglophone poet Nimah Ismail Nawwab as a compelling case study in this field. It investigates three major archetypes among Nawwab's female Muslim characters: Muslim women as agents of social change, Muslim women behind the veil, and Muslim women as agents of peace and reconciliation. In examining the dominant prototypes in Nawwab's poetry, the paper seeks to highlight the poet's endeavor to introduce authentic cultural portrayals of Muslim women to dismantle the prevalent representations of Muslim women living in the Arab/Muslim world.

Keywords: Arab Anglophone poetry, cultural representations, , Middle East, Muslim women Orientalism, public space.