مجلة بحوث
كلية الآداب

البحث (٤٤)

From Diaspora to Hybridity: the in-Betweenness of Arab-Americans Pre and Post 9/11 Displacement in Laila Halaby's West of the Jordan (2003) and Once in a Promised (2007)

By

Sherine A. Kader

Under the Superviesion of

Supervised By

Prof. Mohammed M. Enani
Professor of English Literature
Dean of Faculty of Arts
Menoufiya University

Dr. Hoda Khallaf
Lecturerof English Literature,
Department of English, Faculty of
Arts , Menoufiya University

السنة ٢٧ العدد (١٠٦) يوليو ٢٠١٦م

http : // Art.menofia . edu. eg *** E- mail: rifa2012@ Gmail.com

From Diaspora to Hybridity: The In-Betweenness of Arab-Americans Pre and Post 9/11

Displacement in Laila Halaby's West of the Jordan (2003) and Once in a Promised Land (2007)

By
Sherine A. Kader
Under the Supervision of

Prof. Osama A. F. Madany
Professor of English Literature,
Dean of Faculty of Arts
Menoufia University

Dr. Hoda Khallaf
Lecturer of English Literature,
Department of English,
Faculty of Arts, Menoufia University

Chapter 1

From Diaspora to Hybridity: The In-Betweenness of Arab-Americans Pre and Post 9/11

> "It's tough to name a group when most people aren't aware the group exists...that's why...I coined this phrase for our community: The Most Invisible of the Invisibles."
>
> -Joanna Kadi, Food for Our Grandmothers (xix)

Kadi indicates that "ethnically, Arab-Americans in the US are viewed as the most invisible of the invisibles". To the mainstream US, Arab-Americans are "Not black. Not White. Never quite fitting in. Always on the edge" (Food for Our Grandmothers xix). As explained by Lisa Suhair Majaj "Their status wavers between "people of color" and "honorary whiteness" ("Arab-American Ethnicity" 332). A status which burdens this group; as explained by Helen Samhan "the current federal "white" categorization of Arab-Americans from the Middle East and North Africa within the "white 'majority'

context" does not resolve confusions regarding their racial status" ("Not Quite White" 219).

Naber refers to the fact that up until the attacks of September 11, several Arab-American writers used the trope "invisibility" to refer to the place of Arab-Americans within dominant US discourse on race and ethnicity. According to her, "the common theme in this literature was that while most government definitions classify Arab- Americans as "white," popular US discourse tends to represent "Arabs" as different from and inferior to whites" ("Ambiguous Insiders" 53). In this respect, Zaatari admits:

> Racialization and discrimination may be most reflected in our marginalization, as we become the margins of the margins, in our invisibility as a subject, and in our denial a space of self-determination. Silencing comes from a neocolonial, imperial, and paternal attitude on behalf of professors, students, and community as well as activists. Arabs and Arab-Americans and Muslims and Muslim-Americans are rarely seen as fully-fledged human beings by the dominant society and by many in progressive circles. We, thus, have no right to even claim victimization, discrimination, as well as love and care. We cannot expect things like freedom of speech to include our speech but only to protect the speech of our offenders. ("In the Belly of the Beast" 61)

Recognizably, in a race-conscious US culture, Arabs are often identified and treated as "people of color," although that they are classified as "White" and some of their struggle with the hegemonic culture that has devalued them is similar to the experiences of other minorities. Madany remarks: "Arab-Americans have been vexed and perplexed by notions of "blackness," "whiteness," and "in-betweeness" that have often seen them both "collide and coalesce with the American hegemonic society" ("Collision or Coalition"1). Even Arabness

is a problematic concept to them. How this community engages with this "borderless Arabness both negotiates and recreates the Arab-American experience within the privileges and inequalities of the American cultural and racial hierarchy" (Madany 1).

Unlike Zaatari, Madany is optimistic about the situation of Arab-Americans as both white and a minority. Zaatari accuses the US administration of attempting "to create a safe environment for our oppressors, by eliminating us" ("In the Belly of the Beast" 61-62). She asserts that the discourse that dominates the larger community cannot escape the history of images and representations that are shaped by the Orientalist and colonialist relations. Arab-American literature represents the subjugated knowledge of the marginal. Foucault states that the concept subjugated knowledge refers to two things:

> One is the historical contents that have been buried and disguised in a functionalist coherence or formal systematization. These historical contents enable us to rediscover the rupture effects of conflict and struggle that the order imposed by functionalist or systematizing is designed to mask. The other thing, as I believe, that by subjugated knowledges one should understand a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naïve knowledge located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity. (Power/Knowledge 82)

Foucault believes that "through the re-emergence and reappearance of these low-ranking knowledges, these unqualified, even directly disqualified knowledges, that criticism performs its work" (82). Through the emergence of different discourses, these subjugated knowledges have been given the opportunity to unravel the fragile bedrock of existence referring to old, stable, and functionalist systems. Postcolonial critics, such as Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak, among others, focus mainly on the term discourse in their study of postcolonialism because discourse does not simply reflect social

meanings and relations, but rather constitutes them. Hassan asserts that "discourse, in postcolonial theory, interacts with knowledge to constitute and reinforce" (Marginal Identities 3). Postcolonial theories are concerned mainly with power relations and the way these relations shape the production of utterances and texts.

In this regard, Foucault contrasts two major systems of approach to the analysis of power:

> In the first place, there is the old system as found in the philosophies of the nineteenth century. The conception of power as an original right that is given up in the establishment of sovereignty, and the contact, as matrix of political power, provide its points of articulation. A power so constituted risks becoming oppression whenever it over-extends itself, whenever- that is –it goes beyond the terms of the contract. Thus we have contract-power with oppression at its limit, or rather as the transgression of this limit. In Contrast, the other system of approach no longer tries to analyze political power according to the schema of contract-oppression, but in accordance with that of war-repression, and at this point, repression no longer occupies the place that oppression occupies in relation to the contract, that is, it is not abuse, but is, on the contrary, the mere effect and continuation of a relation of domination. (Power/Knowledge 91-92)

The relationship between the US on one hand and the Arabs/Arab-Americans on the other applies to Foucault's second system of power. In this sense, it is a relationship of war-repression in which the US represents domination, force and hegemony. According to Foucault, the pertinent oppositions in this schema of domination-repression are not between the legitimate and illegitimate, as in the first schema of contract-oppression, but between struggle and submission (Power/Knowledge 91-92). Foucault remarks that power

relations are not repressive but productive. He asserts that every power relation is accompanied by points of resistance. He also, emphasizes that where there is power there is resistance; domination and resistance are inseparable.

Accordingly, Hassan concludes "in this sense, the marginal and the dominant are necessarily defined in relation to each other. This means that Western and Third World cultures can no longer be treated separately. In other words, center and periphery become the backdrop of each other" (Marginal Identities 4). Some critics in postcolonial theory, such as Hall and Bhabha, believe that marginal and subordinated people can represent themselves and can be visible. Bhabha as well states that marginal people can resist authority and are able to create new identities in the sphere of cultural hybridity (Location of Culture, 207). On the other hand, other critics such as Said and Spivak believe that the problem of representing marginal and subordinated people is representational and that those people are not able to represent themselves. Said thinks that "the representation of the marginal, in this case the Orient, is not truthful" (Orientalism 22). Spivak, like Said, believes that "the subaltern cannot speak because the representation of the subaltern and disempowered is embedded within the dominant discourse" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 285).

The terror attacks of September 11, 2001 have led to radical changes in the American society: new laws, governmental agencies, and new ways of seeing the world. Above all, a war on terror is being waged around the world. Naber explains that "in the US, where difference is primarily organized according to racial/ethnic categories, Arab ethnicity has become increasingly politicized with the beginning of the war on terror as Arabs and Americans of Arab descent have become victims of institutional and popular racial profiling and violence" ("Ambiguous Insiders" 53).

Similarly, Fadda-Conrey explains that "such bias against Arabs and Muslims has a long history and has been particularly visible and blatant in US public, political, and legal venues since

the turn of the twenty-first century starting with 9/11 and the ensuing US-led wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the abominable war on terror" (Contemporary Arab-American Literature 1). Arab Americans have found themselves in a precarious position in the US and they were branded as the racial, religious, political and national "Other" of a hegemonic US national identity that has increasingly become more uniform and insular in nature. Arab-Americans suffered this precariousness long before 9/11 since their first immigration to the US in the nineteenth century. Fadda-Conrey explains:

> For one, the integration of European colonialist and Orientalist paradigms into the US's neo-imperialist agenda beginning around the mid-twentieth century has had major repercussions on Arabs within the Arab world as well as in the Diaspora. In this period, the direct and indirect role of the US in major Middle East crises and ensuing wars and conflicts has had particular impact on immigration patterns, pushing millions of Arabs and Muslims into various conditions of displacement, exile, and dispossession. These crises include the rise of the Israeli State in 1984, the Arab-Israeli Wars of 1967 and 1973, the 1970s Arab oil embargo, the Lebanese Civil war from 1975 to 1990 and its aftermath, 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the first Gulf war early 1990s, as well as the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively. (2)

In this respect, Hatem states that "in 1972, the National Association for Arab Americans (NAAA) emerged as a political lobbying group, the American-Arab Anti Discrimination Committee (ADC) followed in 1980 to fight against the prevalent public defamation of Arab-Americans in the US, and finally, the Arab- American Institute was established in 1985 to increase Arab-American participation in electoral politics" ("The Political and Cultural Representations" 42). This reflected improved Arab-American grassroots and signaled a new political

balance between the national with the international interests and concerns (43). However, as Hatem remarks, September 11 contributed to the reversal of the process of political integration that sought to give greater emphasis to the national agendas of the community.

Consequently, the Israeli government was successful in presenting the second Palestinian intifada as a continuation of the terror that was inflicted on the US in 2001:

> The result was the negative reinforcement of the connection between Arabs, their interest in Palestinian rights, and terrorism. Next, some conservative American Jewish groups began a coordinated attack on the alliance between Arab and African-Americans, which Arab- Americans had sought to strengthen as a means of addressing the political attacks on their civil rights after 9/11. (Hatem 43)

Accordingly, Fadda-Conrey concludes that "the changing geopolitical landscapes resulting from such crises have given rise to negative conceptualizations of Arab-Americans in the US, ones that deeply entrenched in the binary logics of Orientalist discourse" (Contemporary Arab-American Literature 2). Eventually, This paved the way to the broad violation of the civil and citizenship rights of Arab-Americans and American-Muslims, the massive random imprisonment of Arab-Americans and American- Muslims, and their maltreatment in captivity provided other graphic examples of the increasing violation of the civil rights of these groups adding a dimension to the concept of a "community under attack".

The passing of the Patriot Act[1] immediately after the 9/11 attacks worsened the situation:

> The ethnic diversity of Arab-Americans and American-Muslims was not appreciated by those who committed hate crimes against members of the communities in the U.S. leading to the indiscriminant assaults on Muslims, Christians, and even a Sikh who was confused for a Muslim because he wore a turban. Next, private and governmental U.S. groups began a sustained attack on the major institutions of Arab-American communities, including their schools, charitable organizations, and mosques, as breeding grounds for terrorism and terrorists. ("The Political and Cultural Representations"38)

The US Patriot Act has given the US government immense leeway to strangle civil liberties of American citizens in its fight against terrorism. On the other hand, Hatem refers to the influx of the new Muslim immigrants who are mostly fundamentalists, and who clashed with secular Muslims already living in the US.

[1]. Observe the justifications that "the department of justice provided the American people with on their official page. The Patriot Act was passed immediately after the 9/11 attacks unanimously by the Senate 98-1 and 357-66 in the house, with the support of members from across the political spectrum. The government's success in preventing another catastrophic attack on the American homeland since September 11,2001, would have been much more difficult, if not possible, without the USA Patriot Act. The Authorities, Congress provided have substantially enhanced our ability to prevent, investigate, and prosecute acts of terror". Item Number 4 in the Act states that "the Patriot Act increased the penalties for those who commit terrorist crimes. Americans as threatened as much by the terrorist who pays for a bomb as by the one who pushes the button. That's why the Patriot Act imposed tough new penalties on those who commit and support terrorist operations, both at home and abroad. In particular the Act eliminates the statutes of limitations for certain terrorism crimes and lengthens them for other terrorist crimes" (The USA Patriot Act: Preserving Life and liberty, www.justice.gov/archive/ll/highlights.htm 16/4/2015 @ 9:30 p.m. n. pag.)

This clash resulted in power struggles between the old secular voices and the new religious ones and between the conservative and liberal voices within the Muslim or Christian communities ("The Political and Cultural Representations" 44).

Within the larger American-Muslim community, there were also power struggles between the representatives of African-American Islam who identified themselves as the indigenous Muslims versus immigrant Muslims from the Middle East and South Asia (India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh). Hatem adds:

> Some African-American Muslims go as far as describing these immigrant Muslims as "white" in their privileged socio-economic status and definition of community and political agendas. They view immigrant co-religionists as socially backward and unfair to women. They also accuse them of ignoring African-American Islamic history and not acknowledging the contributions made by African-American Muslims to the religion. (44)

She attributes the crack in the Muslims' unity in America to religion and nationality/national origin that have contributed to the fragmentation of Arabs and Muslims as transnational groups within the US.

Surprisingly, Arab-Americans who formed a minority group in the past, all of a sudden, came under the spotlight after 9/11. The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 were a turning point for Americans, including those of Middle Eastern origin. Americans have become more interested in understanding the Arab world. However, the desire to understand has been colored by preconceived ideas, as Al Maleh argues:

> The irony of ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE is that it did not gain attention or attain recognition until the world woke up one day to the horror of the infamous 9/11 and asked itself who those Arabs were. The additional irony is that Anglophone Arab writers are perhaps the furthest away

> from paradigmatic Arabs, themselves being the progeny of cultural espousal, hybridity, and diasporic experience. It simply so happened that their works came in handy in recent years, as they seemed to meet the needs of a readership eager to learn about Arab culture and intellectual make-up in a lan a language that was the lingua franca of the modern age. (Arab Voices in Diaspora 1)

She notes "It is a striking fact that bookstores in Western cities and towns began to display on their shelves arrays of Anglophone Arab works placed next to Afghani, Pakistani, and Iranian ones. It did not seem to matter who was who, so long as the names and titles fed the euphoria of luring the reader to a better comprehension of the "terrorist Other" (Al Maleh 2).

The more significant and noticeable mark of increasing interest in Anglophone Arab literature was not only in the bookstores but in the growing number of universities world-wide that began to add to its curricula courses which engaged students in the study of the Arab /Muslim mind and Islamic theology, and found in its writers a convenient window on Arab thought and culture. "Arabs at last became "visible": a pity this visibility was filtered through 'terror' rather than through the catharsis of Aristotlian "pity and fear"' (Al Maleh 2).

Similarly, Darraj points to the increased interest in Arab-American literature. "Nevertheless, we need to be careful; it is not genuine interest. Editors want recycled stories about women and girls being liberated from wearing the veil. Still, more and more Arab-American literature is being published-and more is being reviewed in prestigious publications like the New York Times book review. If the work of an Arab-American writer is good it will eventually find a publisher" ("Third World, Third Wave Feminism(s)" 3). Prior to September 11, the prevailing stereotype of Arab-Americans was somewhat negative but not particularly well articulated. "Arab American fiction constantly engages with issues of anti-Arab racism and foregrounds social

problems facing Arab American communities such as the concern of parents over the future of their (Americanized) children as the works of Laila Halaby, Diana Abu-Jaber, Susan Muaddi Darraj and Randa Jarrar show" (Darraj 3).

Arab-American novelists have represented post-9/11 anti-Arab racism and ensuing violence. Moreover, according to Fadda-Conrey, "the versatility of genres currently emanating from the Arab-American scene attest to such an evolution of talents, which are not only limited to fiction, poetry, and essays, but extend, for instance, to drama, comic strips, stand-up comedy, and rap, thus providing different outlets to the diversity of Arab-American voices" (Racially White 193). Majaj notes, "As we [Arab-Americans] near century's end, we need to take a hard look not only at who we are, but at who we hope to become" ("New Directions" 71).

Since the dramatic and terrifying events of September 11, Arab-Americans have become subject to discrimination, negative stereotyping, and hostility in the United States (Abdelrazek, "Scheherazad's Legacy" 140). Actually, this stereotyping has been looming over Arab-Americans since they first stepped into the US, their picture was frozen into history due to the striking fact that the Western world views all Arabs as terrorists. Arab women specifically suffer from this frozen image of being Scheherazad-the veiled one- who is being sexually manipulated and oppressed by their men. "The images of Arab women in American culture include those of belly dancers, harem girls, or submissive women clad in black from head to toe; they have no identities whatsoever. And they're always mute" (Shaheen, "Hollywood targets Arab" 6). Abdelrazik argues:

> Arab women are perceived as either the "exotic", "the sexually loose", or the "meek" and oppressed creature coming from the un/underdeveloped world. The Arab and Arab-American women are caught between the globalized image of femininity or female beauty as a commodity in the West, and the Arab fundamental notion of femininity as

"protected" by men and hidden behind the veil ("Scheherazade's Legacy" 141)

She relates her own experience when dealing with Americans as an Arab woman living in the US:

> One can see how people become shocked to learn that I am an Arab woman yet educated with a graduate degree. I am a mother of three children, and I am the only wife of an Arab man who is not a terrorist and who loves and respects me. More importantly, these people are astounded to know that I am veiled yet call myself a feminist, as if the word "feminist" and "veil" were mutually exclusive. (141)

Naber notes that the attacks against the Pentagon and the World Trade Center consolidated the conflation of the categories "Arab," "Middle Easter," and "Muslim", and the notion of an "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" enemy of the nation ("Arab American and US Racial Formations" 38). Right-wing, neo-conservative thinktanks coupled with Washington-based opinion and policy makers have covered up historical and political realities such as the United States 'imperial ambitions in the Middle East by constructing the "war on terror" as a "clash of civilizations" which, Said directly states, "will be the latest phase in the evolution of conflict in the modern world" (Orientalism 571). In this sense, Americans are constructed to be on the side of good and people perceived to be "Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim" (and /or South Asian) are positioned on the side of evil (Naber, "Arab-American and US Racial Formations" 38).

In the same sense, Fadda-Conrey elaborates, "derogatory and essentialist stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims, replete with lascivious Arab sheikhs, villains, harem girls, and belly dancers, become the shared vocabulary used to reify the vast differences between a "civilized" US culture on the one hand and a "barbaric" and backward Arab and Muslim landscape on the

other hand" (Contemporary Arab-American Literature 2). She adds:

> Such Orientalist discourse has taken on an additional policing role after 9/11, portraying Arabs and Muslims as perpetual aliens, volatile extremists, and potential or actual terrorists (in the case of men) or oppressed, silenced, and disenfranchised subjects (in the case of women). These labeling acts are not always overtly or directly stated, however. For even seemingly benevolent attempts to depict Arabs and Muslims in a positive light, such as the ones prevalent in various US media outlets and political arenas, ultimately end up affirming their perceived national and religious Otherness. (2)

Stereotypes of Arabs linger in mainstream American culture for many reasons: the various media continue to present negative images; struggles and problems in the Arab world affect the way that people look at Arabs; positive images are missing in the media; some people of Arab ancestry do not reveal their ethnicity and thus remain invisible (most likely because of anticipated negative reactions from others who have been exposed to the media's stereotypical portrayal of Arabs). Zaatari asserts that Arab-Americans and Mulim-Americans are denied access to a platform speak about discrimination against Arabs and Muslims, "while rasict discourses against us are deemed "sacred" by FOX News and a variety of media outlets" ("In the Belly of the Beast" 61).

Accordingly, Edward Said's Orientalism views the ideology of American exceptionalism as true, that is to say, it takes America's representation of itself as a given, and they react against that representation from the perspective of one excluded from it (11). According to Henry Schwarz, "Said divides the world into two opposite forces: the orient versus the orientalists" (A Companion to Postcolonial Studies 11). Schwarz states:

According to Said, the orientalists produced the orient as an object of study and fascination, but mainly one of control. They took their duty to speak in the name of the orient as Carl Marx[2] stated, they cannot represent themselves they must be represented" as if he is giving the orientalists the right to feel free to silence their objects of study by putting words in their mouths. (qtd in Schwarz 11)

It is like dividing the world into binaries embracing the "us and them" paradigm. While Fanon stretches the Marxist analysis when it comes to do with the colonial problem asking for more flexibility (Black Skin 40). It served the purpose of "bringing the literary criticism into the world of politics and power. In this respect, Foucault replaces the concept of ideology with discourse. He believes that "the problem of Marxist ideology is that it tends to reduce the relation between knowledge and power to the question of class power and class interests.

In other words, Foucault suggests that discourse produces subject position. For Foucault, discourse is more than a set of statements. Discourse has a social materiality and is inseparable from power and knowledge" (Discipline and Punish 27). Moreover, "Marxism showed that imperialism was an ongoing process and that especially in the context of Israel and

[2]. Marxism is a theory of mastery, of class carrying into it capital/labor dichotomy with its contradictions. Marxists focus mainly on the fact that history is un-linear. In this sense, postcolonial critics suggest that they must rewrite the history of marginal groups to make them visible. Marxism is a radical critique of western capitalism and the severe inequality between social classes. Marxists focus on the idea of the social nature of language. For Marxists, language is a socially constructed sign system which cannot be separated from ideology. Thus, the intimate connection between language and ideology drew literature into the social and economic spheres which are the homeland of ideology. Moreover, Marxists focus mainly on the fact that history is un-linear. In this sense, postcolonial critics suggest that they must rewrite the history of marginal groups to make them visible (Cohen and Klugmann, *A Reader's Guide of Marxism* 86-90).

Palestine, the US was a massively repressive neocolonial force" (Henry Shwartz 12). Said's intervention did however create a context in which postcolonial discussions, at least in the US, tended toward stark oppositions: colonialism as brute domination, resistance as the romanticization of the victims, and a general de-linking from leftist politics on a global scale.

Thus, Arab-Americans have been living on the edge; in a diaspora. Arab-Americans have been fighting for centuries to survive in the diaspora. Etymologically, the word diaspora is derived From the Greek term diasperien, from dia, "across" and "sperien,"-to sow or scatter seeds," (Brazeil and Manur, "Nation, Migration" 1). According to Virinder S. Karla et Al, diaspora is related to the Greek gardening tradition (as in hybridity) referring simply to the scattering of seeds and implying some description of dispersal (Diaspora and Hybridity 9). "The classical form of diaspora relates to forced movements. With the destruction of the first Temple and Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C., the Jewish diaspora can be seen as a prototype diasporic experience, which ironically victimized another diaspora: the Palestinian" (Virinder S. Karla et Al 9).

Arab-American writers do their best to avoid maintaining an essentialized identity. like Arab-Americans themselves, Arab-American literature is part of the Arab culture and part of the American culture The way in which Arab-American writers resist essentialized identity politics is through the concept of hybridity, refusing to be restricted to only one position, breaking down the centre/margin dichotomy, and opening up spaces between the centre and the margins. In this respect, hybridity is positioned as antidote to essentialism. In postcolonial discourse, the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable. (Ashcroft et al, The Post-Colonial Studies Reader 3). Bhabha himself is aware of the dangers of fixity and fetishism of identities within binary colonial thinking arguing that "all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity" ("Signs Taken for Wonders" 30).

For Bhabha, "hybridity is the indeterminate spaces in between subject-positions that are lauded as the locale of the disruption and displacement of hegemonic colonial narratives of cultural structures and practices. Bhabha posits hybridity as such "a form of liminal or in-between space, where the 'cutting edge of translation and negotiation" 30). Therefore, "hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal (that is, the production of discriminatory identities that secure the 'pure' and original identity of authority" (Bhabha 34).

Literally, hybridity is often located next to diaspora because "the cultural mix that hybridity invokes is a 'problem' for conceptions of both the host culture and the diasporic arrive" (Ashcroft et al, The Key Concepts 5). Hybridity refers to "the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third "hybrid" species" (117). Hybridity is looked upon as the product of late capitalist globalization. Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space trying to empower hybridity allowing cultural differences to operate. According to Ashcroft hybridity is "the in-between space that carries the burden and meaning of culture and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important" (The Key Concepts 119). Ashcroft et Al state:

> Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange'. This use of the term has been widely criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. He refers to the fact that by stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or 'whitewashing' cultural differences. (Ashcroft et al, 109)

Several cultural critics, from Hall and Arjun Appadurai to Nestor Garcia and Avatar Brah, have shown that the contemporary world is characterized by transnational migrations, cultural appropriations, and diasporic peoples. According to Kourti and Nyman, "the previous characteristics all contribute to increased cultural contact and mixing and to the intermingling of the local and the global" (Reconstructing Hybridity 3).

Chapter Two
Displacement in Laila Halaby's West of the Jordan (2003) and Once in a Promised Land (2007).

> I have lived all my adult life in England, in the shadow of the black diaspora - 'in the belly of the beast'... it is worth remembering that all discourse is 'placed'.
> -Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora" (223)

A variety of thinkers have long recognized the importance of location and place in an individual's life. Adriene Rich suggests ontological and epistemological groundings in location (qtd. In Abdelrazek 126). Abdelrazek explains

> Rich's notion of location as "Rich's meaning of location refers to more than just geographic and historical. She states that Rich's 'Politics of location' suggests how gender itself affects the experience of space. Place has more to do with other people than with cartographic location and has boundaries other than "topography", such as fear, danger, belonging, or a sense of homelessness and displacement." (In Contemporary Arab American 126)

Accordingly, the protagonists in Arab American literature written by women writers suffer from a sense of loss and displacement, living in two worlds and yet belonging to neither. They look for a sense of home where they can belong, and they are caught between the American culture which views them as the other and the Arab culture which puts restrictive limits on them: "Their hyphenated identity is influenced by the fact that

many Americans view Arabs as inferior and by the writers' experiences of exile and dislocation in which these writers have earned their hyphenated identities" (Al Momani 84).

Abdelrazek states that "the fragmented narratives of the four characters in Laila Halby's West of the Jordan (2003) and the diasporic experience of Salwa in Once in a Promised Land (2007) reflect the fragmented history and fluctuating movement of Arab women in a split world" (Contemporary Arab American 125). The narratives they tell construct a history of Arab and more specifically Palestinian women and immigrants. Abdelrazek points out that:

> The different narratives of Mawal, Soraya, Hala, and Khadija bring out the traumas, the costs and rewards of displacement that accrue to Arab and Arab American women. They insist on telling their stories, making their voices heard, inviting others to listen, decoding their silences, and uncovering and discovering the narratives of their displacement and of the selves shaped by dislocation. (Contemporary Arab American 125)

Laila Halaby's West of the Jordan (2003) explores the contradictions and incongruities of Arab American communities to challenge stereotypes about Arab women. In West of the Jordan (2003), although the four different women live in four different locations, they all suffer from a similar sense of displacement, revealing how borders that separate them are fluid rather than fixed. Throughout the course of the novel, Halaby paints a clear picture of the conflicts preoccupying the four storytellers. "Their four independent, distinct voices, critical voices through which rage and reconciliation are weaved together, are powerfully heard and they enable the reader to appreciate how ethnic origin and environment have influenced each one's perception of reality. Indeed, the characters are the book's strength" (Waksman, "Nothing to Enjoy" 2).

Waksman notes that "it is they - not the plot, that concludes with a meek protest; the characters - not the way in which Halaby, who occasionally veers into kitsch rhapsody, tells their story" (2). Hala, Khadija, Soraya and Mawal, four young women whose lives dealt them a powerful slap to the face, remain in one's memory even after their story-one of maturing the hard way - is forgotten. Abdelrazek asserts that "whether in Palestine or in America, these Arab women struggle to define themselves, asserting that their individual identities are inconceivable outside their location and its gendered, cultural, historical, national, and political context" (Contemporary Arab American Women Writers 125).

Arab-Americans are leading double lives[3]. "They are suffering a trauma of identity as to be an Arab American is to be both Arab and American and, for the time being at least, to be neither." (Roshdy, "The In-Betweenness 232). This combination of Arab and American has given rise to 'double' identities that fits into Stuart Hall of cultural identity. Stuart Hall uses diaspora to emphasize the hybrid identity formation and the processes, experiences and practices that result from displacements and cultural shifts. For Hall:

> Displacement requires the unpredictable and imaginative occupation of culture and identity and generates vibrant and creative ways of expressing these in cultural production. The diaspora experience as I intend here, is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing

[3]. Bhabha emphasizes the "undecidable split and "doubled" nature of where minority groups, including migrants, who are identified as "neither One nor the Other but something else besides, in between" (Locations 219).

themselves anew through transformation and difference." ("Cultural identity and Diaspora" 235)

In Halaby's West of the Jordan (2003) and Once in a Promised Land (2007), all female protagonists experience a sense of spatial "in-betweenness' that makes them want to struggle against the feeling of being neither Arabs 'now' Americans. This state of "in-betweenness", shared by them in both novels, acts as an 'interstitial passage' between their past and present cultures, hence, stimulating a condition of cultural hybridity[4] (Roshdy, "The In-Betweenness and Cultural Hybridity" 239). Here, the concept of cultural hybridity refers to their actual, everyday relationship with past, present, and future. Bhabha describes this relationship in terms of:

> The 'migrants' 'discursive' discourse that does not 'negate' the difference between past and present, but 'negotiates' that difference through assimilating to the present culture while preserving, in the process, 'part of the parent culture'. They are destined to remain fixed between 'past' and 'present' (Locations of Culture 56)

According to Bhabha "these women are displaced by their geographic dislocation, facing the challenge of having to find their way in a new American culture and a new language, of balancing their lives in the contact zone where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (qtd. in Abdelrazek, 124). Arab American women authors therefore depict young female protagonists who try to negotiate their cultural identity within the social context of confusing and conflicting roles and values. They are influenced by the family conflicts at home and discrimination at school or on the job which create psychological problems for them as in the case of Salwa in Once in a Promised

[4]. Bhabha warns us against interpreting the image of "in-betweenness" in simple spatial terms for "in-between" space is at once "outside" and "inside" the new adopted society (Locations 58). "In-betweeness" is therefore, defines as the "disjunct position that minorities occupy ambivalently within the nation's space. This disjunct position is alternately the "third space."

Land. Salwa suffers a kind of discrimination and bigotry post 9/11, and she struggles hard to contain those feelings of inexplicable hatred and stereotyping only because of her Arab roots.

The ambivalent experience of the characters, specifically in Halaby's West of the Jordan, highlights the idea that Arab-American teenage girls are portrayed as deeply ambivalent characters who pose a series of questions regarding their hybrid identities. These girls wonder about the importance of "acculturation," which according to Abdelrazek, is the adaptation process of immigrant populations in a new culture (Contemporary Arab American Women 124). They ask whether the adaptation to a new culture means losing oneself or giving up one's own values. Like so many others, these originally Arab women straddle two different cultures, trying to maintain a presence in both. "These women have split vision, struggling between their ability to thrive within American culture and also appreciate Arab culture" (Contemporary Arab American Women 124).

This is true in the case of Khadija, Soraya, and Hala in West of the Jordan; even Mawal, their Palestinian cousin, who has never left Palestine and yet feels displaced by the Political and mental colonization of her land. Salwa, in Once in a Promised Land, is another true example of displacement. The women characters reflect the conflict that goes on in the mind of their creator; Laila Halaby. Steven Salaita points out that "although the four girls in West of the Jordan share an identical cultural origin and belong to the same extended family, each is vastly different than the other three in disposition and personal circumstance" (Modern Arab American Fiction 132).

Another case of displacement takes place in Halby's Once in a Promised Land, which was published in 2007. The novel deals with an Arab couple living in the paranoid climate that has gripped the US in recent years. Jassim is a Jordanian hydrologist who lives with his wife Salwa, a banker who is originally Palestinian living in Jordan and a part time real estate

agent in Tucson, Arizona. As a hydrologist, Jassim is in charge of the city's water supply.

Jassim and Salwa own a beautiful house. Jassim drives a Mercedes, and Salwa makes enough money to send large sums to help her Palestinian family in Jordan. To all outside appearances, Jassim and Salwa seem to have captured the American dream. In spite of all the outward success, they find emptiness at the heart of their relationship. Jassim seeks "balance" through his routine of swimming at the Olympic-sized swimming pool at the Fitness Bar. Salwa goes to the mall to add to her overabundant collection of expensive sexy lingerie. Unfulfilled in spite of the comforts and luxuries of their American life, they lie to each other and so exacerbate their alienation from one another.

It is worth noting that it was not Salwa's love for Jassim that brought Salwa to America; it was her love for the American dream instead. Hassan watched Salwa from a distance; he knew that she was ready to sacrifice everything to thwart herself in the American life. He was shocked, when calling her after 9/11 to make sure she was ok, that he found her taking her husband's name: "Hassan was shocked. He stared at the phone for a moment before he hung up. Salwa Haddad. She had taken Jassim's name! Even if many women did take their husbands' names, he never thought Salwa would be one of them. She had erased Palestine from her very name..." (Once in a Promised Land 36).

Halaby personalizes the discrimination and prejudice experienced by Arab Americans during this period through the use of individual experience. Also Halaby avoids any general speculations by illustrating the hardships that these individuals experienced after 9/11. Halaby illustrates the cruel reality of discrimination and the extreme extent to which discrimination and prejudice can lead to. The breaking down of society's moral and constitutional boundaries is evident within the novel. Halaby

focuses on how the public's fear and anger over traumatic events have led to the victimization and exploitation of innocent people.

To conclude, Halaby's novel portrays anti-Arab attitudes post-9/11. As it focused mainly on Arab-Americans as the victims of heavily practiced racial profiling that targeted many of them whether by the US department of State or by the American people who lie completely under the influence of the Zion-oriented media that keep running falsified stories about people from the Middle East who are mainly terrorists. The Arab-Americans are the victims of the media and their campaigns. Halaby focuses on both how the public's fear and anger over traumatic events have led to the victimization and exploitation of innocent people. However, neither Jassim nor Salwa is innocent. Both of them have flaws, but those flaws are personal. The tragedy that sweeps them up is personal, too, but fanned by flames of national rage and paranoia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Abu-Jaber, Diana. Arabian Jazz. New York: Harcourt Brace &Company, 1993.

---. Crescent. New York: Norton, 2003.

Halaby, Laila. West of the Jordan. Boston: Beacon, 2003.

http://lailahalaby.net/west-of-the-jordan/

--- . Once in a Promised Land. Boston: Beacon Press, 2007.

Kahf, Mohja. E-mails From Scheherazad. Gainesville: U Press of Florida, 2003.

--. The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf. New York: Carrol &Garf Publishers, 2006.

Secondary Sources:

Abdelrazek, Amal Talaat. Contemporary Arab American Women Writers. New York: Camria Press, 2007.

---. "Scheherazad's Legacy: Arab-American Women Writers and the Resisting, Healing, and Connecting Power of their Storytelling". Gendar Nation and Belonging: Arab and Arab American Feminist Perspectives. Vol. 5, Spring 2005, © 2005 The MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies: 140-157.

Abdul Hadi, Rabab, Evelyn AlSultany and Nadine Naber eds. Arab AND Arab-American Fenisims: Genedr, Violence and Belonging. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011.

Abdurraqib, Samaa. "Dreams of Return: Community and Identity in the Poetry of Mohja Kahf". In Arab Voices in Diaspora-Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature. Layla Al Maleh ed. New York, 2009: 445-461

---. "Hijab Scenes: Muslim Women and Migration, and Hijab in Immigrant Muslim Literature" MELUS, Volume 31, Number 4 (Winter 2006):56-70

Abu Jaber, Diana. "Netting the Clouds." Multicultural Literature in the US. Today. E Journal: U.S.Department of State, Volume 14, Number 2 (February 2009): NP.

http://www.america.gov/publications/ejournalusa.html

Aguiar, Maria Luiza Cardoso de. Diaspora and Gender in Lala Halaby's West of the Jordan M.A Diss. Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, 2012.

Ahmed, Leila. "Western ethnocentrism and perceptions of the harem". Feminist Studies, (198): 521-34.

---. Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate. New Haven: Yale UP, 1992.

Asdi, Hesham. "**Jihadis in the Hood: Race, Urban Islam and the War on Terror.**" **Middle East Report, vol. 224** (2007)
< www.merip.org/mer/mer224/224_asdi.html>

---. "Let Us Be Moors: Islam, Race and "Connected Histories" **Middle East Report, vol. 229** (2003)
www.merip.org/mer/mer229/229_asdi.html

Al Maleh, Layla Ed. Arab Voices in Diaspora-Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature. New York, 2009. Print

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin Ed. Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts-Second Edition. NY: Routledge, 2007.

Bhabha, Homi. "In the Cave of Making: Thoughts on Third Space: Preface". In Communicating in the Third Space. Karen Ikas and Gerhard Wagne (eds.). New York: Routledge, 2009. xii-xiii

Brubaker, Rogers. "The diaspora Diaspora" Ethnic and Racial Studies vol. 28 No. January, 2005. 1-19.

Hatem, Mervat. "The Political and Cultural Representations of Arabs, and Arab American Feminisms after September 11, 2001" in **Arab and Arab American Feminisms: Gender, Violence and Belonging**. Eds. Rabab Abdul Hadi et Al. NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011. 10-28.

Madany, Osama Abdel Fattah. "Collusion or Coalition: Cultural In/Determinacy in Diana Abu-Jaber's Arabian Jazz (1993) and Crescent (2003)". **Liberty and Justice: America and the Middle East Conference**, (Proceeding of the Second International Conference, Center for American University in Beirut, Lebanon, 2011. Pp 174-183.

Majaj, Lisa Suhair. "Arab-Americans and the Meaning of Race". Postcolonial theory and the United States: Race, Ethnicity and Literature. Eds. Amritjit Singh and

Peter Schmidt. Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2000.

---."Arab-American Ethnicity: Locations, Coalitions, and Cultural Negotiations". Arabs in America. Ed. Michael W. Suleiman. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999: 332.

---. In Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists. Kadi, Joanna, ed .Cambridge: South end press. 1994.

---. "New Directions: Arab-American Writing at Century's End." Post-Gibran: Anthology of Arab-American Writing. Ed. Khaled Mattawa and Munir Akash. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1999: 67.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses." In Feminist Review, No 30 (Autumn, 1988): 61-88.

---. "Under Western Eyes" Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles". Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society,m vol. 28, no. 2 (2002): 499-535.

Naber, Nadine. "Arab American and US Racial Formations". In Race and Arab Americans Before and After 9/11: From Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects. Amany Jamal & Nadine Naber Eds. NY: Syracuse University Press, 2008.

---. "Ambiguous Insiders: an Investigation of Arab American Invisibility". In Ethnic and Racial Studies Journal, Vol. 23, issue No. 1 (2000): 37-61.

Schwarz, Henry and Sangeeta Ray (eds.). A Companion to Postcolonial Studies. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc. 2000.

الشتات و اختلاط الأعراق في الأعمال المختارة لبعض الكاتبات العرب الأمريكيات

شهد العقدان و النصف الماضيان ازدهارا ملحوظا في نتاج الأدب العربي الأمريكي. و تعد الأعداد المتزايدة للأعمال التي تم نشرها على كافة الأصعدة الأدبية من رواية و شعر و فن المسرحية ما هي إلا دليل على هذا الازدهار. ظهر الأدب العربي الأمريكي مع بداية القرن العشرين متمثلا في إنتاج "الرابطة القلمية" و التي عرف أدباؤها بأدباء المهجر و كان أغلبهم من لبنان و سوريا. و الجدير بالذكر أن إنتاجهم كان يكتب باللغة العربية و يترجم إلى اللغة الانجليزية. و أشهر كتاب هذه المرحلة هم: أمين ريحاني، ميخائيل نعيمة، جبران خليل جبران، و إيليا أبو ماضي حاليا يمر الأدب العربي الأمريكي بمنعطف تاريخي حيث تتخذه العديد من الفصول الدراسية منهجا لها و تتناوله كثير من الدراسات و المقالات النقدية و لقد تمكن عدد لا بأس به من الكتاب المعاصرين من نشر أعمالهم من خلال دور نشر عريقة من الثقاة في عالم النشر.

ظهر الأدب العربي الأمريكي في النصف الثاني من القرن التاسع عشر. و يلاحظ نجاح المرأة العربية الأمريكية في الاندماج في الحياة الأمريكية، لكن لسوء الحظ تعانى المرأة العربية الأمريكية من انتشار الادعاءات المضللة التي روج لها المستشرقون. تتمثل تلك الادعاءات في أن المرأة العربية عامة كائن مقهور خانع تتخفى وراء حجابها و تساق كالأنعام من قبل مجتمعات يتمتع فيه الرجال بالسطوة. و هنا تجد تلك المرأة نفسها بين شقي الرحى حيث تعانى من ادعاء بأنها مقهورة و آخر بأنها نتاج مجتمع و دين لا يعرفان سوى الإرهاب سواء في موطنها الأصلي التي تعانى من اضطهاد الأنظمة الحاكمة لشعوبها و التي تعانى أيضا من الصراعات السياسة أو في مجتمع المهجر الذي يعتبر تلك الفئة خطرا مباشرا على الأمن القومي و خاصة بعد تفجيرات الحادي عشر من سبتمبر. و عليه أدت تلك الأحداث إلى أن كثيرا من العرب المهاجرة يعيشون في حالة الشتات يتقاسمها الرجال و النساء على السواء.

يتناول البحث المجتمع العربي الأمريكي على أنه مثالا يصور معاناة كل الأقليات العرقية و خاصة الأقلية العربية الأمريكية و حالة الشتات التي تعيشها على أرض الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية.أيضا يتناول البحث كفاح المرأة العربية و خاصة المرأة العربية الأمريكية التي تعيش حالة الشتات

للوصول إلى إيجاد مساحة للتعبير عن أنفسهن و ذلك عن طريق مواجهة جميع أشكال الهيمنة و السيطرة التي تمارس ضدهن. يمثل الكتاب العرب الأمريكيون هذه الأقلية عن طريق إنتاجهم الأدبي الذي لا يتناول فقط تجربة الهجرة الخاصة بهم و لكن أيضا يبحث في كينونة الشخصية التي تعيش في أرض الشتات و التي فرض عليها كأي أقلية أن تعيش فيما يسميه هومى بابا "الفضاء الثالث" التي تعتبر منطقة وسط بين الوطن الأم و مستقر الهجرة أو ما يطلق عليه دابليو اى دو بواه "الرؤية المزدوجة. ويعد الأدب العربي الأمريكي نتاجا لهجين و اختلاط الأعراق بين عالمين نتج عنهما أجيالا من الكتاب الذكور و الإناث المتنقلة أعينهم دائما بين موطنهم الاصلى و مقر هجرتهم. نتيجة اختلاط و تهجين الثقافتين كانت انتاج ادب يحتوى الثقافتين و لكن يختلف عنهما أيضا بحيث تكون له هوية فريدة بذاتها.

يتناول البحث نظريتي أدب ما بعد الاستعمارية و هما الشتات و اختلاط الأعراق في أعمال كل من ليلى حلبى، مهجة قحف ، و ديانا أبو جابر مستشهدا بالنظريات النقدية بعدد من النقاد أمثال هومى بابا، جلوريا أنزلدوا، ميشيل فوكو، جاياترى سبيفاك، ستيوارت هول، جيمس كليفورد و آخرون و التى تتناول تفسيرا لنظريات كالشتات و الهيمنة و اختلاط الأعراق و غيرها من النظريات التي ظهرت مع ظهور أدب ما بعد الإستعمارية .