

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the Master's Degree in field
of English Language and Literature

Major: Literature and Civilization

***The Reality of Contemporary Arab-American Literary Character
and the Idea of the Third Space***

Female Character Analysis of Abu Jaber Novel Arabian Jazz

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Academic Year: 2022/2023

DEDICATIONS

I am beyond grateful to my parents, Samira and Messaoud. Thank you for all the love, support, and for always doing everything so that I could accomplish my dreams. My sincere appreciation to my mother for always being proud of me, for encouraging me, and for being an example of simplicity. To my father , I declare my warmest affection, for being an example of courage and strength.

To my sister, Ikram and herdaughter Arwa, whose mere company has always been enough to make me feel better. Thanks for your dedication, for taking care of me, and for all the moments we have shared so far. Thanks for always standing by my side and for being the best sister I could have.

To my best friend and soul mate Rahil, your cheerful company is what makes my life happy.

To my brothers and sisters, may ALLAH bless you.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To THE ALMIGHTY MOST GRACIOUS I express my deepest gratitude for giving me the strength to accomplish this humble work.

To the underrated women in Diaspora

To my beloved supervisor Prof. Halimi who stood always as my source of knowledge and wisdom and to whom I will always express my gratitude for his choice for this interesting thesis.

I express my deepest gratitude to both dr. Nafnouf and dr.Messaoudi for their priceless recommendations and wise guidance

To all my teachers to whom I owe a lot

To all my friends and class mates

Abstract

Contemporary Arab-American Literature that contributes greatly in understanding the role of third space in controlling the behavior of the Arab American literary character in relation to their Arabian identity and their American belonging. The explanation of such inquiry led to the need of using the observational analytical view to depict the real picture of the Arab American character related to its ethnicity, gender and belonging. Unfortunately, little researches were found of this subject comparing to its extreme necessity in comprehending the relation between the literary character behavior and the third space.

In this dissertation, the major aim is to capture the main traits of the Arab American literary character and the impact of the third place on their way of living. In addition to that, we will depict the bias of the female Arab American writer Diana Abu Jaber to the American culture claiming indirectly that home is where the character has found itself bringing not losing. However, she draws the vibrant picture of the outcomes of being in an immigrant society such as the American one especially on the women.

In order to understand the novels in light of diaspora theories, one must know about the authors and the content of the novel.

Through the analysis of specific aspects depicted within the novel, I tend to open up new element on diasporic experience among Arab American especially women immigrants by changing the stereotypical notion that those women have the same experience. Therefore, this research will use sociological and political studies approaches to explore anxieties faced by the Arab American characters of the novel. Although this dissertation is a literary analysis, it seeks to explore political, sociological and psychological elements affecting Arab women's negotiation of their identities in a context of immigration on the perspective of Diana Abu Jaber.

Keywords

Contemporary, literary character, Arab American writers, diaspora, mysterious place.

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Introduction :

General Introduction

According to a quote from an Arab American author, "To overcome my fear, I shackled myself with hope, its links heavier than any metal known to man." In order to communicate the reality of an Arab American character in a certain literary environment, this statement must demonstrate the strong word choice and tense combinations of semantic levels inside one linguistic group of words. The thrilling blossoming of Arab-American literature has been evidenced by the enormous increase in the quantity of literary works published in a range of genres over the past few decades, including fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and theater. The field of contemporary Arab-American literature is at a turning moment in its evolution. Its origins are in the Al-Rabita-led Arab American literary tradition of the early 20th century.

Most contemporary Arab American writers, who are aware of their cultural history, emphasize ethnicity and declare that hybridity is the core of a hyphenated Arab American identity. As they insist on placing the Arab American experience within its American multicultural framework, this growing knowledge promotes them to investigate the spaces located on either side of the hyphen in their literary work. In order to eliminate the pervasive misconceptions that dominate how Americans view Arabs, these authors believe they have been given the responsibility of representing their community. These authors, who have a strong sense of their American identity, express their devotion to the Arab country without falling into sentimentality or nostalgia.

With reference to a literary novel written by an Arab woman author who is also an immigrant, this dissertation will examine the various experiences that Arab immigrants have to deal with. It will support the idea that they do not fit into either the host country's or their own native culture's mainstream. It tries to demonstrate that the Third Space is multi-dimensional given

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the diversity of Arab immigrants and the fact that not all migrants experience the same emotions. *Arabian Jazz* by Diana Abu Jaber is a suitable literary work to investigate for this topic since it clarifies the difficulties Arab immigrants confront. The selection of this novel will result in many representations of immigrants navigating their identities.

Preceding to such matter, The complexity of the Arab American experience is reflected in the literary work produced by the community members, as seen in the chapters of this dissertation. Arab American literature is neither purely Arab nor exclusively American; rather, it exists on a middle ground between the two. It is a hybrid genre that sits squarely at the hyphen since it draws on both literary canons to create its own viewpoint.

From there, Arab American writers were sent on a quest to cope with and blend into American society while dealing with a variety of obstacles, including whether to put on their own mask or the one they made up to fit in. Arab American writers highlighted the tension between those two identities in their diasporic characters. In between those two identities, Arab American writers exposed that contradiction in their diasporic characters who live in a maze governing their personal life , family life and most importantly their social life which represent the other face of the third place in matters of decisions , emotions and relationships.

In this research, I will convey the nature of such sensitive traits in the Arab American character in relation to the third space. Therefore, In this dissertation, I aim to capture the main traits of the Arab American literary character and the impact of the third place on their way of living .In addition to that, we will depict the bias of the female Arab American writer Diana Abu Jaber to the American culture claiming indirectly that home is where the character has found itself bringing not losing .

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Consequently, The chief questions that I will investigate are: what is the reality of contemporary Arab American character? What are the main behaviours and effects that highlight the existence of such character and do all immigrants share the same journey towards enunciating the third space ? What is the value of the third place and its relationship to the Arab American character?

Chapter one is aimed to stand as a historical and literary framework for the whole dissertation. I analyse the contemporary Arab American literature as a legacy passed by for generations. Additionally, I will mention some contemporary Arab American female writers who made such hyphenated hybrid culture amusing to read. Of course, I tended to provide my dissertation with crucial concepts dominating such literary work to make it easier for the reader to detect the meaning of double identity or term diaspora.

Chapter two is aimed at providing a theoretical framework for this dissertation, in which I try to define Homi Bhabha's concept of the Third Space, as developed in his book *The Location of Culture* (1994), in order to redefine it afterwards in terms of the Arab American discourse. Starting from the idea of hybridity as a mixed location where individuals do not belong to any unified or stable position, making their subjectivity multiple and unstable. Therefore, the Third Space gives hybrid subjects the opportunity to maintain a process of translation and negotiation through the creation of a space where they can articulate and negotiate their cultural difference.

Contemporary Arab American literature embodies to a large extent this idea as it presents an in-between space approaching the past and cultural origins in order to establish a constant dialogue and negotiation in which I will state some Arab American writers and their main novel's character distinguished characteristics .

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The third chapter examines *Arabian Jazz* (1993) by Diana Abu-Jaber. This chapter is meant to analyze the writers' approach to the construction of female Arab American identities, through the study of the identification options offered to their female characters. Situating her novel in a poor white neighborhood in upstate New York, Abu-Jaber traces the development of the identification process of two Jordanian American sisters, Jemorah and Melvina with their father accompanied with the memories of the late mother and the unasked for intervention of their aunt Fatima.

Chapter One:

The Reality of Contemporary Arab American Literature and Character

Introduction

Arab American literature has a long history that extends back to the turn of the 20th century, but it has only recently begun to assert itself and seek recognition as an ethnic literary genre in the US. The emergence of new authors and voices over the past two decades has delighted Arab American scholars who, in the words of Evelyn Shakir, "have been waiting a long time for poems and stories that make myth of (and so make real) our experience and that of our immigrant ancestors" (1996, p.3). The patterns of Arab American history and the shifting social climate that compelled the community's writers to establish new venues for their views to be heard may be seen in the evolution of Arab American literature. In this chapter, I will try to trace Early Arab American literature as to making particular light shading on Arab American female writers and their contribution on the prosperity of such literary legacy. Adding to that, I will discuss the rise of Arab American consciousness emerged in their hybrid character which lead to embracing a new intercultural ethnicity represented in the Arab American. However, before that, certain terms must be clarified first in order to understand the reality behind Arab American characters which are mostly tackled in Ethnicity, Cultural Identity and Diaspora.

I.1.Ethnicity, Cultural Identity and Diaspora

It is fundamental to highlight a few concepts that bolster my work. To begin with of all, Diaspora alludes to bunches of individuals who were —dislocated from their local country through the developments of relocation, movement, or oust. (Braziel et al., 2003)

In this way, diaspora is continuously related to separation from one put to another. It is fictionally spoken in a few modern Middle eastern American scholarly works, such as the books displayed in this paper. (Nassima et al., 2011) .Additionally, James Clifford(1999), one of the foremost critical scholars of Diaspora, states that characteristics of diaspora are: “a history of dispersal, myths/memories of the country, distance within the have nation, want for inevitable return, progressing bolster of the country, and a collective personality imperatively characterized by this relationship”(p.215).Similarly, as Clifford(1999) states, diasporic subjects are influenced by its negative and positive sides. According to him,

"Diaspora awareness is constituted both contrarily and emphatically. It is constituted contrarily by encounters of separation and avoidance. The obstructions confronting racialized sojourners are regularly fortified by financial imperatives. . . . Diaspora awareness is delivered positively through recognizable proof with world verifiable cultural/political strengths. The method may not be as much approximately being African . . . or wherever one has settled, in an unexpected way. It is additionally almost feeling worldwide. "(1999,p.224)

Another scholar that bargains with Diaspora is Stuart Corridor. He sheds light on critical issues that are common to ethnic bunches. He contends that personality could be a generation that's continuously in prepare and is never steady. (Hall,1990)

He focuses out two diverse concepts for —cultural identityl. The primary concept is related to the thought of an ethnic bunch sharing numerous likenesses, such social conventions. As Lobby states, "this conception of social personality —provides us, as one individuals. with

steady, perpetual and nonstop outlines of reference and meaning, underneath the moving divisions and changes of our real history”(1990,p.234).

Hall (1990) clarifies the moment concept of social personality. He states that,

"this position concedes the nearness of similitudes shared by a bunch, but it goes past that, centering on the changes that people experience, which are not settled as it were in a common past, but —constitute „what we truly are“, or maybe – since history has mediated – „what we have become“. We cannot talk for exceptionally long, with any precision, around „one encounter, one identity“ without recognizing its other side – the breaks and discontinuities which constitute the Caribbean’s uniqueness” (p.236)

The "Caribbean uniqueness“ about which he writes can be generalized with other groups, such as the Arab, as it is the case here, to show that one cannot write about an —Arabness and cannot consider that all Arab people experience the same identity. (Hall,1990)

In that matter, we come to the conclusion that Hall was right if we apply this concept on Diana Abu Jaber’s novel Arabian Jazz. Both Jemorah and Melvina are sisters and dealing with same circumstances however their behaviour and attitudes differ greatly, we find Jemorah feeling lost most of the time believing that her Arabian identity causing her troubles at work although she seeks only for peace . Whereas, Melvina embarrassed her American belonging which gave her the strength to decide wisely in times and pushing her dreamer motor biker side out in other times.

I.2.Arab American's sense of Double-consciousness

Arising from Du Bois's definition of double-consciousness Arab Americans were compared with their African- American counterparts, despite the historical, social, political and linguistic differences, in light of their dual identities they experienced at their homes of origin and their host homes. Race, however, was not the major reason for such feeling; it was people's suffering from socioreligious and cultural traditions that

negatively banned them from creating any sense of unified identity, especially at their homes of origin. Double consciousness is originated from African-American literary traditions; a term coined by W.E.B Du Bois as he attempted to define the African-American "Negro". It, however, previously existed in the early American literary traditions and psycho/sociological studies but later began to be seen extensively in post/colonial and feminist approaches. Referring to the conflicting pattern of self-depiction, William James refers to it as an "alternating personality" (qtd. in Jimoh, 169) while Marc Black refers to it as "two antagonistic identities," (394). Double-consciousness has arisen abundantly within minority literature where émigré writers and thinkers live in two different worlds: their native home and the host world. It is typical that minority literature writers, intellectuals and critics tackle topics on double-consciousness and duality as they attempted to conserve their real identities.

It happens that these writers are contended to realize themselves because they don't normally recognize how people around see them. An Arab American, for example, is not regarded as a full American citizen or a first-class citizen in America, and also he is not considered a full Arab in his or her native country. With such feeling of twoness, a subject will automatically be dragged into malevolent aspects of double-consciousness.

I.2. Contemporary Arab American Literature

The New York Pen League, also known as Al Rabita Al Qalamiyah, was founded in the early decades of the 20th century, beginning the Arab American literary heritage. This group of authors from Lebanon and Syria, sometimes referred to as Al-Mahjar or "immigrant poets," worked along with translators of their Arabic-language works.

"Ameen Rihani, Gibran Khalil Gibran, Mikhail Naimy and Elia Abu Madi served as the major figures in this period, and often were and still credited with developing an interest in immigrant writing in general" (Majaj, 2009, p. 2).

When the first wave of Arab immigrants from the Ottoman-ruled region of "Greater Syria," which included Mount Lebanon and the nearby provinces of Syria and Palestine, began migrating to the New World in the 1880s, this is when the history of Arab American literature began. The Christian merchants who took part in the Philadelphia International Exposition in 1876, urged by the Ottoman Sultan to show Syrian goods, were perhaps the first Arabs to learn about the economic potential in the United States. Their enjoyable journey and positive reviews encouraged a broad migratory movement across the nation. The first wave of Arab immigrants marked the beginning of Arab American writing. The majority of these early immigrants were Christians from mountain villages who were trying to avoid being conscripted into the Turkish military, which was required of both Christians and Muslims, and were obviously looking for employment prospects. The concern of not being able to uphold their Islamic beliefs in a Christian country stopped only a small number of young Muslims from participating in this migrating adventure. Since they were citizens of the Ottoman Empire, these immigrants were referred to as Turks for the first few years. However, many immigrants opted to identify as Syrian since they detested their Ottoman overseers. Many young Syrians made their way to the New World, and soon married men and families joined them. With few exceptions, they saw themselves as "sojourners" whose goal was to earn money so they could return home. "To enjoy the status and privileges that money would bring." Indeed, "emigration was generally a family venture and was financed by family resources. It was considered an investment whose return would be both wealth and prestige when the emigrant returned to his native village" (Naff, 1983,p. 14).

Unskilled and frequently illiterate, many of these early Christian Arab immigrants worked two or three years as street vendors before returning home with enough money saved

up to enable them to buy more property in their native towns or open up their own businesses. Whole family units immigrated to America to labor side by side since peddling needed no cash or English proficiency and was coordinated by other Arabs who served as suppliers, offered loans, and provided directions to newcomers. "Peddling drew young men and women from villages in groups of up to sixty or more, allowing the network of transit services to be formed and stimulating a Syrian industry of manufacturers, importers, and wholesalers to supply their needs" (Naff 1983,p. 16). These early arrivals created a template for how later Arab immigrants should settle and integrate. Later immigrants established commercial networks in 17 American cities and small villages by settling along the paths taken by Arab peddlers. Peddling was a way of life that, in addition to helping people build up their financial resources, accelerated assimilation because it gave immigrants from Arab countries plenty of opportunities to learn English and interact with the locals. As a result, it helped them adopt new values, enthusiastically embrace American standards, and even begin to consider staying in the country permanently. Syrians eventually settled down in widely separated towns around the nation, where many of them started family enterprises and retail stores, as a result of this acquired sense of permanency. Peddling may, and frequently did, result in financial success.

As Naff assumes: "given the economic opportunities and the system of values in the United States, Syrians became success-oriented free-enterprisers" (1983, p.15).

According to Alixa Naff, early Arab immigrants associated themselves with "religiously self-segregated neighborhoods and quarters in villages, towns and cities of the old country" (1985, p.63). This "village mindedness" fostered factionalism among immigrant communities, which eventually hindered their ability to unite as a single ethnic group and prevented them from developing a strong sense of identity. However, fragmentation led to the emergence of a large number of periodicals, each of which supported the causes, passions, and political views of a particular group within the society. Therefore, the sojourners formed a diasporan mindset that

was mirrored in their journals, which were very sectarian and political and focused on Middle Eastern issues. There was fierce competition among these frequently transient articles. The first Arabic-language newspaper to be published in North America was *Kawkab Amirka* (The Star of America), which was founded in New York in 1892. The paper “did not espouse a religious bias” and remained loyal to the Ottoman Empire, perhaps because of the [founder’s] family’s Damascene origin and Eastern Orthodox Christian faith” (Naff 1983: 7). In 1898, Naoum Mokarzal started a journal named *AlHoda* (Guidance) to counter the editorial stance of the *Kawkab Amirk* publishers , and “to serve the cause of a Christian, Maronite-dominated Lebanese nation under French tutelage, independent of the Ottoman Empire (Naff ,1983, p. 7). Additionally, in 1899, *Mir'at al-Gharb* (Mirror of the West) was established to represent anti-Ottoman Arabism and Syrian Orthodoxy. *Al Bayan* (The News) was formed by the Druze in 1910. The sectarian split in the society was not deterred by these documents, with each group claiming to be the best in this "temporary" abode. On the other side, these ethnic publications promoted Arab immigrants' integration and good citizenship in the US.

While peddling played an important part in the establishment of a sense of permanence among early Arab immigrants, World War I, according to Michael Suleiman, was a watershed moment in the Arab American community's history. “the Arabs in the United States become truly an Arab American community” (Sulaiman, 1994, p.43). They came to terms with important issues regarding their identity as Arab Americans and their relationship with America when they recognized it was doubtful they would ever go back to their native countries. The integration process was sped up by this understanding, which also raised demands for unity, decreased sectarian strife, and increased engagement in American politics. Arabic-speaking immigrants fought for white racial status within the context of white supremacy when they faced the possibility of losing their citizenship privileges. They made a concerted effort to demonstrate their "whiteness" in court and in the media, highlighting their

Christian beliefs and their ancestry in the Holy Land. Lisa Suhair Majaj notes, “petitions for naturalization were challenged and, in some instances, denied on the basis of whether or not petitioners qualified as ‘white.’ These cases not only decided the fate of individual immigrants, but also set precedents for the inclusion or exclusion of entire ethnic groups” (2000,p.321). One of the legacies of Syrians was the Congress’s decision to officially recognize Arab immigrants as “white” in 1917, and place them within the of whiteness and American citizenship. This status was strengthened by the 1920 census, which identified Palestinians and Syrians, separately, under the category of “Foreign-born white population” (Naff, 1985,p.117).

Under the influence of western Romanticism and American transcendentalism, the New York school inaugurated a new age of Romantic literature in the Arab World (Badawi, 1975,p.203). In addition to disseminating their poetry and prose to other immigrants, journalism was instrumental in promoting this group of writers by luring the Middle Eastern literary elite. The daily *Al-Sayeh* (The Traveler), founded by Abdul Massih Hadad and operating from 1912 to 1957, and the ambitious literary periodical *Al-Funun* (The Arts), managed by Naseeb Arida from 1913 to 1918, provided as a forum for their astonishingly consistent worldview of literature and life. The New York Pen League, also known as *Al Rabita al Qalamiyya*, was founded in 1920, marking the culmination of the movement.

According to poet and novelist Mikhail Naimy, the group’s main theoretician, the purpose of this revolutionary society was “to lift Arabic literature from the quagmire of stagnation and imitation, and to infuse a new life into its veins so as to make of it an active force in the building up of the Arab nations” (p.154). The group was dedicated to challenging the stringent guidelines and limitations of early 20th-century Arab literature, which was confined to the copying of traditional Arabic letters. The movement, which was self-consciously

committed to literary reform, believed that literature needed to be updated to meet the needs, interests, and expectations of readers in the early 20th century because they were convinced that if no efforts were made to revive the spirit of Arab literature from the era, imitation and stagnation would kill off literature altogether. Therefore, these youthful writers significantly contributed to the resurgence of literature in their own Arab countries and to the establishment of the foundations of contemporary Arab literature.

The ability to write in English, a foreign language, was not the only requirement for writers like Gibran and Rihani to write for an American audience; it was also perhaps more crucial that they situate themselves in relation to a strong discourse that had already shaped how their readers perceived oriental culture. Writing in English constrained the newly developing Anglophone Arab literature to the discourse that had already been created, forcing it to continuously explain itself in reference to it. However, when they wrote inside an Arabic cultural discourse, they not only had a different objective but also had more discursive leeway since, in the first place, they were exempt from having to explain Arab culture to Arabic readers.; secondly, they were not expected by their readers to pose as Oriental spokesmen; and thirdly, they did not have to abide by discursive strictures imposed on their cultures by a conquering knowledge system—with its stereotypes ,typologies, culturalist and racist frames of reference, privileged texts and modes, and so forth – even when they could not free themselves entirely from its powerful imprint. (Hassan,2007,p.249). Addressing to an Arab audience gave them the chance to refute essentialist and oversimplified prevailing Orientalist discourses, exposing and even confronting their imperialistic roots and goals. On the other hand, when they wrote in English, they had to do it without compromising their standing as writers in the eyes of American readers. As Shakir states, The first generation of Arab American writers (as might be expected of immigrants of an age of rampant xenophobia)

dressed carefully for their encounter with the American public, putting on the guise of prophet, preacher, or man of letters. They could not hide their foreignness, but they could make it respectable (1996,p.6). Early Arab American writers asserted themselves as Orientalist translators in this context because they thought they were more equipped and more qualified to do so than European Orientalists. They experienced some friction between their own experiences and that knowledge despite being fully steeped in the systematic Orientalist discourse. Hassan notes that their “attempts to replace the Orientalists as interpreters or translators of the Orient were a way of claiming cultural space and voice, countering the negativity associated with the Orient, and mediating between it and the West for the sake of greater cross-cultural understanding” (p.250). The Orientalist essentialist distinction between the East and the West as two distinct entities was acknowledged by these writers. They attempted to redefine the connection between the two poles by rejecting any form of hierarchical classification of their principles, but they had no faith in the West's supremacy over the East. In place of the prevalent Orientalist rhetoric, they offered a dualism between two equal partners who complemented one another and sought to achieve metaphysical harmony. As Hassan notes, many of these writers, like Rihani for instance, “envisioned a Hegelian dynamic that would eventually blend East and West into a higher civilizational synthesis, and saw themselves in the role of two-way reformers and facilitators of that process” (p.252). Hassan goes on to explain that this vision admitted, on the one hand, the Orientalist distinction between East and West, and on the other, it “rejected its historical immutability in favor of a conception of East and West as values and attitudes of mind that are not geographically determined and which can, therefore, circulate among cultures over long historical periods” (p.252). They might really contribute to their new nation by using this way to impart a significant sense of pride in the cultural and civilizational legacy of their home countries.

Moving forward, early Arab American writers frequently expressed their nationalistic aspirations and support for Arab unity and independence from the Ottomans, and later from European colonialism. They were also highly critical of the rapidly deteriorating situation at home. Additionally, they vigorously opposed religious superstition and the influence of the clergy and called for the change of socioeconomic circumstances in the Arab homelands.

Rihbany supports the Orientalist division between the East and the West, just like other early Arab American authors. He uses an essentialist strategy to address these two components of his self-assigned role as a mediator between the Christian East and the West. In this sense, Syria and the United States, which serve as the representation of East and West in Rihbany's story, are set up as fixed, mutually incompatible entities. As Said sustains in *Orientalism* (1978), for the native in general, and for the native intellectual formed in the West in particular, there exists the possibility of internalizing the stereotypical and rigid categorizations mediating the construction of Orientalist discourse (p.322-25). This type of integration could show up in "the native informant's" use of the language of authenticity, the portrayal of the past, etc., or the reinforcement of dichotomies between East and West (324). Rihbany's depiction of his Syria is founded on a process of homogeneity that, as I've already indicated, is accomplished through its link with mythology, mysticism, and spirituality. Moreover, he can claim Syria as his mother in this configuration, "Syria, my loving untutored mother", while America is considered as "my virile, resourceful teacher" (Rihbany, 1914,p.ix). Rihbany uses the gendering of Syria and America to create a barrier between his Syrian past and American present. His portrayal of Syria as "untutored" and based in the feminine contrasts with America's portrayal of itself as the "virile" educator and a symbol of Rihbany's access to the masculine world, where logic, knowledge, and structure are prized.

He sets his Syrian background in this maternal framework. The East is meant to stand in for the carnal side of humanity as well as the child-self of the narrator, whose mother, Syria, struggles with ignorance and is unable to reach the higher levels of civilization. As Said argues, “the association between the Orient and sex is remarkably persistent. The Middle East is resistant, as any virgin would be, but the male scholar wins the prize by bursting open, penetrating through the Gordian knot...” (1978, p. 309).

I.3 Contemporary Arab American Female Writers

Arab American female writers fought valiantly to be given a prominent position in the canon of Arab American writings, using their writing as a tool to combat racism, oppression, marginalization, and exile. They forged positive connections with other Arab American writers, both established and recent arrivals, and attempted to negotiate their hyphenated identities. They also fought against stereotypes and false beliefs about female writers in Arab communities as they had been portrayed by America. They used several books and various forms of social media to publicly communicate their thoughts, aspirations, feelings, and survival methods. Their writings primarily sought to define themselves, reject all forms of prejudice, denounce the war, stand with the country's oppressed citizens, reject western culture's hegemony, and present proudly their Arab history. (Noman, 2015)

It was significant to note that female authors from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, and Palestine had significantly enriched the literary canon in the United States and had garnered favorable reviews. The publishers' dedication to producing and disseminating their works was also recognized, along with the creativity and productivity of Arab women writers. A few of these authors include Diana Abu-Jaber, Mohja Kahf, Lisa Suhair Majaj, Naomi Shihab Nye, Mona Simpson, Laila Halaby, and many others. (Noman, 2015).

From the aforementioned authors, feminist Mohja Kahf, a Syrian-American poet and novelist, made the argument that immigrant Arab women were unable to criticize their communities in

both the United States and their own Arab countries without facing accusations of cultural treachery. She stated that Arab American women had different relationships with their American homes and the Arab countries where their families had come from; they still had to overcome difficulties brought on by certain stereotypes that were perpetuated both inside and outside of their communities. (Cooke,2008).

Amal Amireh and Lisa Suheir Majaj also discussed the cultural barriers that Arab women faced when expressing their own experiences. Their individual interactions as Arab feminist academics working in the US were the basis for their observations. Their research revealed that the criticism of orientalist stereotypes of Arab women by Arab women had also been interpreted as defending themselves, creating questions about their self-described status as feminists.(Amireh & Majaj 2000).

Additionally, in 1994, she released a new work *Food for Our Grandmothers*, edited by Joanna Kadi and featuring works by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian feminists, was frequently referred to as a "landmark" occasion in the development of Arab American literature. .(Amireh & Majaj, 2000).

Joanna Kadi, a Lebanese-American poet, writer, and activist, was raised in a working-class family. She was born in 1958. Her essay book *Thinking Class: Notes from a Cultural Worker* (1996) is her most well-known work. She is one of the creators of the idea of the intersection of oppression, which is crucial to many feminists whose identities cross more than one line. For instance, she has examined classism in the queer and gay-positive communities and anti-Arab prejudice among feminists. Her books have also empowered Arab-American women to develop alternative narratives to those of the dominant American discourse. The selections mapped the search for belonging and the search for a home capable of addressing concerns of identity, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political activism, racism, and classcharted the quest for

belonging and the search for a home capable of encompassing the voices of Arab-American women from a variety of backgrounds (Noman,2015).

Diana Abu Jaber, a Jordanian-American author, tackled the problem of identity confusion more thoroughly in her novels *Arabian Jazz* and *Crescent*, which included her protagonists with Arab fathers and an American mother. The protagonists struggled to fit in both Arab and American cultures because of the complexity of their dual identities and the incapacity of those around them to comprehend that complexity. Since they saw labels like "white" or "not white" as a sort of violence, the subject of identity was explored in both novels via the lens of race. The protagonist of *Arabian Jazz*, Jemorah, who is half Jordanian and half American, noticed that racial tensions surrounding Arab-American identity had increased during a conversation with Portia, who believed that Jemorah's "good white blood" had been tainted by her Arab father, who "[isn't] any better than Negroes" (Abu-Jaber, 2003, p.294). Portia was nonetheless able to transform this Arab "taint" (Abu-Jaber, 2003, p.294) Jemorah, the half Jordanian, half American protagonist of *Arabian Jazz*, found the racial tensions around Arab-American identity brought to an increase in an interchange with her employer, Portia, who considered the "good white blood" running in Jemorah's veins to have been contaminated by her Arab father who "[isn't] any better than Negroes" (Abu-Jaber, 2003, p.294). For Portia, this Arab "taint" (Abu-Jaber, 2003, p.294) was nonetheless recoverable into a framework of white ethnicity; lipstick and hair lightener will help make her more of an "American." Recoiling from such bigotry, Jemorah turned instead to her Arab identity. But the novel suggested that reverting to the other side of the hyphen was not a solution either: rather, what needed was the ability to move with fluidity between worlds.

Conclusion

CHAPTER ONE :

The tremendous expansion in the number of literary texts published in a variety of genres, including fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and theatre, during the past 25 years has demonstrated the exhilarating flowering of Arab-American literature. Contemporary Arab-American literature is at a crucial point in its evolution as a field. Its roots are in an early 20th-century Arab-American literary tradition led by the Al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya, or the Pen League that paved the way for contemporary Arab American literature to be more creative and tackle crucial socio-cultural matters especially when dealing with female diasporic characters.

Chapter Two:

The Idea of the Mysterious Place (Third Space) and its Relationship to Arab American Character

Introduction

“Being in the “beyond” ,then, is to inhabit an intervening space as any dictionary will tell you . But to dwell “in the beyond” is also, as I have shown, to be part of a revisionary time , a return to the present to redescribe our cultural contemporaneity ; to reinscribe our human historic commonality; to touch the future on its hither sides. In the sense then, the intervening space “beyond” becomes a space of intervention in the here and now.”(Bhabha,1994, p.7)

Indeed, Bhabha thought of the unseen but felt “beyond space” which hybrid person would feel located in certain circumstances which he calls third space ; a space free of cultural boundaries yet full of intercultural identities that let the character behave in certain way which most of contemporary Arab American writers seek to illustrate and that what I will explain in this chapter .

II.1. Third Space Definition according to Homi Bhabha

The creation of one's identity is built upon diverse discourses and ideologies, leading to a diverse combination of personal experiences that are fundamentally multifaced.The aforementioned subject is further characterized as being "overdetermined," indicating that its determination is not solely attributed to a single discourse or ideology, but instead to a multitude of varying factors. The notion of identity formation dates back to the early twentieth century within African American intellectual circles, where Ralph Ellison posits that identity is established through a deliberate process rather than being innately endowed, and is shaped by creation as opposed to being dictated by biological or societal metrics.

The concept of the Third Space has significant implications for any statement, as it poses a challenge to the notion of historical cultural identity as a force that unifies and homogenizes society. This idea is grounded in the belief that such cultural identities derive their authenticity from an originary past and are perpetuated through national traditions, be it in

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Europe or post-colonial nations. Bhabha (1994) characterizes the Third Space as the discursive conditions of enunciation that displace the narrative of the Western and post-colonial nation. According to Bhabha (1994), the written form is characterized by a homogeneous, serial temporality, which is further complicated by the "disruptive temporality of enunciation" (Bhabha,1994,p.54) .All cultural statements and systems are formed in a manner that is both contradictory and ambivalent"space of enunciation" (Bhabha,1994:55) as a result of which "hierarchical claims to the inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable" (Bhabha,1994 p.55).

As a result, the bearers of a "hybrid identity" (Bhabha,1994, p.55) are "caught in the discontinuous time of translation and negotiation" (Bhabha,1994, p.55) as a result of which they are "now free to negotiate and translate their cultural identities in a discontinuous intertextual temporality of cultural difference" (Bhabha,1994, p.55).

Consequently, the "native intellectual who identifies the people with the 'true national culture' will be disappointed" (Bhabha,1994, p.55). In short, the recognition of the "split-space of enunciation" (Bhabha,1994, p.55) will open the way to "conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism or multiculturalism of the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity" (Bhabha,1994, p.55).To conclude, Bhabha (1994) says that,

"We should remember that it is the "inter"— the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space – that carries the burden of the meaning of culture. It makes it possible to begin envisaging national, anti-nationalist histories of the "people". And by exploring this "Third Space", we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves"

(Bhabha,1994, p.56).

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The Third Space is a way for people who are a mix of different cultures to make a space where they can express their differences. In this place, people can make up their own history and change their past. Such assistance aids them in forming novel notions and putting a hold on present situations .Arab American literature shows how the Arab American community has changed over the past 100 years in the United States.

II.2.Reforming the concept of Third Space According to Arab American Characters

Modern Arab American scholars are looking more closely at the work of old Arab American writers. These writers were able to explore beyond their hometown and find happiness, which is different from the sadness and feeling out of place that newer writers talk about. (Al Maleh, 2009).Al Maleh uses R. Radhakrishnan's terms (1996) to describe how these writers were "ensconced comfortably in the heartland of both national and transnational citizenship" (p.159).She states that theirs was "a hybridity that undoubtedly helped them negotiate the 'identity politics' of their place of origin and their chosen abode with less tension than their successors" (Al Maleh, 2009, p.4)

In this context, I will trace the itinerary followed by contemporary Arab American writers to articulate hybridity and, therefore, negotiate the Third Space through their works.

In their efforts to carve a place for Arab American discourse within mainstream American literature and at the same time among minority literatures in the United States, contemporary Arab American writers seem to be aware of their cultural background, being "the descendents of a rich heritage, with a shared history, the wealth of a much-respected literature, and an esteemed language". More importantly, they have the mission to negotiate identities from a vantage-point with firm links to Arab history, even when they were second or third-generation writers. Indeed, much of what they wrote still reflected a warm relationship to the homeland despite the authors' geographical distance from it (Al Maleh, p.12-13).The vital growth of this

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emerging literature is helping Arab American writers in their attempts to regain their discourse as they “found ‘home’ and acceptance in ethnicity” (p.24).

In this way, the work of most contemporary Arab American writers reflects a deep awareness of their hyphenated identity, and embodies an exploration of the spaces situated in each side of the hyphen. In addition to that, the treatment that Arab Americans have long suffered at the hands of the most part of mainstream America helped them realize the importance of exercising self-representation in order to achieve social, political and religious equality in the United States. In their effort to counteract being constantly received as “outsiders” since the end of the nineteenth century, they struggle to find themselves a significant place within American culture. For that purpose, literature becomes an important mean to realize such self-representation, bringing to light the unheard stories and experiences of a community.

II.3.Hyphenated Identity, Consciousness Awareness and Cultural Identity

The preface to *Scheherazade's Legacy*: Barbara Nimri Aziz, journalist and founder of RAWI (Arab-American Writers Radius), wrote in her book *Arabs and the Writings of Arab-American Women* (2004) that Arab-American writers, like other minority groups, has long recognized the importance of “”. “If you don't write, you won't write” principle. She believes that “to confront the sweet and the bitter, to wrestle with disorder, hatred and fear, is to accept our responsibility, the responsibility we once entrusted to others” (p.xii).

Aziz argues that after decades of misrepresentations and “half truths,” Arab Americans “must decide what is really true and what is false, then negotiate those and add to this our own hidden experience” (p.xii).

To illustrate her point, she mentioned Toni Morrison, who once said that writing is the process of going to a place and moving the soil to understand why a person is there in the first place. Respectively, Every writer is a miner, culling out little things overlooked, abandoned,

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or discolored by others. Here are today's Arab-American writers. They go there first and clean up the mess. (p.xiii)

Nimri sheds light on the importance of “minor details” in recreating and bringing about the collective memory of Arab Americans as a minority group. She refers to these details as “the ‘little things’ we are able to identify and recover [from Arab American communal and individual histories],” making, therefore, a story more “poignant” and relative (p.xiii). The role played by Arab American literature in openly discussing these “little things,” according to Nimri,

“may not overturn centuries of injustice, and it will not propel us into a position of dominance. But we can at least write our story with our own words ... Writers cannot refuse . But we can locate ourselves at that archaeological site, and build new stories from the little things we reclaim” (p.xiii-xiv).

The presence of these details from Arab American legacy in literary production not only helps to voice the Arab American experience to a mainstream audience, and therefore, humanize it, but also to enhance inter-community connections and assist in “rebuild a fragmented, uncertain identity” (p.xiii).

In that regard, Arab American writers have the task of helping the community locate and enjoy a communal hyphenated identity taking into account its complexity and varied features. Stuart Hall argues that cultural identity is not a fixed static concept. He writes that cultural identity is a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being.’ It belongs to a future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history and culture. Cultural identities come from somewhere of history. But like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power. (p.225)

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In this way, the unstable racial categorization of the Arab American community further problematizes the sense of belonging and identification among the members of this group. Most Arab American writers are definitely good at illustrating such malfunction in their literary characters. In this sense, these writers' focus on ethnicity embodies an act of proclamation of hybridity as the essence of an Arab American identity being an exclusive part of the mosaic of ethnic America. They try to straddle both sides of the hyphen through validating their American identity and their Arab origin.

This double consciousness – a term coined by the African American intellectual W. E. B. Du Bois – leads Arab American writers to more and more address issues pertaining to their own experiences. For this reason, we can find a multitude of novels and memoirs holding strong connections with the Arab homeland, and whose titles invoke these links, such as Evelyn Shakir's *Bint Arab: Arab and Arab American Women in the United States* (1997), Elmaz Abinader's *The Children of Roojme: A Family's Journey from Lebanon* (1991), Mohja Kahf's *The girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), Samia Serageldine's *Cairo House* (2000), Laila Halaby's *The West of the Jordan* (2003), and Diana Abu-Jaber's *Arabian Jazz* (1993), *Crescent* (2003) and *The Language of Baklava* (2005), among others.

II.4.Character Analysis of Most Famous Arab American Novels and the Discovery of Third Space

In this dissertation, I will try to mention some the greatest Arab American novels and their writers who tried to find that mysterious place which hold both of their Arab identity and their American belonging so as to be called the third place or eventually "home". Here follows, two of these talented Arab American writers and a partial analysis of their Arab American selected protagonists:

II.4.1.A Map of Home (2008) by Randa Jarrar

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The search for home remains one of the recurring themes in contemporary Arab American narrative. Randa Jarrar's coming-of-age novel entitled *A Map of Home* (2008) is praised for its uniqueness, as it is "unlike anything that has been published before it by Arab American writers." This novel is "by turns and sometimes all at once funny, moving, lewd, introspective, crass, sarcastic, witty, crude, and sincere" (Salaita, 2011, p.130).

The novel chronicles the story of the protagonist and narrator Nidali Ammar from birth to college. From the beginning, we learn that everything about Nidali is different, starting from the story of her birth and her very name. Assuming she was a boy, her father Waheed proceeds to name her Nidal for "struggle," as "he'd always known I was a boy, had spoken to me as a boy while I was tucked safely in Mama's uterus" (Jarrar, 2008,p.3).

As soon as he realizes his mistake, he corrects the name adding an "i" to make it possessive, meaning "my struggle," which the mother Fairuza does not appreciate, and so the reader witnesses a scene of a loud but at the same time humorous argument between the parents. Fairuza screams at Waheed saying, "I'm changing the girl's name right this instant! First you give her a stock boy's name, as though she's ready to be a struggler or a diaper-warrior, then you add a letter and think it's goddamn unique" (Jarrar,2008, p.6).

As Steven Salaita states, "the scene of Nidali's birth sets the novel's tone, including as it does a vicious yet humorous fight between her parents, replete with colorful language, and a narrative that oscillates between serious and lighthearted" (2011, p.131).

Just like Jarrar, Nidali was born in the United States to a Palestinian father and a Greek-Egyptian mother. The Palestinian element plays a dominant role in Nidali's sense of identity and belonging. According to her, "Baba said that moving was part of being Palestinian. 'Our people carry the homeland in their souls,' he would tell me at night as he tucked me in. This was my bedtime story when I was three, four. 'You can go wherever you want, but you'll always have it in your heart'" (Jarrar, 2008,p.9). Nidali,indeed, personifies this nomadic

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identity as she moves from Boston to Kuwait where she grows up, and then her family flees to Alexandria, Egypt, during the first Gulf War, and finally she moves back to the United States when she is in high school. Nidali's coming-of-age experience, therefore, carries the moral and social adventures she undertakes in her passage through a number of countries and cultures, and whose impact is essential to the forging of the girl's personality and identity forging, and at the same time, to her awareness of the instability of belonging.

Salaita(2011) states that "this instability is commensurate with the complicated lives of the Ammar family, whose members must constantly redraw maps to itinerant homes" (p.134). Hence, in this atmosphere of homelessness and cultural transplantation, Nidali tries to find a place for herself in the world through by aiming to have her own voice, to become a writer.

II.4.2. I, the Divine: A Novel in First Chapters (2001) by Rabih Alameddine

The Lebanese American writer and painter Rabih Alameddine also explores in his work the sense of home and/or the homeland in the culturally hybrid experiences of his Arab American characters. Born in Jordan in 1959 to Lebanese Druze parents, he grew up in Kuwait and Lebanon until the age of 17, when he moved to England and then to California. Author of *Koolaid*(1999), *The Prev*(1999), *I, the Divine: A Novel in First Chapters* (2001), and *The Hakawati*(2008), Alameddine works on multilocational stories and characters situated on two sides of the world, i.e. the Middle East and America. The images that his works convey of the homeland, in this case Lebanon, are related to "war, disease, rape, and insanity, all equally dispersed in his novels to reflect an historical era that is devoid of moral form or meaning" (Al Maleh, p.36).

I, the Divine (2001) is a complete novel which technically never moves beyond the first chapter. It is a fragmented narrative attempting to reconstruct the life of an Arab American woman, Sarah Nour El-Din. The novel carries a collection of the protagonists' failed and

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fragmented attempts to write a novel and a memoir, since she is unable to put together all the pieces of the story of her life. That is why she only manages to write the first chapters of her memoirs. Depicting exilic and diasporic Arab American identities, the novel stresses contemporary transnational connections based rather on the critical and complex relation with the homeland. Alameddine focuses on the diasporic experience of Sarah who, born and raised in Beirut to a Lebanese father and an American mother, witnesses a part of the Lebanese civil war before she moves to the America at the age of twenty. After falling in love with Omar, both of them decide to rebel against her Druze family and his Greek Orthodox parents, and elope to New York where Sarah gives birth to their son. When Omar decides to go back to Lebanon, she divorces him and stays in New York without her child.

Sarah spends her time constantly going back and forth between the U.S. and Lebanon, which constitutes an ongoing process of physical and ideological negotiation of both cultures. Through Sarah's story, the novelist addresses personal dislocation as it is displayed in the following extract: "Can there be any here? No. She understands there. Whenever she is in Beirut, home is in New York. Whenever she is in New York, home is Beirut. Home is never where she is but where she is not" (Alameddine, 2001,p.99).

Sarah feels displaced in both "homes" as she does not belong completely in either of them. Thanks to this transnational standpoint, the protagonist is given a space where she probes cultural questions and performs this negotiation process in order to reach to self-understanding.

The novel problematizes national and cultural belonging as the protagonist's suspension between the two nations makes her constant border-crossing fluid and flexible. This position facilitates the articulation of Sarah's in-between identities and pokes the door of the emergence of third space because she is able to examine and evaluate both backgrounds from a critical perspective. Therefore, Sarah's fragmented narrative is a reflection of her

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fragmented heterogeneous background as her rebellion against her Lebanese family, clan and principles leads her to try hard to adopt her newfound American individuality. She says: “I hated Umm Kalthoum. I wanted to identify only with my American half. I wanted to be special. I could not envision how to be Lebanese and keep any sense of individuality” (p.229). Here, she exposes her binary sense of belonging, identifying America with individualism and independence, and Lebanon with community and collectivity. She continues:

“I have been blessed with many curses in my life, not the least of which was being born half Lebanese and half American. Throughout my life, these contradictory parts battled endlessly, clashed, never coming to a satisfactory conclusion. I shuffled between the need to assert my individuality and the need to belong to my clan, being terrified of loneliness and terrorized of losing myself to relationships”. (p.229)

Sarah does not make clear which component of her fractured self is the burden, but most importantly she comes to recognize that this inner conflict is the consequence of her attempts to separate individuality and clan. Then she wonders, “have I begun to realize that like my city, my American patina covers an Arab soul?” (p.229).

Hence, Sarah gradually comes to realize that what she really needs is a combination of individuality and family affection, which helps her come to terms with her family in which she displays her pride in the closing of the final chapter:

“I have tried to write my memoir by telling an imaginary reader to listen to my story. Come learn about me, I said. But how can I expect readers to know who I am if I do not tell them about my family, my friends, the relationships in my life?” (p.308).

Sarah, then, realizes that she cannot continue her desperate attempt to escape from her clan among whom she seems to find a place for herself, and finally coming to terms with her multiple fragmented selves and countries.

Conclusion

As Bhabha expected, Things are more confusing if you your decisions are made in the basis of one of the two hyphenated cultural paths but he ensures that embracing both the old identity and the new individuality make life clearer and more peaceful. Moving from there, he states that, enunciation is the key forming the in between space for those of double identities in the case of Arab American individuals. Thus, Bhabha(1994) declares that these hybrid people struggle daily to make decisions controlling their attitudes and behaviors towards themselves and society.

Chapter Three:

Arabian Jazz
(Characters' Analysis)

CHAPTER ONE :

Introduction

According to my humble way of thinking, I claim profoundly that Diana Abu-Jaber is prominent representative of a generation of Arab American writer who has been trying hard to create and develop a space of her own within ethnic literatures in the United States. Her work undercuts the mainstream preconceived notions of what constitutes Arab American subjectivity, thus creating her own versions of individual and collective Arab American identities. She provides a wonderful setting for the negotiation of the Third Space in the Arab American context because to the vast range of persons and tales with diverse histories that she presents. My analysis of her novel intends to show how she deconstructs essentialized frameworks of identity through the construction of an ant essentialist Arab American subjectivity rooted in the Arab American experience. This unstable subjectivity is definitely complex and multilayered, which makes the exploration of such work an exquisite critical exercise.

This chapter will be dedicated to the study of the characters of the novel *Arabian Jazz* that I consider to be a story of displacement. My aim is to observe the identification options that Diana Abu-Jaber offers to their Arab American female characters. I will therefore examine the complex Arab American female identities of Jemorah and Melvina as well as the third space negotiations that the characters in the novels go through.

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III.1. Arabian Jazz (1993) by Diana Abu Jaber

Within the perspective of contemporary Arab American literature, the choice of Abu-Jaber's first new Arabian Jazz(1993) as the object of my study sounded nearly egregious, since it was entered and hailed as a “ corner work in the Arab American tradition”. It was the first Arab American novel to reach a large mainstream American readership, and come a foundation of a heated debate about the construction and critical depiction of a contemporary Arab American identity.

Abu- Jaber herself seems to embody in her biographical circumstances the hyphenated experience which marks ethnical narratives in the Unites States. Born of a mixed heritage, she makes mongrel the center of Arabian Jazz's narrative converse. Numerous of her introductory motives can be traced back, still discontinuously, to her double heritage. She was born in 1959 to a Jordanian emigrant father – himself of a mixed heritage, with a Bedouin Jordanian father and a Palestinian mama – and an American mama from Irish- German stock.

Abu- Jaber's nonage was spent in a typical American middle- class terrain, since the family had settled in the small city of Euclid, outside of Syracuse, New York. When she was seven, her family, her parents and two youngish sisters, moved to Amman, Jordan, where they “ spent some time living among yards and trellised jasmine and extended family ”(Abu- Jaber,2004, p.122), giving her an experience of dis- position or relegation. Two times latterly, they returned to America to settle down again in Syracuse. Abu- Jaber reveals the transmission through paternal authority of the experience of duality, as she writes the following

“My father couldn't make up his mind about which country we should live in. In America, he constantly reminded us that we were good Arab girls; we were n't allowed to go

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out to parties or academy balls. But also he encouraged us to study single- mindedly, to contend as intensively as any boy, and to always make our own way in the world. ”(p.122)

Following her father’s will, Abu- Jaber entered her undergraduate degree from the State University of New York- Oswego, as one of her uncles tutored there so he could keep an eye on her while she lived in a dormitory. The original experience of freedom that university provides was to be constantly tutored and covered so as to save a set of paternal motherland values. She earned her PhD in English and Creative Writing from the University of Binghamton. She tutored English and creative jotting at the University of Michigan, the University of Oregon and the University of Miami. She has been tutoring at Portland University since 1996 and divides her time between Portland and Miami.

Abu- Jaber’s finding of her own mongrel voice in the autobiographical experience of a mixed Arab American background determines the introductory thematic concern of her first two novels *Arabian Jazz*(1993) and *Crescent*(2003), and her book entitled *The Language of Baklava*(2005), showing a progressive problematization of the issues she addresses.

The new posits itself in a double tradition of hyphenation and mongrel in its depiction of the struggle of a Jordanian American family to find its place in the American setting of upstate New York.

III.2.The Frail Picture of Female Arab American Character in Relation to Third Space

Abu- Jaber situates her narrative in a poor white neighborhood, on the one hand, to concentrate on the way this small white community perceives values and differences; and on the other, to suggest the significance of growing up and attaining one’s identity in this particular frame, taking into account that identity is constructed out of a binary process of

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identification with, and resistance to, some given situations. The city of Euclid offers a setting where Abu- Jaber tries to open the debate on the concession of an Arab American identity as her characters try to find their own Third Space in this frame. Euclid becomes the home of a transplanted Jordanian American family, the Ramouds, conforming of Matussem, the Jordanian father, and his two daughters Jemorah(Jem) and Melvina(Melvie) and the shadow of their dead mama (Nora) without forgetting their auntie(Fatima) which I, found hard to understand.

Abu- Jaber creates a completely American setting which, in principle, could act as the central converse towards which or against which Arab American identity is to be tested. This setting acts as a force of marginalization within the norms of American values – in this environment the fire of the two youthful womanish characters eschews an easy disjunction of the moreover – or Arab/ American – to come a form of multi and problematic identification

In addition to that, the family's moving to Euclid is directly connected to the mama 's death, after which Matussem decides to choose this city as a new home for his family rather of Syracuse, where they've been living until also. This can be considered another unsettling element because the loss of Nora, the mama , is linked to the loss of what the girls until that moment have regarded as home. On the other hand, the father's decision comes down to his desire to settle down nearly and accordingly to bring to an end the vagrant tradition of his Bedouin family.

Euclid is portrayed as Matussem's new home, and particularly, as his private Palestine that his parents formerly left before for Jordan and noway had the possibility to go back to.

thus, this city is the land left for him after Nora's death. Unlike Palestine, in this case Euclid as a land is still then but its history which is Nora is lost.

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The death of the girls' Irish American mama Nora of typhus, while on a visit to Jordan, has been a turning point in the relation of the Ramouds with Nora's parents. formerly in the field, they're entered with the grandmother's allegations to Matussem, ““ you killed her. You. You killed her. You. You killed ' His son's hand in his was iron hot. ” The grandparents' response suggests that they see the girls as cohorts in their mama's death.

The death of Nora, thus, has formed her parents' resentment, and accordingly the Ramouds are doomed to face rejection as well as abomination within their own family sphere.

Rejection and abomination feel to have helped shape the girls' knowledge about their difference since their nonage. Their physical aspect accentuates this difference, as they “ looked so likewise, their skin the same pale shimmer of olive, the same glints of blue in their hair ”(Abu- Jaber ,1993,p.31).

Consequently, the patterns of psychic identification of Matussem's daughters are problematized not only by the question of the double artistic identity but also by the early experience of loss of the mama figure and the consequent relegation of the imaginary, as well all leading to facing dislocation in the idea of belonging to one stable ground.

III.3. The Struggle of Belonging and Emergence of Third Space for the Ramoud Female members

Abu Jaber intends to let Jem and Melvie have their own struggle during this trip and allow them in this way to produce their own stories. In this environment, Mazen Naous states that ““ Jemorah ' is a transliteration of the Arabic word meaning ' live coal ' (Baalbaki, p.430) and ' Melvina ' is a name of Irish origin. The sisters' names decide from their parents' artistic backgrounds Arab and Irish American ”(p.63) thus, the actuality of Jem and Melvie in itself symbolizes this union between the Arab and the American sides. On the other hand, they've

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different comprehensions of what it means to be Arab American, reflected in each one's struggle to straddle both societies she belongs to and to find a place for herself in America. also, the two sisters have contrary characters. While Jemorah emerges as a silent utopian lacking tone- confidence and bus- regard, Melvina is realist and largely determined.

III.3. 1. Jemorah: The Silent Dreamer:

In one of the flashbacks to Jemorah's nonage, we learn that her Arab features have provoked the hostility of children in the academy machine.

“They teased Jem because of her strange name, her darker skin She flashed back the sensation of their hands on her body as they teased her, a splashing abomination running over her arms, legs, through her hair. They asked her stag questions, searched for her sickness, the fissure that would let them into her freshness. She no way let them. She learned how to close her mind, how to vanish in her seat, how to blur the sound of searing voices chanting her name”

(Abu- Jaber,1993, p. 92- 93)

Jemorah's Arab half, which formerly led to her grandparents' denial, seems also to impact her first experience of socialization as a sprat at academy. The other kiddies' mockery that turns occasionally into importunity dominates Jem's everyday life as a child to the point that it haunts her nights.

This tormenting experience not only makes the girl open her eyes to her difference from others but also helps her develop her own strategy of defense conforming of just “fading.” Once she gets on the machine, she contemporaneously crosses the door of her own world where her persecutors' voices are just reduced to a background noise. also, she creates a new world of her own where she forbids access to these kiddies, which helps her come strong enough to ignore their commentary and mockery. Abu- Jaber's deliberate crossing of color

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boundaries affects the formerly complex identity plot, and accordingly, the Arab American individualities in the timber. In fact, one of the novel's most revealing scenes is Jem's battle with Portia, her administrator at the sanitarium. Jemorah's multitudinous attempts to quit her unrewarding office job have constantly faced Portia's intimidation, until the day she decides to leave for good. The administrator calls her into her office, and there she reveals her intention to keep her under her command. She starts her homily talking about Jem's mama,

“Your mama used to be such a good girl. She was so beautifully white, pale as a flower. And also, I do not know. What happed? The silly girl wanted attention. She met your father in her alternate time (of council) and she just wanted attention This man, he could not speak a word of our language, did not have a real job. And Nora was so – like a flower, a real flower, I ’m telling you. It sounded like three days after she met that man, they were getting wedded. A split second latterly she was pregnant. I know for a fact her poor mama – your grandmother – had to ask for a picture of the man for her church clerk to show around to prove he was not a Negro. Though he might as well have been, really, who could tell the difference, the one lives about the same as the other” (Abu- Jaber, 1993, p. 293)

On the other hand, Portia considers herself a rescuer with a civilizing charge, that of saving this Arab American youthful woman. She warns Jem that she'll always be an inferior misfit unless she accepts her offer to help her get relieve of her maternal Arab heritage that she considers savage, primitive and impure.

Therefore, Abu- Jaber intends to let Jem and Melvie have their own struggle during this trip and allow them in this way to produce their own stories. In her interview with RobinE. Field, Abu- Jaber explains this point, pertaining to it as “directly killing the parents” (Abu- Jaber, 1993). She adds that “you ’ve got to put them way down from you and say ‘I’ve to have an imaginative space in which to recreate myself.’” This is exactly what she's doing with her

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protagonists, and that she describes as a preoccupation of hers to observe the characters' development in these specific circumstances.

Abu- Jaber reveals Jem's passiveness in the sense that she depends on others to define who she is. On the one hand, she's Arab because she's defined by her family as similar, and on the other, she complains about her mama 's early death which has averted her from enjoying her American part. thus, Jem intends to put an end to her struggle to find a balance and understand her hyphen. She explains her decision through the disaffection she feels in America. She says that, "effects are changing for me. I've started to see better, like the way I do not fit in. I have not put together a life. I 'm still living at home, I've been working at a job I detest. I 'm so tired of being a child, being good, wanting people to like me. They do not like Arabs". (Abu Jaber, 1993, p.327- 328) . Hence, Melvina declares herself, and thus her family and her family, to be American. She states that they aren't less Americans than the others as she refers to the substance of America, the nation of settlers.

Jem's third space mission was challenging and winding. Due to her Arabian physical appearance, which made it impossible for her to blend in with a white culture, Jemorah has sought to live undercover since she was a little girl. Because she pays too much attention to what other people think of her and as a result has become somewhat weak, this white culture and her mother's friend Portia have complicated matters for her. In the end, Jemorah realized that her Arab side exists and she happily embraces it so that she can forget the past trauma and move on. As a result, Jemorah's life was somehow caught between her Arabian identity and her American individuality, which had a significant impact on her social life and especially her love life with Ricky Ellis.

III.3. 2.Melvina: The Strong Nurse

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Melvina's peculiar character is explosively affected by her mama's absence. In this sense, her personality is the outgrowth of her early nonage recollections, and particularly the vague distant moments that she, as a two-time-old baby, has lived with her mama. Her imagination is constantly reproducing the night when her mama dies, "She had met with death tête-à-tête. When she was two and a half, she'd sat up in her crib in her parents' bedroom in Jordan and watched it come in through the window" (p.178). Melvie pretends that, despite her age at that moment, she still remembers every single second of that night when she sees death coming to take her mama off, as it "protruded through the air in a robe, like the bones that flew around belly hop, a robe like Salome's. It turned over and over, tumbling in crowds over their heads as Melvina kept watch"(p.178). At that moment, she learns "artificially, inarticulately, that death came to people in particular guises one would see a cover where another saw a fish or a star. This robe, she understood, would be the way death revealed itself to her" (p.178).

Therefore, touched off by her helplessness to do anything to help death from taking off her mama, she decides to come a nanny. She explains that "from that night on she knew she was called to pursue the topmost of professions, the most physically, emotionally, and intellectually demanding of any field, the most knew and martyred, the closest to divinity nanny" (Abu- Jaber, 79).

Melvie's devotion to her job makes her a full-time nanny whether at sanitarium or outside. This is reflected, for case, in her relationship with the heroin addict Larry Fasco whom she provides with methadone from the sanitarium to help him ease his dependence. Acting then like a "healer and killer" (Chérif, 2003,p. 217) at the same time, the fact that she's the one who gives him the medicines ensures her control of the situation. In this way, in her particular involvement with people she remains in her part of nanny. Indeed, her relationship with her family and father follows this pattern as not only is she concerned with their surroundings but also, she feels responsible for their well-being.

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Then, we find a fully different experience of Third space trip. Melvina, acts like she controls her life, hence, she's responsible for her family's safety as if she, in a cerebral moral, hold the charge of balancing her family's happiness with furnishing little worries in answering the question of her artistic ethnical identity as if she does not care if she's Arab or American. Accordingly, Melvina succeeded in moving on from her mama 's death which made her no lower than a redeemer or a heroine of the family. as a hyphenated existent, Melvie identifies with some particular artistic labels related to her ancestors' motherland. It seems that she has set up her own formula of concession to come to terms with her double heritage, which enables her to enjoy both sides of the hyphen.

III.3.3. Aunt Fatima: Adviser or Controller

In the middle of all this, we find the tyrannous character of Aunt Fatima, Matussem's family, who tries to play the part of counsel for her whoresons, and hence fill the space left by the missing mama. Fatima can be described as the minister of the Old Country in America whom Abu- Jaber makes use of in order to test the validity of numerous of the training and principles the aunt intends to transmit to her American whoresons.

Aunt Fatima is really the champion of her motherland's conservative values that she tries to sustain in America. She emerges as a loud, novelettish, melodramatic and entertaining matchmaker who's obsessed with the idea of chancing Arab misters for her whoresons. Fatima's character, still, is much more complex than that, as Abu- Jaber makes use of her to bring the memory of womanish experience of the history in the country of origin. An important part of Matussem's family's life has been shaped by trauma and loss. While she moved from Jordan to America in the early sixties, "a time after (her family) did, in order to keep an eye on him" (Abu- Jaber, 1993,p.3), her trip was inspired by her traumatic gests of

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poverty, burials and imprisonment back home. The dark part of it is surely her participation in the burial alive of four child sisters.

Without mistrustfulness, Fatima is doing her stylish to intermediate in her whoresons' construction of their Arab American womanish identity and accordingly keep them under her sphere of control. The aunt doesn't miss any occasion to express her rejection of mixing with Americans. For case, when one of her whoresons marries an American woman, she "attended the marriage dressed in black and gave them a card written in Arabic, 'Samir, this would kill your holy mama, bless her sacred name, if she were still alive'" (Abu- Jaber,p.44). The marriage, in this case, becomes a burial represented by the color of Fatima's outfits. She believes that as a consequence of this union, Samir will be cut off from his old ways and ties which an Arab woman could duly save. The black color, also, refers to the mourning for the loss of Samir as a member of the community as well as the breaking of the womanish chain immortalizing the motherland's patriarchal social order.

In thatmatter, Fatima's preoccupation with the marriage issue shapes her relationship with her defying whoresons whom she tries to inseminate from an early age that the family's honor depends on them.

Therefore, Fatima doesn't show any interest in the culture of the country where she has spent utmost of her life, as she has chosen to stick to the Old Country's values and repel integration. It's important then to punctuate what Abu- Jaber refers to as the deep "sense of peril" (p.360) that the aunt feels towards everything American. She perceives Americanization as a trouble to the survival of her Arab values in the New World. In fact, she's unfit to imagine herself outside this model, hence the absence of the fewest intention to go through aconcession process to establish her sense of belonging which she considers it only as an abstract cover for her damaged motherland.

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Moving from that, we come to the conclusion that aunt Fatima is n't seeking for integration nor for acceptance of belonging, she only believes that she's responsible of guarding the other hyphen of the children's identity when reaching out for the in between space as called the third Space.

Conclusion

The Arab American female characters in the novel strangely place a lot of stress on what other people think of them until they come to the conclusion that the only thing that counts is their happiness, not the other way around, as I have pointed out in my study of the in-between places the novel provides. Melvina and Jemorah both had an interesting journey to discover their in-between space, which is a third space that is completely different from the two sisters' attempts to overcome the obstacles posed by their dual identities and by social class, gender, and ethnicity.

General Conclusion

In this discussion, I've studied the miscellaneous nature of the Arab American erudite character experience in the United States of America and their trip towards third space through the selection of Diana Abu Jaber novel *Arabian Jazz*. Arab American Diana have the gift to illustrate the obstaclesfacing hyphenated people who live in the stake of two sides of motherland ethnical identity and morals significance on one hand and living on the rules of the host land multilateral community on the other. Jemorah, Melvina and aunt Fatima gave us a great assignment on how the idea of third space is shaped or rather say embraced.

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The first chapter provides a literal and erudite frame for the whole discussion, through which I've tried to trace the development of the contemporary Arab American double tradition marking the great deeds of Al Rabita Al Kalamia. utmost of the work of pen league paved the way for pens like Abu Jaber to picture the sensitive and cruel life of Arab American community in America. As to that, I handed my discussion with most important terms that can explain the idea of third space and its relationship to the reality of contemporary Arab American character. also, this new generation of Arab American womanish pens has been publishing a growing erudite product, including fabrication, biographies, poetry and non-fiction, trying to punctuate the diversity, complexity, and also uproariousness of the Arab American experience. Admitting their Arab ethnical background, they try to consolidate their tradition within the broad diapason of multilateral America.

The second chapter is a theoretical frame which offers a description of Homi Bhabha's conception of the Third Space, through which the scholar challenges ethnocentric sundries of identity and identity. He argues that the mongrel position destabilizes any stable double opposition or order because it constitutes a place where orders are crossed, and where a space between defined subject positions is created. For this reason, he deconstructs the pre-given generality of identity both at individual and collaborative situations, suggesting that it must rather be enunciated. The Third Space, thus, provides mongrel individualities with the possibility to produce a space where they can maintain a process of restatement and concession of their difference. I've tried to demonstrate that contemporary Arab American literature articulates Bhabha's conception of the Third Space through the donation of the work of Randa Jarrar and Rabih Alameddine. Their focus on race glasses the proclamation of mongrel as the substance of an Arab American identity, being an exclusive element of the mosaic of ethnical America as a part of their hyphenated mongrel identity and belonging.

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In the third chapter, my analysis of the construction of womanish Arab American individualities concludes with the idea of the multilayered subjectivity and struggle of Arab American women and the conception of Third space for each of the two sisters Jemorah and Melvina moving to their aunt Fatima troubled sense of Arab ethnical artistic roots and turndown of American reality. In *Arabian Jazz* (1993) by Diana Abu- Jaber, the two Jordanian American sisters Jemorah and Melvina face the task of negotiating the multiple sets of duality they find themselves in two societies, two families, two countries, two individualities, and two languages. Their performance as youthful Arab American women in the United States is shaped and re-shaped by these rudiments on a diurnal base. My analysis of this novel was to depict the cortege of the the white community that Ramoud family lives in and shadowing the light on the gap caused by the death of the mama. This gap caused an internal damage in the personality of the two sisters performing to reforming a significant in between space that differ radically between the two sisters. Despite the reality of their Arab American intercultural cross lines both of Jemorah and Melvina succeeded in reaching their peaceful third space without losing any of their hyphenated mongrel individualities. Indeed, third space has a large impact of the geste and stations of the two sisters giving Melvina the strength to cover her family and furnishing Jemorah with the courage to cancel her marriage with her kinsman and follow her dream to finish her studies in university.

Abu Jaber has the gift of grabbing her followership attention through unanticipated plots and rich settings. Each time, Abu Jaber creates an Arab American character that fights for her in between space to live in peace in its host land reality and embracing its motherland artistic heritage. But as an Arabe American pen, Abu Jaber fell to the trap of being bias to one of her two intercultural individualities, in her novel *Arabian Jazz*, she illustrates the home land as the worst fate that could be to the Ramoud sisters and their American side is their stopgap, matter of fact, stopgap for the entire family, depicting little excrescencies of this

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country in comparison to their motherland Jordan. Despite all of that, Abu Jaber is one of the most brilliant Arab American pens who gave the idea of third space a whole different dimension providing each Arab American literary character with time to find their enunciated third space.

ملخص

تهدف هذه الرسالة إلى مناقشة واقع الأدب العربي الأمريكي المعاصر الذي ساهم بشكل كبير في فهم دور الفضاء الثالث في التحكم في سلوك الشخصية الأدبية العربية الأمريكية فيما يتعلق بهويتهم العربية وانتمائهم الأمريكي. أدى تفسير مثل هذا الاستفسار إلى الحاجة إلى استخدام وجهة النظر التحليلية القائمة على الملاحظة لتصوير الصورة الحقيقية للشخصية العربية الأمريكية المتعلقة بعرقها وجنسها وانتمائها. لسوء الحظ ، تم العثور على القليل من الأبحاث حول هذا الموضوع مقارنة بضرورته القصوى في فهم العلاقة بين سلوك الشخصية الأدبية والفضاء الثالث. الهدف الرئيسي في هذه الرسالة هو التقاط السمات الرئيسية للشخصية الأدبية العربية الأمريكية وتأثير المركز الثالث على طريقة عيشهم. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، سنصور تحيز الكاتبة الأمريكية العربية ديانا أبو جابر للثقافة الأمريكية، مدعية بشكل غير مباشر أن المنزل هو المكان الذي وجدت الشخصية نفسها فيه لا تخسر. ومع ذلك ، فهي ترسم الصورة الحية لنتائج التواجد في مجتمع مهاجر مثل المجتمع الأمريكي وخاصة على النساء من أجل فهم الروايات في ضوء نظريات الشتات ، لا بد من معرفة المؤلفين ومحتوى الرواية من خلال تحليل جوانب محددة تم تصويرها في الرواية ، أميل إلى فتح عنصر جديد حول تجربة الشتات بين الأمريكيين العرب ، وخاصة النساء المهاجرات ، من خلال تغيير المفهوم النمطي القائل بأن هؤلاء النساء لديهن نفس التجربة. لذلك ، سيستخدم هذا البحث مناهج الدراسات الاجتماعية ونفسية لاستكشاف المخاوف التي تواجه الشخصيات العربية الأمريكية في الرواية. على الرغم من أن هذه الرسالة عبارة عن تحليل أدبي ، إلا أنها تسعى إلى استكشاف العناصر السياسية والاجتماعية والنفسية التي تؤثر على تفاوض النساء العربيات حول هوياتهن في سياق الهجرة من منظور ديانا أبو جابر.

Résumé

Cette thèse vise à discuter de la réalité de la littérature arabo-américaine contemporaine, qui a contribué de manière significative à comprendre le rôle du tiers espace dans le contrôle du comportement du personnage littéraire arabo-américain à l'égard de son identité arabe et de son affiliation américaine. L'interprétation d'une telle enquête a conduit à la nécessité d'utiliser le point de vue analytique et observationnel pour dépeindre la véritable image du caractère arabo-américain lié à sa race, son sexe et son affiliation. Malheureusement, peu de recherches ont été trouvées sur ce sujet qui se compare à sa nécessité absolue pour comprendre la relation entre le comportement des personnages littéraires et le tiers espace. L'objectif principal de cette thèse est de saisir les principales caractéristiques de la figure littéraire arabo-américaine et l'influence du tiers-lieu sur leur mode de vie. De plus, nous décrivons le parti pris de l'auteur arabo-américaine Diana Abu-Jaber envers la culture américaine, affirmant indirectement que la maison est l'endroit où le personnage se retrouve sans perdre. Cependant, il brosse un tableau saisissant des conséquences d'être dans une société immigrée telle que la société américaine, en particulier sur les femmes. Afin de comprendre les romans à la lumière des théories de la diaspora, il est nécessaire de connaître les auteurs et le contenu des En analysant des aspects spécifiques dépeints dans le roman, je tends à ouvrir un nouvel élément sur l'expérience de la diaspora chez les Arabes américains, en particulier les femmes immigrées, en changeant la notion stéréotypée selon laquelle ces femmes ont la même expérience. Par conséquent, cette recherche utilisera des études sociales et des approches psychologiques pour explorer les préoccupations auxquelles sont confrontés les personnages arabo-américains dans le roman. Bien que cette thèse soit une analyse littéraire, elle cherche à explorer les éléments politiques, sociaux et psychologiques qui influencent la négociation de l'identité des femmes arabes dans le contexte de la migration du point de vue de Diana Abu Jaber.

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