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Representation of Half-Arab Half -American: Homi K. Bhabha's Third Space in Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*

Abeer Oday Ismael
Prof. Dr. Lamiaa Ahmed Rasheed
English Department
Education College of Women
Tikrit University

Abstract

Being third-world women immigrants into the cosmopolitan world and attempting to find self-scattering belonging in between East and West is the hardest struggle that one may encounter. This struggle is the core subject of the present study, which is going to explore the cultural hybridity strands Laila Halaby introduces throughout her novel, *Once in a Promised Land* (2007). It analyzes the identity of the Arab Muslim diasporic community as being victimized due to cultural diversity. It concentrates on the significance of cultural options to establish an identity as a negotiation process and articulates cultural diversity. It demonstrates how Halaby addresses the hybrid world in which no identity and culture are essential or pure. Homi K. Bhabha's critical approach, ‘Hybridization in Third Space’, is adopted as the theoretical framework of this study. The manuscript employs Bhabha's concepts that include the main motives: the challenging of the young generation in the host culture, understanding of other existent cultures, and contestation of privileges between cultures, which finally produce multiple values, meanings, and identities. Finally, the research concludes that diasporic communities face resentment in identity and language while living in a hybrid world that has no platform to represent them. A world where third space is not productive enough for diasporic communities because of which they become struggling to identify and survive their identities.

Key Words

Laila Halaby, Homi Bhabha, 9/11attack, Third Space, Hybridity, Hyphen Identity, Arab-American Immigrants.

Introduction

Arab -Americans term refers to individuals who belong to Arab League countries in origin. Most of their religion is Muslim and Christian. Their identity comes from their original culture and their incorporation into

American society. Arab Americans are frequently identified by their language (Arabic), religion (Muslim), and country of origin (Middle East). Since not all three typical descriptors apply, describing an Arab American is challenging. The first wave showed that Arab Americans might be Middle Eastern but not Muslim. Language is another concern, as certain Middle Eastern groups do not speak Arabic. They are not Arabs. (Mc Clam &Woodside, 2016, p.153). Arab immigrants sought a better life for themselves and their families in the United States. Some came to the United States to make it their permanent home; others intended to remain for just a short time, perhaps to earn money or get a higher education before returning home, but eventually opted to become permanent citizens. Most of them dwell in big metropolitan regions such as Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, New York, and Washington, D.C., although others reside in small communities. (Arida & Ameri, 2012, p.2)

Arab immigration to the United States started in the late eighteenth century and has persisted into the twenty-first century, although in small numbers. There have been three waves of large-scale Arab immigration: the first between 1870 and 1924, when strict national quotas on immigration to the United States were implemented; the second between 1948, when Israel was founded, and 1967; and the third since 1967 when Israel captured the West Bank, greater Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and the Golan Heights from neighboring Arab countries. The earliest waves of Arab immigration to the United States were mostly Christian, but subsequent waves were predominantly Muslim. Despite religious differences, their motives for moving were the same early on; the first wave of immigrants was inspired by economic hardship in their homelands, but succeeding waves would be motivated by political instability and dreams for a higher quality of life. (Giment&Radzilowski, 2015, p.773)

Today, the political situation of the United States and the Arab world substantially impact Arab American life and culture. The tragedy of the 9/11 terrorist attacks had a tremendous impact on Arab Americans; many were killed, While some came out as heroes, and others have suffered from unjustified suspicion, discrimination, collective responsibility, or fear of reprisals. Aftermath, an increasing number of immigrants from Arabic-speaking nations and their descendants started to identify as Arab Americans. Arab Americans remain an integral element of American life and culture today. Arab Americans continue to immigrate to America in pursuit of the American Dream. They think they have the right to enjoy the freedoms and privileges of American citizenship and support organizations that oppose prejudice. They retain solid familial ties and have created a hybrid family culture by blending traditions from their Arab homelands with modern American customs. They participate in public and political life by voting, becoming politically engaged, campaigning for office, or joining the military. Despite the challenges, Arab American life and culture flourish today and are integral to the American tapestry. (Arida & Ameri, 2012, p.ix)

Since the 1970s, hyphenated phrases have been used often to identify subgroups of the American mosaic. In reaction to politics in the Arab world, the hybrid "Arab-American" identity started to take shape at about the same time. Americans of Arab descent initiated political organizing and the formation of new groups and institutions. This initiative coincided with a fresh influx of immigrants from Lebanon, Palestine, and Iraq. Some of these newly arriving Arab immigrants resided in Arab American ethnic enclaves created in the early 20th century. Their presence contributed to strengthening and revitalizing Arab American identity in these communities. Before the terrorist events of September 11, 2001, some immigrants and their descendants identified primarily with the

particular Arab nation from where they or their ancestors had emigrated, such as Lebanon or Egypt, and some continue to do so now. For many Americans of Arab descent, though, common interests and experiences have fostered a feeling of community. (p.ix)

Arab-American identity has been changed by Arab immigrants in reaction to American attitudes and behaviour toward them and their own country. The immigrants' local American experiences also shape this identity, the places they settle, their relationships with older generations of immigrants, the reception and treatment they endure in their new environment, the diversity of the community they associate with, and their participation in organized religion. Increasingly, it has also been deeply impacted by actual and imagined American prejudice and hostility against Arabs and Muslims. (Haddad, 2011,p.14).

The clash between Arab communal values and the individuality and freedom of America heightens the stress of the hyphen for the identities of these Arab American women. Especially since any effort to adapt to American society requires breaking away from Arab family norms. Their challenges intensify contemporary Arab American women authors' hyphenation. Given their bicultural upbringings, these women struggle to establish a space for themselves; they want and fight for an Arab identity without being alienated by American culture. Concerns about the worsening of already damaging stereotypes about Arabs in the United States inhibit the capacity of Arab American women authors to discuss the obstacles they confront openly. With their impressive abilities. Ahmed, Kahf Halaby, and Abu-Jaber criticize intellectual trends that make concessions to Western and Eastern fundamentalist governments and movements, abandoning Arab women to their iron tyranny. These women use their literature to oppose the East, with its basic, repressive

governments, and the West, which regards them as tame and/or unenlightened foreign. Although their depiction of the Arab world with its oppressive patriarchal systems at times appears to fit stereotypical Western images of the underdeveloped Arab world with its domineering male and subjugated female, contemporary Arab American writers, emphasize that it is not their religion that has put them in this predicament. On the contrary, Islam has provided Muslim Arab women with rights that, if they are aware of them and request them, would ensure that they live a decent life. Finally, the hyphen becomes tenser for these Arab American women authors as they struggle to establish their place in a difficult environment, as Arab Americans have done in America despite decades of bigotry, persecution, and unfavorable stereotyping. Since 9/11, this has become much more obvious. Indeed, the post-9/11 mindset makes it especially appropriate to give voice to silent, disenfranchised Arab American women authors (Abdelrazak, 2007, p.2).

Non-Arab Americans have extensively addressed the problem of Arab women. However, Americans have long found them strange and difficult to express. Therefore, non-Arabs often misinterpret or falsify their identities in their work; as a result, Arab Americans are much less visible in America than in their own countries. As active as their male counterparts, Arab-American female authors attempted to challenge the Western concept and representation of women. Modern Arab American women are more knowledgeable and concerned about women's concerns in the Arab and American cultures. (Lidwig.2017, p.132) Arab American women authors, whether first-, second-, or third-generation immigrants, make up a very tiny percentage in the United States, but they all live and write about unique diasporic experiences in the country (Arida & Ameri, 2012, p.8).

Arab American women swing between the Arab and American cultures. While they want to embrace their Arab background, they cannot identify with the patriarchal features of society. However, they cannot completely belong to American society, which often rejects them due to racial and cultural disparities. Therefore, they all struggle to reconcile their splintered American identities with the cultural difficulties of being Arab American women. As a result, individuals confront obstacles within their communities about their sexual identities. In addition, they suffer political and social barriers from the greater American population, which exposes them to bigotry and discrimination. Consequently, they have no option except to reside in the border zone, the third area. This third area, situated between Arab and American cultures, is resistant to classification, persistence, and closure. Instead, Arab American women live in fluid "third-time spaces" that allow them to interact with both cultures, erasing any dichotomies between an essentialized self and other while keeping and enjoying their distinctions.. Due to the "middle state" in which exiled or immigrant identities exist, they also experience double vision or double consciousness. Indeed, Arab American women authors' preoccupation with finding a place within their bicultural upbringing and the quest for their Arab American identity has played a vital part in their works. While the specifics of their particular experiences vary, their cultural negotiation results in a double vision: while one eye is constantly focused on the American setting, the other is always focused on the Middle East. Arab American literature often conveys this dual perspective with a hint of Arab or American identities. Arab American women authors tackle the notion of doubleness and cultural "in-betweenness in their work; as they explore their numerous experiences, views, and heritages, they undergo a continual negotiation of self. As Lisa Majaj mentions in *The Post Gibran Anthology*

of Arah American Writing, "As hyphenated Americans we seek to integrate the different facets of ourselves, our experiences, and our heritages into a unified whole. But the schism in our vision often affects our balance: as we turn our gaze in two directions at once, we sometimes lose sight of the ground beneath our feet" (Amal, 2007, p.p.10-12).

Furthermore, what does home mean for Arab American women in a world of overlapping merging cultures and fluid moving geographical and cultural borders? More specifically, does home for these Arab American women refer to the newly adopted location from which they write: does home refer to the reservoir of public and private memories, or does home refer to that 'third space' where these women go after alienation from their original home and their adopted ones? These essential themes are addressed by contemporary Arab American women authors such as (Leila Ahmed, Mohja Khalaf, Laila Halaby, and Diana Abu Jaber), and each finds her way to manage the hyphen of her identity (Sabry, 2011, p.174).

Laila Halaby, an Arab American author of two novels (West of Jordan (2003) and (Once in a Promised Land (2007), represents a group of authors who give an opposing viewpoint by concentrating on the aftermath of the terrible incident. Laila Halaby, born in the mixed household of a Jordanian father and an American mother in Beirut, Lebanon, must have been aware of the alienation that characterized American culture soon after September 11. Laila exposes social concerns, examines cultural displacement, denounces stereotypes, and depicts immigrant life in post-9/11 America with sensitivity. The author personalizes the nation's pain by revealing the tragedy's many facets and its aftermath. (Rudaityte, 2012, p.169).Halaby, an Arizona-based female writer of Palestinian Jordanian and white American descent, is one of the post-9/11 fictional narratives that focuses on various socio-political concerns that define Arab American identity in pre-and post-9/11 America. Most of the work describes what it

means to be an Arab American after the destruction of the World Trade Center. Set in post-9/11 America. Once in a Promised Land is a title with double meaning. 'Once' may refer to a single instance, a bygone age, or a series, as in "Once I landed in the United States." (Sbiri et al., 2020, p.82).

The experience of exile is intimately associated with these concepts of border crossing and diaspora. Exile may be forced (due to colonialism or fear of political persecution) or voluntary (in quest of literary, political, or economic freedom and wealth), or both, as in Laila Halaby's West of the Jordan (2001). (Amal, 2007, p.9) On the other hand, diasporic Muslim authors have sought to account for the events of September 11 in terms of US involvement in the Third World and the Muslim migrant's experience of racial othering in the United States. *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) by Halaby reviews white Americans' ignorance and petty-minded isolationism against non-white immigration. A non-western migrant's viewpoint on life in the West, a 'Third World' perspective on America's worldwide operations, and an insider's perspective on what it is like to belong to a Muslim country (Nash, 2012, p.8).

As a postcolonial-diasporic work, the primary purpose of *Once in a Promised Land* is to fictionalize the impact of the post-9/11 political discourse on the lives of diasporic Arab American communities whose identity and mode of existence cannot be identified and defined outside the discourses of Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism. The post-9/11 discourse has shaped the identities of not just Muslims and Arabs in the so-called Third World but also those who moved to or were born in western nations, particularly the United States, where the post-9/11 "regime of truth" has labelled them "terrorist outsiders." (Sbiri et al., 2020, p.82).

In her work, Halaby attempts to establish transnational connectivities as the method for the formation of subjects and identities. The characters,

migrants such as Jassim and Salwa, are formed via the neoliberal bio-politics of choice. America provides them with several options in their everyday life that Jordan, their home nation, never did. Thus, Halaby frames her tale around the stereotype of the dichotomy of tradition and modernity, demonstrating a lively opposition between a Jordan that exemplified tradition and an America that exemplified modernity (Salaita, 2011,p.97).

Consequently, the diasporic site may be seen as a transitional region of identity, where local and global transnational influences reshape identity. In this way, diasporic identity is a hybridized identity, as the diasporic subjects reconstruct themselves in this place of in-betweenness. As presented by post-colonial thinker Homi K. Bhabha, his theory examines the questions of home, belonging, and country. According to him, in "the Third Space of enunciation", the contradiction between the colonizer and the colonized is dismantled, and a new post-colonial identity arises, unburdened by nationalist and colonialist thought (Nyman, 2009, p. 22).

Homi K. Bhabha is an Indian academic philosopher and one of the pioneer theorists famous for his cultural theory movement, known as post-colonial critique. The notions of hybridity, mimicry, difference, and ambivalence are developed in Bhabha's work, which is important to post-colonial theory. These notions explain the resistance of colonized peoples against the colonizer's control. This focus sheds light on our current predicament in a society characterized by a contradictory mix of forcefully declared cultural diversity and intricately intertwined globalization networks. Instead of seeing colonialism as a relic of the past, Bhabha demonstrates how its histories and cultures continually intrude on the present, compelling us to revise our conception of intercultural interactions. (Huddart 1) Bhabha’s idea, it challenges at a more

fundamental level as well. *The Location of Culture* invites to think about identity as not fixed, but flexible. The Western metropolis must address its postcolonial past, as narrated by its postwar migration and refugee inflow, as an indigenous or indigenous narrative integral to its national identity (Bhabha,1994,p.49).

The Location of Culture challenges western ontology philosophy of being and existence. Bhabha questioned how West/East, civilized/barbarian distinctions were developed and maintained. He intended to illustrate that colonial ideology depended on these categories being antagonistic and that their conflict pushed them closer and more linked than previously assumed. Bhabha wanted to destabilize nationality, gender, and class as "spaces of cooperation and contestation" that make up an unstable, hybrid self or society. He intended to demonstrate that all identities are composites of the numerous cultures and ideologies with which they interact (Fay and Haydon 30).

This paper aims to explore the formations of Arab American identities and immigrants' ethnic minorities by authors of ethnic identities based on the hybrid cultural identity. This study suggests focusing on the dilemma of immigrants in general and the challenges that Arab Muslim Americans struggles with after the attack of 11/9, particularly racial and ethnic discrimination as well as the re-representation of Arab-American immigrants to protect and present them. Also, reconciliation with the idea of cultural diversity; no pure community belongs to one race or nationality and merging the cultural boundaries. This study is considered a thematical and critical analysis that presents a stereotypical picture of the hyphenated identity that is dispersed between the culture of the country of origin and the culture of the resident country, as well as the conflicts and challenges that immigrants as an Arab Muslims in America faced with (self and other).

The study adopts Homi Bhabha's third space as the conceptual framework to analyze the novel.

Analysis

Arab-American women battle against the pervasive preconceptions that characterize them based on the orientalist image of Arab women from the eighteenth century. In their efforts to establish a new identity, they battle with two competing forces, each of which seeks to impose its conception of them rather than allowing them the freedom to create their own. These pressures include the mainstream's preconception of the racial group and the Arab community's political and social demands that restrict creative expression and identity reconstruction and the mainstream's preconception of the racial group. Arab-American women, however, reject stereotypes and preconceived notions of their identity and insist on establishing a new identity that sits in between (Huderwood&Hutchinson, 2017, p.46).

Once in a Promised Land relates the narrative of Jassim, a Jordanian hydrologist, who works as a water analyst in Tucson, and his wife Salwa, a Palestinian Jordanian, banker and real estate agent born in the United States and returned to her "promised land" after marrying Jassim. In the early days and months after the September 11 attacks. The tale focuses on a prosperous but ultimately disillusioned Arab American couple who have moved from the deserts of Jordan to the deserts of Arizona in pursuit of the so-called American dream. The events tackle the difficulties that Muslims and Arabs faced in the wake of 9/11 and how heightened patriotism and anxiety led to a toxic paranoia that had implications for everyone deemed an outsider. Through the tale of Jassim and Salwa, Halaby's book outlines the configurations of anti-Arab prejudice and exposes its dangerous repercussions. Because it drew from a known repertory of images of these communities, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discourse swiftly became the

basis for heightened patriotism. Halaby employs aspects of Arabic folklore to organize the book and portray the American Dream as a work of fiction, calling into question a key feature of the prevailing narrative. In addition, her utilization of the Arabic folkloric tradition highlights the concept of cultural mobility since the tradition acquires a new meaning in the American setting to challenge the notion that the American Dream is equally available to all members of society. Finally, it explores what makes a feeling of belonging and home.

To express the transnational diasporic issues in the narrative, the novelist employs myth and folklore to develop innovative discursive spaces for discussing the impacts of unfair racial profiling and cultural stereotypes. The work is narrated in both Arabic and English. A structural decision evocative of The 1001 Arabian Nights reflects the rhetoric of American fairy tales and Arab folklore. Halaby frames her narrative with a 'before and an after' section whose introductory lines correspond to the customary beginnings of Arab fairy tales. In this Arabic introduction:

> Kan ya ma kan fee Qadeem az-zamaan
> “They say there was or there wasn’t in older times a story
> as old as life, as young as this moment, a story that is yours
> and is mine” (Halaby, 2007, p.vii).

The story begins in the present, the two protagonists reside in Tucson, Arizona, and it illuminates their lives after the attacks on the World Trade Center. As Arabs Muslims, Salwa and Jassim are accused of committing this offence as a terrorist. They are not involved, but they must endure the repercussions and be implicated as if they are responsible for everything. Since they are seen as a threat to their fellow Americans, they are victims of this treatment:

> This is the tale of a man who delighted in the science of water … and a woman with a penchant for numerals (Arabic, not Roman) and a taste for silk pajamas…We really come to know them only after the World Trade Center buildings have been flattened by planes flown by Arabs, by Muslims. Salwa and Jassim are both Arabs. Both Muslims. But of course they have nothing to do with what happened to the World Trade Center. Nothing and everything" (Halaby, 2007, p.p. vii-viii).

Salwa, probably more than any other character, becomes disillusioned when she is faced with heightened patriotism after the assaults. Bhabha captures the uncanny nature of the migrant experience by using a variety of recognizable concepts. "First, this is a half-life, like the partial presence of colonial identity; second, it repeats a life lived in the country of origin, but this repetition is not identical, introducing difference and transformation; further, this difference-in-repetition is a way of reviving that past life, of keeping it alive in the present" (Huddart,2006,p.51). Bhabha makes the connection between memory and migrant identity for post-colonial and Multicultural Studies. That is related to her early belonging, as her mother mentioned, "Made in USA. Miss America.Oh, don't make Salwa do it; she won't know how—she was born in the U.S" (Halaby, 2007, p.47). Salwa considers the land she was born in her native country. She is distinguished by her fondness for silk pajamas that go with the luxurious life and living in America. "Oh no, Mama. These pajamas are beautiful, because in them you can be a queen" (Halaby, 2007, p.47). She grows up with a restlessness and desire to return to the land of her birth. Salwa's sense of home is complicated by the fact that her father describes her as "Palestinian by blood, Jordanian by residence, and American by citizenship. That is why she uses so much water and has a

taste for luxury. We tease her that she is really first world . A colonizer. You see, she even studies money" (Halaby, 2007p.70).

Bhabha evokes the uncanniness of the migrant experience through a series of familiar ideas. First, this is a half-life, like the partial presence of colonial identity; second, it repeats a life lived in the country of origin, but this repetition is not identical, introducing difference and transformation. Further, this difference in recurrence is a way of reviving that past life, of keeping it alive in the present. These figures of doubling and halving mark the experience of the colonized, as we have seen, but also that of the migrant (Bhabha, 1994, p.139). Salwa's desire to return to her homeland was why she accepted Jassim's marriage proposal "I would like that very much. I would like to go to America too" (Halaby, 2007, p.68). Her father informs Jassim that she does not need a visa to get US citizenship. "Salwa is an American citizen." (70). At the outset of the novel, however, her perception of the United States is based on the images of consumerism in the American narrative that is exported to other parts of the world and not a lived experience:

> America pulled and yanked on her from a very young age, forever trying to reel her in. Only the America that pulled at her was not the America of her birth, it was the exported America of Disneyland and hamburgers, Hollywood and the Marlboro man, and therefore impossible to find. Once in America, Salwa still searched and tripped and bought smaller and sexier pajamas in the hope that she would one day wake up in that Promised Land (Halaby 49).

The novel's first section depicts Salwa and Jassim's lives before September 11, 2001. Then, they had an American-style, luxurious existence. However, like every Arab-American, they have experienced

significant life changes since the attacks. Arab Americans Muslims seemed weird and suspicious to Americans; thus, they began questioning every outsider that appeared out of place. This depicts the image of Muslim Arab Americans accused of terrorists. The 9/11 atrocities branded Arabs with a stigma, and as a result, their portrayal in the American scene has become repulsive. Throughout the story, Salwa and Jassim's perspectives on their surroundings and their self-narratives in post-9/11 America change dramatically. Jassim, an adult, comes to the United States for school and employment, but Salwa comes for marriage and a luxurious lifestyle. The narrative function of each area complicates Jassim's relationship with the United States and Jordan. “His Ph.D. and experience were very impressive, but America, once tasted, is hard to spit out, with its shiny tools and machinery. Jordan pumps through the blood, but America stays in the mouth” (Halaby 64). Jassim worked at Jordan's Ministry of Water Resources after two years studying in the US in hopes of freeing Jordan from drought and dependence. Unfortunately, his ideas and innovative initiatives were neglected. Jassim returns to America and seems comfortable throughout the story, yet he is obsessed with the events around him. He represents Bhabha's idea of 'beyond' as explains that our existence today is living on the borderlines of the present. He asserts that such transformation leads us to beyond. “The beyond' is neither a new horizon, nor a leaving behind of the past ..... we find ourselves in the moment of transit where space and time cross to produce complex figures of difference and identity, past and present, inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion”(Bhabha, 1994, p.1).

Although the events shocked everyone, the most potent shock to Salwa was when her co-worker gave Joan the American flag poster as evidence of her belonging and her innocence of the act of her nationality “You should put one on your car, on the back window. You never know

what people are thinking, and having this will let them know where you stand" (Halaby, 2007 p. 55). This reflects the American perspective of Salwa; she is advised to represent herself as an American by applying flag decals. Naturally, this causes Salwa concern, as she wonders whether this will have "repercussions for Arabs." She addressed this with Randa, another significant Arabic Muslim character and Salwa's Lebanese-American best friend, to whom she often goes when she feels lost inside. Through the conversation between Salwa and Jassim, Halaby deftly conveys this dread and foreshadows the future transformation for Arabs, "Why would anyone hurt Randa's kids? People are not so ignorant as to take revenge on a Lebanese family for the act of a few extremist Saudis who destroyed those buildings." […] "People are stupid. Stupid and macho," (Halaby 21).

As Bhabha explains in *The Location of Culture*, the temporal and cultural differences collide, and new identifiers are forged. In this environment, the cultural norms and racial characteristics of the past are reinterpreted. The cultural distinctions are formed by tradition, yet they are contested and reinvented by contingencies and tensions. Cultural differences interact and negotiate, resulting in a change that generates something new and original. He argues that interstitial space's cultural interaction generates novelty distinct from both the past and the present. It generates a feeling of novelty as a revolutionary act of cultural translation "Such act does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent 'in-between' space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present" (Bhabha, 1994, p.7).

When Salwa discovers that she is pregnant, but she decides to keep the matter a secret because Jassim rejects the idea of having children

outside their homeland. She was subjected to repeated racial discrimination after the attack, which plunged her into an internal conflict between consciousness and sub-consciousness. How will she raise a child in an unhealthy environment far from everything she known in her life? "We cannot live here anymore" (Halaby, 2007, p.54), she wondered about the past nine years of schizophrenic reaction to American culture, which was nothing but superficial disdain, lost between reality and a dream. "That's what I've been doing. Killing time, not living" (56) what happens to Salwa Bhabha expounds it he does not negate the role of past and present. They play crucial roles in forming cultural identity and negotiating in-between cultural spaces. In fact, in-between space is not simply merging between two opposites. Nevertheless, it should be understood as confusion between two opposites and stands between oppositions at once. Being creative, fertile and unstable in the in-between space renders the confusion. He regards such phenomenon as one of the legacies of colonial discourse that is still operative in contemporary global culture. Consequently, they produce hybrid cultural identities. Bhabha's' in-between' might be defined as: "The creative, malleable indeterminacy involving feelings of simultaneously repulsion and desire that exist at the interface between self and other, or between the polarities of unequal world that we still inhabit, of what Bhabha calls the 'ongoing colonial present'" (Waugh,2006,p. 355).

Laila shows the image of Arab Muslims in the eyes of Americans in sympathetic scene when Salwa and Jassim go shopping in a mall. Amber, the clerk, called the security for Jassim because he is an Arab. Salwa did not tolerate what happened, and she spoke out asking why the clerk sent the security to her husband. This made the picture clear as how Americans started to look at Arabs. Thus was the view, "He just scared me." …"He just stood there and stared for a really long time, like he was high or

something. And then I remembered all the stuff that's been going on" (Halaby, 2007, p.30).

Simply answers that she got scared as she saw Jassim standing and staring for a long time, and she remembered the attacks. It seemed to her as if any Arab had become suspicious. The conflict is often between the historicist teleological or mythical time and narrative of traditionalism - whether on the right or the left - and the moving, strategically displaced time of the articulation mentioned above of a historical politics of negotiation. As Fanon eloquently depicts, the moment of emancipation is a time of cultural uncertainty and, most importantly, of significatory or representational ambiguity. It becomes clearer when she justifies that her uncle died in the town towers. This vision of horror within Amber represents a view of the American vision towards Arabs and, to her being an Arab Muslim, brings suspicion to Jassim. Furthermore, Salwa expected that something as such could have happened to Amber, yet she states:

> "I am sorry to hear that. Are you planning to have every Arab arrested now?"... "Do you not use your brains? This country has more than fifty million people in it, and you're worried about your tacky little store. But now you'll have a lot to talk about in school. You can say you saw a real live Arab and had to call security on him"(Halaby, 2007, p.30).

Being young, Arab, and Muslim in the United States does not relate to terrorism. Equally crucial is Salwa's meeting with the white American woman who comes to the bank to establish an account. When the woman knows that Salwa is a Palestinian from Jordan, her tone turned roughly. Indignant and arrogant, she questions Salwa:

> "What does that mean?

> What do you mean that you are Palestinian from Jordan? Does it mean you will steal my money and blow up my world? ” (113).

Salwa is considered an outsider in the perspective of the white American woman, a potential account manipulator, an embezzler of her money, and a terrorist who will use the money to blow up America. The woman's statement of America as "my world" reveals her belief that America belongs to her, a white American, and not to Salwa, an Arab American who is not white. The woman denies Salwa's service and approaches another white American official. “I think I'd like to work with someone else” (Halaby 114). Racial prejudice and the popular negative stereotyping of Arab Muslims as evil, extremist and terrorist suggest exclusion and marginalization of Arab American Muslims. For Bhabha, colonialism produces stereotypes and negative images because as it is built on cultural not only physical violence while styling itself as civilized and ordered. Stereotypes are what allow this apparent paradox, because they are the way in which the dualities (order/disorder, civilized/savage) that justify colonization are constructed. Bhabha uses the notion of the uncanny as part of his overarching project to examine the West, and the sum of personal identities that compose it as a patient whose mental malaise requires diagnosis and cure. Bhabha develops in many essays, for example *Articulating the Archaic*, which discusses the uncanniness of culture “Culture is *heimlich,* with its disciplinary generalizations, its mimetic narratives, its homologous empty time, its seriality, its progress, its customs and coherence. But cultural authority is also *unheimlich,* for to be distinctive, significa-tory, influential and identifiable, it has to be translated, disseminated, differentiated, interdisciplinary, intertextual, international, inter-racial” (Bhabha, 1994, p.p136-137).

Salwa's identity begins to take a new shape, as she feels increasingly alienated from her husband and co-workers at the bank. After an incident at the bank where Salwa feels that a white American woman has racially abused her, Salwa finds Jake's attention amusing and comforting. Jake is Salwa's co-worker, who is younger and unknown to her, a drug addict and dealer. Triggered by her psychological need to be recognized and accepted among white people, Salwa befriends him. She meets him secretly many times. After American customers at the bank have treated Salwa badly, she decides to accept Jake's attention. Jake's company has satisfied Salwa as she self-identifies with the white American race. Her intimate relationship with him can be construed as an attempt to achieve social inclusion and protection, which she, much like other Arab Americans, has lost after 9/11.

Salwa decides to assimilate by all means as using only English words. She promised herself to think about it only in English, even as her brain shouted at her in Arabic, cursed her with her mother's words. "What have I done? What have I done?" (Halaby, 2007, p.175); her remorse and shame for what she did make her lose her belongingness as her culture and religion do not allow that, but she lives in a country that will render her to do all taboos. Salwa's identity begins to take a new shape, as she feels increasingly alienated from her husband and co-workers at the bank. Jake's company has satisfied Salwa as she self-identifies with the white American race. Her intimate relationship with him can be construed as an attempt to achieve social inclusion and protection, which she, much like other Arab Americans, has lost after 9/11:

> Here in America, no one said anything, no one intruded in other people's business or stopped things like this from occurring. No one tiptoed into the dark rooms of other people's homes with their buckets of judgment and said

> what they really thought. There were no intrusive neighbors or blunt aunties to announce what they knew and say, You'd better not, or else (Halaby, 2007, p.181).

Randa, a Lebanon American, lives in USA and Salwa's only friend is reconciled with herself, being a hyphen through accepting her belonging to both cultures, and this is reflected in her lifestyle that brings them together. Her life is rather stable and happy she loves America. For her measure of happiness depends on getting the opportunity of luxurious life surrounded by safety for her, her children, and her husband. They are good and healthy, in addition to providing all the basic requirements and needs for living. It is easier and more comfortable than living in the homeland. New or hybrid identities might arise within a Third Space by recovering dominant epistemologies and ideologies. Third Place was a space of acceptance of diverse viewpoints since it allowed perpetual fertility for continuous originations. "These 'in-between' spaces give the ground for creating strategies of selfhood single or communal that originate new indications of identification, as well as inventive sites of cooperation and contestation, in the process of establishing the notion of society itself, (Bhabha, 1994, p. 124). Randa describes her life by saying:

> But American life, as I see it, lacks flavor, that tastiness you find at home. Overall I am happy, but when it comes to some of the smaller details, the ones that don't matter so much but are a large part of what makes life rich, then I am not. Happiness is a luxury, don't you think?" (Halaby, 2007, p.283).

Randa is the character who represents the homeland for Salwa; although they speak English, she flavors it with Arabic words, as she does when preparing Arabic coffee and cracking cardamom into it to preserve her culture. In Rushdie's essay; the migrant's imagined homelands

represent everyone's conception of home. Bhabha defined mimicry as a process that replicates no permanent, final, and basic identity. Bhabha, Rushdie, and Smith consider the homelands imaginary yet real. This unreality means it can be re-imagined endlessly, but practical limits make this difficult. Problems emerge when imitation is trapped in a regulated economy that fixes the cultural identity of the colonized (Huddart, 2006, p.48). “Our identity is at once plural and partial. Sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures; at other times, we fall between two stools, but however ambiguous and shifting the ground may be, it is not an infertile territory for a writer to occupy” (Ashcroft et al., 2006, p. 431). Salwa admits that she underwent a miscarriage, which put her in a bad psychological state, then led her to tension in the relationship between her and Jassim; and this gets her involved in an intimate relationship with her manager, Jake, and she feels disgusted, psychologically pressed, and lost at what she is going through. Randa advised her to return home “Salwa, listen to me. You need to go home for a little while.You need to be with your mother and sisters. And your culture, where things like this can’t happen” (288). Nevertheless, Salwa is still confused and unable to make a decision.

Once again, Salwa is disturbed by the way Americans think, as there are no limits to expression. Culture has a dual identity, similar to colonial rhetoric. On the one hand, it is domestic or realism, emphasizing its coherence and stability: those to whom it belongs give it meaning. On the other hand, it is unsettling because it is always changing: it is constantly being given significance by people to whom it ostensibly does not belong. Due to its dual nature, culture is never entirely cohesive and self-sufficient. Its tales seem sturdy and self-assured, yet they are constantly entangled in weird interactions with other cultures, literature, or fields. Bhabha contends

that the uncanny is also un-homely, which, Bhabha refers to as a 'means of living at home abroad or abroad at home.' However, it should not forget that homelessness is both literal and figurative (Huddart, 2006, p. 56). Salwa burned to walk away, not just from this conversation but also from this culture, where men and women could choose between men and women, where there were no limits, no taboos. When Salwa meets her co-worker, Petra, and asks her about Jake, describing him as "the lovely Boy "in an inappropriate way, with obscene words, Salwa warns her that this is unacceptable, so Petra replies “Sorry for offending. I forget you come from a conservative culture. Really, sorry. Thanks for listening, Salwa ”. (Halaby, 2007, p.182-183).

The idea that the wishes would not come true for Arabs in America occupied her mind. Jassim did not seem to be bothered, but Salwa could not tolerate it, those red, white, and blue fingers flapping at her, flicking her away. It was not just her lies that had brought distance between her and her husband and surrounded them with tension; it was the patriotic breathing of those around them. Unfortunately, Jassim had a car accident against teenager named Evan Parker to worsen matters. The accident occurs while the FBI’s investigation is underway, and Jassim is going through a phase of debilitating mental conflicts. Filled with remorse for the death he has accidentally caused, he approaches Mrs. Parker, the bereaved mother, to apologize. Then, he learns that Evan is an errant and uncompromising hater of the Arabs. On hearing that her visitor is an Arab, she laughs and guffaws, perhaps sensing the irony implicit in her son’s death. Then, recollecting 9/11, she tells Jassim:

> See, when 9/11 happened, Evan was freaked out, totally freaked out. It was weird, because once he was a teenager; he didn’t lose it very often. But he did then, ranted and raved about how Arabic people should all be kicked out of

> this country, rounded up, herded up, and thrown out. I ignored it for a while, thought he was just scared. We were all scared those people were going to blow us all up. Then he started talking about how he wished he could kill an Arab" (p.p200-201).

Even Evan's mother is not convinced of Jassim's innocence. Still, because Jassim is an Arab and the victim a known anti-Arab who used to skate about with the words 'Terrorist Hunting Licence' insolently inscribed on his skateboard, some people suspect that Jassim must have intentionally bumped the car into the skating Evan using the accident as a ruse and excuse. "And you are also saying that it is a coincidence that the boy you killed hated Arabs? Having a 'terrorist hunting license' and hating Arabs are two very different things" (Halaby, 2007, p.231). Being an Arab Muslim in America and being run over by a fanatical teenager towards Arabs is difficult for Jassim in white society. The Americans consider the Arabs a threat to the country's national security, as they are terrorists, as most of the country's population sees them. Agent Fletcher's investigation portrayed this reality through his method of interrogating Jassim about his opinion and reaction to the events of 9/11 and his religious rituals.

Jassim's job is forcefully affected by prejudice and discrimination towards Arab-American Muslims. The customers complain to the Company's owner that they are concerned about their safety; because Jassim is untrustworthy, he could do violence skillfully. Therefore, they keep a close eye on him, discreetly examining his computer, taking notes on his utterances, and studying his appearance, mood, and clothing. All of this finally leads to Jassim's capture by the FBI. Halaby's depiction of the FBI investigation and interrogation of Jassim is full of hatred, prejudice and hostility as a rich man from the Middle East. This reflects the

preconceptions with which American governmental agencies deal with people of Arab-Muslim stock. Despite the fact that they are American citizens, their lives come under the FBI's scrutiny. Bhabha argues that stereotypes emerged in colonial discourse because of the unavoidable fact that colonial domination was not a “natural” occurrence; it required an ideological structure to justify it. This was provided by the stereotypical representation for example in literature or art of the colonized subject as inherently inferior, lazy, and stupid: “as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin” (Fay and Haydon 41). Jassim gives Agent Fletcher his typical daily routine to protect himself and justify his position. His agonized words in this context reflect the struggles of non-white Americans in a racial environment, “I am a normal citizen who happens to be an Arab. Yes, I have access to the city’s water supply, but I have no desire to abuse it.” (232). finally, he realized that the problem of being an "Arab" and, above all, a "Muslim" led to being fired from his job. This makes him full of the cup of misery, and his American dream ends, and his traumatized situation returns him to his starting point, “I understand American society, I speak your language. I pay taxes to your government. I play your game. I have a right to be here. How could this be happening? ” (Halaby 234).

Overall, Bhabha claims that colonial cultures are hybrid. Cultures are not separate and unconnected. They should be seen as temporal events that influence one another. Therefore, a cultural encounter is not a discrete historical event but a sequence of ongoing exchanges that have already started and continue to influence the connection between cultures. Some roots may be eliminated or transformed over time. Essentialist claims to a pristine history or genesis would be untenable in a mixed society. Rather, they are constantly negotiating and interacting with one another. "Third Space of Enunciation" is dialogue and negotiation (Bhabha, 1994, p.34).

Jassim wondering this behavior would take place in the country in which he has lived for so many years, “Things like this aren’t supposed to happen in America. Americans are pure, simple people, their culture governed by a few basic tenets, not complicated conspiracy theories” (Halaby, 2007, p.299). Jassim recalls when he saw the innocent Salwa before she was polluted by American life and her ignorance and realized that she had been lost since birth. “Salwa, I feel as though I have lost control of my life, and as a result our lives are about to change for the worse. I don’t know what we will do” (Halaby 300).

Halaby exposes the discrepancy between the two cultures and racial discrimination and shows their effects on the psychology of the immigrants who are marginalized and weakened by the American mainstream after 9/11, despite their hybrid identities. Jassim and Salwa are torn between the East and the West and face psychological injuries from the American hostility. Salwa and Jassim feel homesick; the novel has an open ending. Salwa visits her lover Jake to say goodbye to him before her trip to Jordan, but he cannot accept her departure of his mind exoticisms. Therefore, he shouts at her, “you're running back to the pigsty you came from” (320) and beats her. In the hospital, Salwa is lying distorted in bed, and Jassim has an epiphany. The discriminatory effects of cultural colonialism's discourse are not just about a "person," a power struggle between self and other, or a difference between "mother culture" and "alien cultures." Discrimination is always a reference to splitting as the condition of subjection. It is a distinction between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is disavowed is not erased but repeated as something different, like a mutation or a hybrid. This kind of partial and double force, which is more than mimicry but less than symbolism, makes the colonial presence hard to see and recognize its authority. Authoritative

rules must be based on a consensus of knowledge or opinion. For these rules of recognition to be powerful, they must be able to represent the incredibly discriminatory things that are outside of their scope. So, if the unitary (and essentialist) reference to race, nation or cultural tradition is necessary to keep the presence of authority as an immediate mimetic effect, such essentialism must be surpassed when articulating "differentiatory" and "discriminatory" identities. Jasim recognizes that his in-between identity marked whom he chose as a wife. As Halaby illustrates “He loved Salwa because in her he saw home, which made her both more precious and a source of resentment.” (Halaby, 2007, p.325).

The novel ends with a symbolic note reproducing the tale of the Ghola, the mythical oriental creature and Palestinian folklore that eats her children. For the author, “the hairy hideous Ghola” refers to the unforgiving and intolerant America that mistreats her children. Nevertheless, besides this torn picture, Halaby, in her nostalgic rhetoric, makes use of a large load of political symbols about Palestine in those words:

> They say that once upon a time a peasant girl was born far from olive trees and falafel stands in a land where fathers- and often mothers too- labored so that their children could change their fates. She was born to parents who were refugees from their real home, a land snatched away and reworked, a story taken and rewritten. (331) .

Bhabha demonstrates that 'hybrid hyphenations stress the incommensurable parts as the foundation for cultural identifications' (Kalra et al, 2005, p.89). Thus, national identity can only be seen as the consequence of a negotiation between the dominant élites representing the majority of the population and the newly arriving minority in a third space. The Western metropolis must address its postcolonial past, as narrated by

its postwar migration and refugee inflow, as an indigenous or indigenous narrative integral to its national identity (Bhabha, 1994, p.6). Both Salwa and Jassim show themselves models trying to merge to make that ultimate jump into American life. The one that promises a happy ending for everyone if you just believe it hard enough because, as the final words in the story read “Happily ever after” happens only in American fairy tales.Wasn’t this an American fairy tale? It was and it wasn’t” (Halaby, 2007, p.335). The story of Jassim and Salwa is not a fairy tale, and the America of Salwa and Jassim is not the Promised Land.

Laila Halaby demonstrates through this novel that the Arab American authors no longer obsessed with themes of displacement, uprootedness, or dislocation, but the concept of transnationalism and globalization influences them. She attempts to determine and improve their cultural identities in recent territories. In addition, she proved that the immigrant writers overcome the conventional notion and coin the "Third Space", where they create their Hybrid identity as transnational. Homi K. Bhabha's notion of Third Space is the area of negotiation and transformation, which is neither otherness nor assimilation but represents coalition through negotiation and transnational cultural engagement.

Conclusion

Being Arab Muslim immigrants living in the US and a diasporic cultural community, they attempt to conquer cultural obstacles and navigate their many ethnic identities. Contemporary Arab immigrant authors strive to combat the dualism or conflict between self and others by challenging the preconceptions that distinguish Arab women from American women. These authors advocate a dynamic identity of negotiation and resistance rather than ignoring the existence of diversity. In this research, Arab American women authors analyse what it means to

live as a hybrid in all its complexity. They encourage conversation and cohabitation, as opposed to absorption. However, these authors stress that adapting to a new culture does not entail losing oneself or abandoning one's values to pass or obtain acceptance. Laila Halaby focuses on the experiences of Arab Muslim immigrants. Her characters experience self-division, attempting to prove their dual selves simultaneously. In Once in a Promised Land, the author depicts the end of the American Dream for Jassim and Salwa, a Jordanian couple whose idyllic living in the United States ends on September 11, 2001. They question the meaning and purpose of their life in the United States in the aftermath as their family connections and employment collapse. Because Arabs and Muslims are ideologically seen as the World Trade Center's primary offenders, this statement is true. This research employs Homi K. Bhabha's critical method, "Hybridization in Third Space," as its theoretical foundation. The manuscript uses Bhabha's concepts, which include the primary motivations: the testing of the young generation in the host culture, the comprehension of other existing cultures, and the contestation of privileges between cultures, all of which result in the production of multiple values, meanings, and identities. The study suggests that diasporic populations experience resentment in identity and language while living in a mixed environment without a representative platform.

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