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From Enculturation to Acculturation in Arab American Literature in the Global Era: the case of Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007)

THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH IN CANDIDACY FOR THE 'DOCTORAT' DEGREE IN CIVILIZATION

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Declaration

I, Latifa CHIKHI, do hereby declare that the submission of the present work entitled 'From Enculturation to Acculturation in Arab American Literature in the Global Era: the case study of Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007)' it neither contains materials previously published nor materials which have been submitted for the qualification of any other degree of a university or institutions. I certify that the present work is the result of my own investigation, except where otherwise stated.

Signature

Proof Reader:

Dr. Fazilet ALACHAHER (BENZERDJEB)

Dedication

In the memory of my Mother (God rest her soul)

To my father, my sisters and brothers, and to my friends and beloved relatives who motivate me to accomplish the current work.

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Abstract

The current research examines the acculturation process among Arab Americans through the analysis of two prominent novels by Arab American female writers. It focuses on the acculturation adjustment of Khadra Shamy in Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and the assimilation status of Salwa Haddad in Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) the analysis is based on Berry's acculturation theory, which identifies four acculturation strategies: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. The research explores Khadra Shamy's journey from the separation phase of acculturation, where she initially rejects the host culture, to the adaptation phase of acculturation, where she accepts the host culture and attempts to integrate safely within it. Additionally, the study demystifies the reasons that make Salwa Haddad and her husband Jassim in *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) assimilate to the host culture while losing their original culture. Both novels acknowledge the challenges that emerge from the protagonists' enculturation backgrounds during the acculturation process. The study showed that the protagonists of both novels adapt to their host society in various ways. Their diverse backgrounds, social standing, and goals for living in the United States have all played a role in their acculturation.

Key Words: Acculturation, Arab American literature, Adaptation, Assimilation, Enculturation, Ethnocentrism, Separation.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Acculturation and enculturation are two major concepts in the field of psychology; they permit scholars and writers to analyze an individual's behavior once indulged in a new culture. The history of humanity witnesses an unceasing movement of immigration throughout history. People generally change their place of residence for different reasons, for instance, seeking a better life or fleeing from wars and famines. The United States witnesses a perpetual motion of immigrants from all over the world, and Arabs are among the general immigration mosaic in the United States. Their encounter with the new world was after American missionaries had visited the areas of Syria and Lebanon.

From the 1800s upward, Arabs continued to immigrate to the United States seeking new opportunities. The number of Arab immigrants inflated in the 1900s, when most Arab countries were under colonization. These Arabs immigrated to the United States carrying with them their language, traditions, and cultures; which put the American government in a dilemma about how to integrate this ethnic group in American society. This issue urged Arab American writers to highlight the permanent difficulties that hinder the acculturation of Arab immigrants in the United States through literary works. There are several Arab American writers who skillfully discuss different immigrants' problems related to their identity and in relation to the host culture.

Acculturation and enculturation are the major concepts that bound the current study; for enculturation, it represents a social phenomenon and is described as the first acquisition of one's culture that includes values and behaviors that are necessary for the communities' survival. On the other hand, acculturation is a

concept that explains the cultural change that results from the meeting of two or more cultures.

The core of this study is to explore the different levels of conflict among Arab Americans in order to maintain their identity in the United States. Chen argues in this context that whenever immigrants are confronted with a new host culture, they cannot avoid the influence of the target culture on their lives; a certain amount of adjustment is unavoidable (1). Thus, this study deals with the acculturation strategies that occur when Arabs immigrate to the United States, for instance, not all Arabs immigrating to the United States have the same degree of cultural change.

According to Berry (1997), acculturation occurs at four levels: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. For Berry, the assimilation phase occurs when individuals discard their original culture and seek cultural exchange with others; meanwhile, the integration phase happens when individuals balance between their original culture and the host culture, showing equal interaction with both cultures. On the other hand, the separation phase occurs when individuals maintain their original cultural values and avoid interaction with people from the host culture. Finally, marginalization occurs when individuals show no interest in both cultures, neither the original nor the host culture, and avoid any kind of interaction with others.

The acculturation strategies of Arab and Muslim immigrants in the United States are examined through the analysis of two notable novels by female Arab American writers. The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2006) by Mohja Kahf depicts the journey of a Syrian family who came to the United States in search of safety from the Al Assad regime's persecution. Once in a Promised Land (2007) by Laila Halaby

tells the story of a couple who witnessed the events of September 11th while living in the United States.

Both novels involve the analysis of different cultural components like culture, Islam, identity construction, belonging, discrimination, and the 9/11 attacks and their impact on Arab Americans. Hence, the research questions to be explored in this thesis can be articulated in the following manner:

- What are the predominant strategies that might characterize the shift from enculturation to acculturation in the selected novels?
- To what extent do Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad acculturate to the American culture?
- Why do Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad acculturate differently?
- What role does enculturation play in the acculturation of Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad?

The analysis of the acculturation of Arab immigrants in the United States will be done through the projection of cultural and social issues on literary works of Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007). The choice of these novels fits the study in terms of the themes they tackle. Both novels display cultural issues among Arab families in the United States. Meanwhile, the analysis will focus on some particular characters like Khadra Shamy in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and Salwa Haddad in *Once in a Promised Land (*2007).

Besides the acculturation theory selected to study both novels, Kalervo Oberg's theory of culture shock (1960) is combined with the previous theory of acculturation to elucidate the cultural differences of Arab immigrants in the United

States. Culture shock may occur among immigrants because of the radical change in tradition and culture; even the way of thinking differs from one country to another.

This thesis is composed of four chapters. The first chapter is a relevant review of the previous literature concerning culture, acculturation theories, and other important concepts related to the study. The chapter also provides an overview of Arab American literature from its early beginnings with the Arab Diaspora in the United States; and widely labeled El Mahjar literature and its founders, to the most prominent Arab American literature with a bias toward the women Arab American writers. It also enfolds themes and major issues that led to the rise of a considerable constellation of Arab American women writers, who make it a responsibility to clear up their position from terrorism, and to define themselves to the world instead of being defined by others.

The second chapter analyzes the integration journey of Khadra Shamy in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (*2006). The study focuses on Khadra's shift from an enculturation phase-sticking of the original culture to an integration phase. Khadra's struggle is centered on how she gradually adopts the new culture, while keeping her original one.

The third chapter explores the effect of the 9/11 attacks on Salwa and Jassim, an Arab American couple, on their assimilation phase in *Once in a Promised Land* (2007). Both Salwa and Jassim were deeply assimilated into the host culture, however, their marriage and their afluent lives in the United States began to unravel after the 9/11 attacks as they were spotted as probable danger. The chapter also examines the anti-Arab sentiment in the United States and the stereotypes drawn up by the mass media about Arabs as terrorists. Moreover, the American Dream and its impact on the couple are discussed in this chapter. The couple chooses to delve into

the American consumerist culture, considering the American lifestyle as their perfect model. However, all this was overturned after the 9/11 attacks, when they faced racist attitudes from Americans, which made them question their existence in the United States.

The fourth chapter is a comparative study that examines the differences and similarities of the acculturation strategy in both novels. The comparison encompasses various themes explored in the novels discussed in chapters two and three. The comparison tends to illustrate how both writers deal with the issue of the acculturation of Arab immigrants in the United States. Mohja Kahf tries to make American readers understand the different problems that an Arab immigrant may encounter in his life, which, by consequence, may hinder his response to integrating into American society. However, Laila Halaby explores the same issue differently, she highlights an important problematic, which is that even an assimilated immigrant may find difficulties in living peacefully in the United States, and this is due to American society, which refuses to accept this assimilated immigrant as being part of American identity and still considers him an ethnic member.

The selected novels are of premium importance in Arab American literature and have received valuable praise for their contribution to elucidating the main conflicts among Arab Americans.

This research, entitled "From Enculturation to Acculturation in Arab American Literature in the Global Era: The Case of Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007)", is an attempt in the field of American Studies to highlight the issue of cultural change among Arab American immigrants, who are caught between their original culture,

which represents their identity, and the new culture, which imposes on them its values.

Chapter One: Relevant Literature Review

1.1. Introduction

Arab American literature has not been recognized in the American literary hemisphere until the twentieth century, which witnessed the emergence of a considerable number of Arab emigrants in America. The submerging of new talented literary voices helped Arab American literature manifest and take a distinctive place in the ethnic landscape of American literature.

Many American writers and critics are aware of the development of Arab literature in America and feel responsible to write about it, as Steven Salaita argues that it is important to write about Arab American literature and the prolific works of Arab American writers who are producing a considerable amount of interest among popular and academic circles (ix).

Thus, the Arabs in America suffered to gain their position in different dynamic domains. The present chapter therefore studies the historical existence of both the literary and social existence of Arabs in America and gives a conceptual background to the different milestones in their process of acculturation.

1.2. Culture Defined

The term culture is one of the most complex terms in sociology; this complexity comes from the nature of the word and its meaning according to each scientist. For decades, scholars have carried out research to elucidate the meaning of culture, but instead, it has turned more ambiguous than before because of its various and relative significations.

A general and broad definition of culture is given by the Cambridge Dictionary online as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time". Hence, the classic definition of culture was provided by Edward Burnett Taylor, the English anthropologist, in

his seminal work *Primitive Culture* (1871), where he explained in the first paragraph that culture or civilization encompasses the multifaceted aspects of human society, such as acquired knowledge, beliefs, artistic expression, moral codes, legal frameworks, customary practices, and other abilities and habits that individuals develop as members of a community.

However, the concept of culture may include different perspectives, have different cultural connotations, and depend on which context culture is studied. Moreover, culture is not universal, it is specific and has a footprint related to each society; Nieto (1992) defines culture as:

> the ever-changing values, traditions, social and political relationships, and worldwide created, shared, and transformed by a group of people bound together by a combination of factors that can include a common history, geographic location, language, social class, and religion (136).

Nieto also sees culture as something created and shared by a group of people under some circumstances. According to Nieto, culture has elements and agents; its elements are, of course, beliefs, traditions, and social relationships.

Kramsch (1998) also shares the same point of view with Nieto (1992). His arguments are that culture is about sharing common system standards within a limited space: "the membership in a discourse community that shares a common social space and history and a common system standard for perceiving, believing, evaluating, and acting" (qtd. in Nunan and Choi 3).

Judd's definition (2002) corresponds to the aforementioned perspectives. He puts that "culture can be defined as the system of shared objects, activities, and beliefs of a given group of people" (qtd. in Nunan and Choi 3). Judd has clearly emphasized that culture is the system of sharing everything between any group of people.

Now that it is clear that culture is a way of life shared by a group of people, this means that not all races share the same culture, and different groups of people may have different standards and norms of culture. Meanwhile, the culture is related to the individual, who is part of the culture of the group, and the latter is also part of the whole landscape society.

Thus, culture is better understood through language and beliefs. Culture represents the code of communication of societies; a community that shares the same language, beliefs, and values is a community that shares the same culture. Culture includes religion, language, food, clothing, marriage, and music.

Countries all over the world have different cultures; however, cultures can be similar if the countries are too close to each other. For instance, the United States and Canada are two different countries with similar cultures. The same is true in Arab countries; their cultures are similar due to the similarity in language and religion, but there are differences of course in terms of customs.

In a multicultural community like the United States, ethnic groups need to be regrouped in small communities to maintain and share their cultures among their members.

1.3. Culture and Subculture

A broad definition of subculture is the outgrowth of social groups different from the dominant culture of that society; these groups show differences in dress, food, and way of speaking, make-up, and even hairstyles.

Subcultures are divided into different categories: ethnic, fashion, sexual, and criminal. The current study focuses on the Arab subculture in America and how Arabs react to the different cultural changes that surround them. Cultures are changing through time; some cultures are flexible to change, while others change

much less. Culture in general is based on some basic elements, which together form a whole system that any culture depends on. The family is the most important component of any culture, for this institution is the authority that protects the values and morals of any culture and assures its continuity.

The Arab subculture in the United States of America gains strength from the family; parents are the supreme authority in that institution and play an important role in making the process of assimilation or acculturation difficult or easy. Arab American writers show the daily struggles of Arab Americans concerning their assimilation in the overwhelming culture, whether maintaining their original habits from one side or evading their Muslim identity and behaving like Americans.

Food habits are also important in Arab subculture as a strong element to preserve their identity. Ramadan and the Easter Holiday are the perfect occasions for Arab and Muslim families to meet. Different meals and recipes are presented on this occasion to show the richness of Arab cultures. Notably, food is strongly highlighted in Arab American literature as a matter of identification.

Eventually, Subcultures are distinct from mainstream culture, although they are not wholly distinct. Subcultures are nonetheless influenced by and may adopt elements from the larger culture, and members of subcultures frequently contact with people outside of their group. Subcultures, on the other hand, can be sources of resistance to dominant cultural standards, as well as spaces for people to express themselves and interact with others who share their interests and values.

1.4. Acculturation Phenomenon Defined

People have moved around the world since the dawn of time, leaving their homes to seek fresh opportunities in distant areas. People are fleeing for a variety of reasons, including economic reasons or to avoid persecution and war. This exodus has contributed to the formation of a new social texture; the coexistence of more than one culture in one society has given birth to a new concept, "acculturation," which was first coined by Wesley Powel in the 1880s to explain the phenomenon of acquiring a second culture, and has been studied since the early 1900s.

Acculturation has been occurring among humans for a long time, as people on our planet have not stopped traveling from one area to another, forming new relationships in which they affect and are affected in turn; yet, it was not recognized until the 1900s. Acculturation, according to Berry, was initially focused on European dominance of their colonial countries, researching indigenous peoples' reactions to the colonizer; it later shifted to studying immigrants' changes upon establishing themselves in a new society. Acculturation now focuses on how different ethnic groups influence each other within culturally multiple communities (Berry 2005). In his article "Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures"(2005), Berry defines acculturation on the light of previous studies, one view is that:

> Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups…under this definition, acculturation is to be distinguished from culture change, of which it is but one aspect, and

> assimilation, which is at times a phase of acculturation (qtd. In Berry 700).

According to this view, acculturation is the confluence of two or more cultures within a society; the contact of these cultures results in the development of a new culture that is neither the original nor the host one. Berry continues explaining how acculturation works:

> Culture change that is initiated by conjunction of two or more autonomous cultural systems. Acculturative change may be the consequence of direct cultural transmission; it may be derived from non-cultural causes, such ecological or demographic modification induced by an impinging culture, it may be delayed, as with internal adjustments following upon the acceptance of alien traits or patterns; or it may a reactive adaptation of traditional modes of life (qtd. In Berry 700).

The new identity engendered by the culture change leads to the formation of a new identity that combines two or more cultures. In a multicultural society, this hybrid identity no longer relies on one given culture, but rather takes its characteristics from every culture that is close to it.

In the United States, hybrid identity can take numerous forms and is influenced by a range of elements such as historical and cultural context, familial background, personal experiences, and self-identification. A person of Mexican and Japanese ancestry, for example, may identify as both Mexican and Japanese, or may have a hybrid identity that represents both cultures. Hybrid identities are not new, having been created by a complicated history of colonialism, immigration, and social and political battles. In recent years, there has been a rising realization in the United States of the necessity of acknowledging and valuing the range of hybrid

identities. This acknowledgement has increased the visibility of mixed-race people and sparked discussions on the challenges and intricacies of negotiating several cultural identities.

1.5. Theories about Acculturation

The acculturation process among people has been taking place for a long time since people on this planet have not ceased moving from one place to another, building new relationships where they share their values and learn others' values and standards. According to Berry (2005), acculturation concerns European domination of their colonized countries by analyzing the reaction of the indigenous people to the colonizer; then turning to study the immigrants' changes when settling in new societies.

Nowadays, acculturation foci are on how different ethnic groups influence each other within cultural plural communities (Berry 700).

In the article "Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures"(2005), Berry insists that the fact that understanding group relations is the basis of making the acculturation process successful: **"**the focus is on how persons who are members of different groups work out how to live together, again through negotiation so that conflict is avoided" (Berry 689). Berry (2005) here deconstructs the concept of acculturation into sub-concepts to understand the function of the whole; thus, the role of the individual is significant in the acculturation process. He continues to ask a pivotal question: "how can peoples of different cultural backgrounds encounter each other, seek avenues of mutual understanding, negotiate and compromise on their initial positions, and achieve some degree of harmonious engagement?" (698).

Intercultural changes, according to Berry, happen first at the individual level. Immigration, international study, tourism, media, and social networks have

paved the way for better acculturation among people. Nonetheless, people from different cultures may maintain their ethno-cultural identities while receiving the new one. Moreover, those who immigrate in great numbers or represent a sort of patriarch or matriarchal community will have some difficulties to acculturate or at least they will react to the host culture as they are fully or semi-acculturated, but once alone they will practice their culture of origin. Some families go further to oblige their kids or family members to deny any sort of acculturation or adaptation to the new culture.

Nonetheless, ethnic identities have largely been associated with positive psychological outcomes (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Unger & Szapocznik, 2010), which implies that any ethnic identity may to some extent be helpful in protecting adolescents from juvenile delinquency. Arab American Muslims in the United States are more likely to show this kind of identity as prevention from negative adolescence practices.

Indeed, many scholars highlight the study of every ethnic group in isolation, this allows them to present different models of acculturation depending on the preferences of each ethnic group and individual**.** (Schwartz, Zamboanga, Unger & Szapocznik, 2010) argue that Canadian immigrants are more fluent in acculturating to the American context than other groups, such as Arabs or Africans, due to the large similarities they share with American society, such as language and skin color. Therefore, language is a very crucial component of acculturation and a facilitator of integration. (e.g., Barker et al., 2001; Schildkraut, 2005) contend that:

> A shared language is part of the fabric of national identity and migrants who speak other languages (or cannot speak the language of the country or region in which they are settling) are considered a threat to

> national unity. Permutations among language, ethnicity, and cultural similarity, among other factors, affect the ease or difficulty associated with acculturation process. For example, a White, English-speaking Canadian person who moves the United States will likely have less acculturating to do than an indigenous migrant from Mexico or Central America. This is due not only to the common language shared by the United States and Canada but also to other cultural similarities (e.g., similar orientations toward individualism over collectivism) and the ability of White migrant to blend into the American mainstream (qtd. In Schwartz et al. 240).

Berry (2006) introduces four categories of migrants, voluntary immigrants: those who leave their countries of origin seeking better chances. Refugees who leave their countries involuntarily escaping war and other disasters, usually the move according to international aid agency treaties, as in the case of Syrian refugees in Europe. Asylum seekers who voluntarily choose another country seeking sanctuary, and usually politicians do that. The last category Berry introduces is sojourners, who immigrate to other countries to seek better opportunities but they are fully intended to return home once they achieve wealth. For instance, the first Arab immigrants, who mostly were from "Greater Syria" (Bilad al Sham in the vernacular of early Arab rule) (Jawadi 17), encountered America through business affairs at the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia; they considered themselves "sojourners" with the objective to make money and return home.

1.6. The Acculturation Process of Arab Americans

Like other ethnic communities in America, Arabs suffered from the complete change of culture and tried to cope with the current environment. These attempts at acculturation conceptualized by Arabs have taken many forms of integration in the American society. For instance, the Arab community in the United States descends from different Arab countries and has two distinctive religions: Islam and Christianity. The levels of acculturation vary from one group to another and from one person to another; they are related to the individual's psychological adaptability to the new social characteristics.

According to Awad (2010), Berry suggested two main levels of acculturation: "immersion in or adoption of the dominant society and retention or immersion in the ethnic society" (60). According to Berry, immigrants either adopt and assimilate into the host culture or refuse this culture and instead immerse themselves in their ethnic community. Consequently, these two fundamental issues can result in four different acculturation positions. Berry's suggestion was rather a taxonomic conceptualization of acculturation, which involves four main stages of acculturation; the model starts from the lower stage to the highest level of acculturation. *Marginalization* is the lowest level of immersion and is characterized by the total cut from both cultures, the host culture and the original ethnic group; at this level, the marginalized individual can represent a risk to his social environment because marginalization has been pathologized (Khawaja 2).

The second level of acculturation among Arabs in the United States is *separation,* which includes a considerable number of Arabs and is characterized by absolute involvement in the ethnic society and the refusal of all that comes from the host culture.

Integration is considered the most balanced phase of acculturation because the individual is fully involved in his ethnic culture as well as the dominant one, and can react positively to both of them; however, *assimilation* is the total immersion of the individual in the dominant culture, while the assimilation process occurs, the minority culture will gradually lose its markers like language, food, and the way of dressing (Awad 60).

The acculturation process of Arab Americans is connected to several factors, among them multimedia, age, length of residence, religion, and the political relationship between the United States and Eastern countries. Arabs in America suffer from the vilification of their religion and culture as long as the term Arab or Muslim becomes a reference to terrorism. The great majority of Americans get their daily news and information from different media sets, this mass media has an important role in constructing communities' opinions not only inside America but around the world. This representation is generally conveyed through "editorial cartoons, television shows, comic strips, comic books, college and school textbooks, novels, magazines, newspapers and in novelty merchandise" (Shaheen 328). This portrayal plays an important handicap in the integration of most Arabs in the United States, This discrimination existed from a long time in the United States but was not considered until after the 9/11 events, when discrimination was largely perceived on Arab and Muslim Americans in the United States.

Furthermore, the acculturation of Arab and Muslim Americans is also defined by the political relationship between the United States and most Arab countries. The US support of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories, the American war on Iraq, and many other conflicts in the Middle East have engendered a general resentment among Arab and Muslim communities in the United States. In the light

of these conditions, "it is easy to assume that immigrants from Middle East experience the biggest difficulties during the process of acculturation" (Al Wakhiani 90); which makes most of them rethink of this hostile culture.

The majority of Arab and Muslim new immigrants choose to join their communities in order to stay connected to their culture and practice their religion peacefully. This strategy is very important for them; doing so will automatically reduce their culture shock. Meanwhile, their adaptation varies from one individual to another depending on different factors like their ability to speak and understand the English language, and their length of stay in the United States, as indicated by Faragallah et al. (1997), "length of residence in the United States has a positive relation with the acculturation process for Arab immigrants" (183).

Religion is also an important factor in the acculturation of Arab and Muslim immigrants in the United States. Christianity is the overwhelmed religion in the United States, and so Arabs who are Christians are more likely to adapt to the American culture. However, Arab Muslim immigrants will take more time to accept or adjust the host culture and their religious traditions.

Another important factor in the acculturation of Arabs and Muslims in the United States is age, the younger the immigrant, the better he acculturates to the host culture.

The acculturation of Arab and Muslim Americans depends on different factors that may either help or hinder the adjustment of these immigrants, such age, religion, residence length, political conditions, and other circumstances that affect the acculturative attitudes of many Arab and Muslim immigrants in the United States.

1.7. Enculturation Defined

Enculturation is always seen as the conscious and unconscious process where individuals acquire competences in their culture that allow them to fully communicate and; consequently, to be absolutely enculturated. Jack David Eller (2016) explains the phenomenon of enculturation as fellows "Basically, enculturation or socialization is the process by which a person masters his/her culture, ordinarily as a child" (22). So, enculturation is the process by which an individual acquires his surrounding culture, language, and customs. The concept is described by anthropologists as a phase of socialization where the individual is immersed in the surrounding culture, and it starts from the individual's birth to the last day of his life. For Herskovitz (1948), enculturation is seen through primitive values, ideas, and concepts.

Socialization, or enculturation, plays a pivotal role in the life of the individual, where the culture of the society he lives in affects his personal convictions; and this is the fundamental difference among nations. What is prohibited and proscribed in one society is welcomed and prescribed in another one.

Thus, enculturation is the first social, cultural, and religious knowledge that is acquired by individuals from the beginning of their lives. It starts at birth and ends with the death of individuals. Any individual learns the group's culture through his family, then through school and tacit repetition; this learning includes personal experiences, social interactions, and observations. It is an unconscious learning of primitive society's values and norms, which form the identity of an individual.

Enculturation is an important step in the formation of the individual's identity, when he immigrates to a new society, the enculturation process will stop, leaving space for acculturation. At this level, enculturation faces direct contact with

the new culture, which may represent direct danger for it. All the norms, values, experiences, and cultural convictions may be blown away by the new culture. However, the most solid the enculturation phase, the more it will hinder the acculturation phase of the individual. This case is common when the cultures show a very high level of differences, like the Arab and Muslim cultures in American society; these cultures are incompatible with each other.

Consequently, these cultures have to co-exist with each other through different strategies like culture adjustment or adaptation, where the new culture adapts itself to the host culture in order to continue living peacefully.

1.8. Ethnocentrism

If you were to ask me about Muslim culture, I would surely say that it is one of the most unique cultures on the planet. However, it is not uncommon for people to assume that their culture is superior to others. Ethnocentrism is the term used by anthropologists to describe this attitude of cultural judgment.

Ethnocentrism is a mono-centric perspective that views other cultures as bad and inconvenient. Every judgment on another culture, whether good or bad, is based on a specific cultural point of view. Eller (2016) defines this attitude as: "The attitude of practice of assuming that one's own cultural point of view is the best, the right or even the only point of view. Of course ethnocentrism is possible, it is the easy even the automatic, this- but it is simply helpful" (11).

Ethnocentrism, or in-group bias, is a largely observed phenomenon in societies. It is due to differences in the society's texture, mainly in terms of religion and culture. Basically, ethnocentrism develops among groups that share the same

values, and consequently, they do not favor other groups who are different and do not share their same values and consider them as outsiders.

Ethnocentrism provokes hatred between cultures and can lead to discrimination and war. This frequently happens when different religions and ideologies are found in one society, and the minor sect is often the oppressed one, as is happening with the ethnic cleansing of the Rohingya people in Burma.

The ethnocentric attitude toward Arab and mainly Muslim immigrants leads to Islamophobia. There is an immense fear and antipathy toward Islam and Muslims. Edward Said's influential book "Orientalism" (1979) showed the ethnocentric perspective of the west towards Islam years ago:

> One aspect of the electronic, postmodern world is that there has been a reinforcement of the stereotypes by which the Orient is viewed. Television, the films, and all the media's resources have forced information into more and more standardized molds. So far as the Orient is concerned, standardization and cultural stereotyping have intensified the hold of the nineteenth-century academic and imaginative demonology of "the mysterious Orient"(26).

This derogatory attitude toward Islam has come to its highest level after the 9/11 attacks and has widely spread all over the world.

Arab and Muslim Americans are targets of cultural ethnocentrism as their culture and religion are extremely different from the host culture. However, in many cases, the host culture is also seen from an ethnocentric perspective. Arab and Muslim immigrants always criticize the host culture as being inappropriate for them and say that their culture and religion are more pure than other cultures and

religions. This ethnocentric perspective from both cultures may lead to social misunderstandings or even dangerous conflicts.

Anthropologists argue that cultures are different, they are formed according to each group of people that share the same heritage; within one society, there are different cultures. Cultures are built on some basic standards, and what is considered moral in one culture, may be immoral in another. Eller also claims that: "different cultures can and do have different notions of what is good, normal, moral, valuable, legal, etc." (11). In the light of this definition, if an anthropologist wants to study a culture or give his opinion about it, he has to do it from the point of view of that culture; this new vision of studying cultures is called *cultural relativism* in anthropology.

1.9. Cultural Relativism

Cultural relativism is practically the opposite of ethnocentrism; this concept was introduced by anthropologists to deny judgments on cultures. If we accept that cultures are different, we also accept that each culture has its own specificities and characteristics. Cultural relativism is more likely to be open-minded to different cultures and, more precisely, to see the other culture from the inside in order to understand and even feel what they are feeling. For instance, French restaurants offer food like snails and frog legs as favorable dishes, this may surprise foreign tourists! But in the cultural relativism approach, the case is different, instead of being surprised and disgusted by some other cultures' food, you may ask the following questions: why is this sort of food eaten here? Or what are the benefits of eating snails? You may find that this strange food is very healthy.

Cultural relativism does not mean the absolute freedom of deeds, this is what the concept advocates. Cultural relativism has more to do with scientific positivism,

every judgment we make has to pass through some scientific observation and experiments; it has nothing to do with feelings or any other sort of sympathy with cultures (Howson 2009).

This thesis sheds light on the importance of cultural relativism for Americans as well as the Arab and Muslim immigrants to better cultural understanding. Cultural relativism helps immigrants integrate in the host culture; conclusively, Arab and Muslim immigrants in the United States suffer from racial differences; they are targets of different kinds of discrimination, and this is due to the lack of mutual cultural comprehension.

1.10. Religion and Culture

Raymond Williams (1983) suggests that "culture is a particular way of life, whether of people, a period or a group"(90). The phrase "particular way of life" used by Williams is open to different interpretations, it can suggest that a group of people have made some values and customs and considered it as a way of life and adopted them as their culture. This implicates that cultures are manmade.

Religion is defined by Collins dictionary as "belief in a god or gods and the activities that are connected with this belief, such as praying or worshipping in a building such as a church or temple" (Religion Definition/ Collins English Dictionary"). These activities in religion will become daily habits that, in return, shape cultural practices.

Religion has always constituted cultures and shaped their traditions as well. Religious practices will become part of the cultural habits of individuals and societies as well. Let us explore an example of a cultural habit and how religion has banned this habit forever. In pre-Islamic Arab society, they used to burry female babies alive; and this was a conventional act practiced by almost all the community.

This habit was done to protect the reputation of the family from shame, but once Islam established its norms, this tradition gradually disappeared.

Culture and religion have a more complex relationship, sometimes, people confuse cultural traditions, with religious practices. Mariam Abdulla says in this context that "cultural practices becoming "religionized" and religious ideas and spaces becoming part of the culture" (102), this is the issue of many Arab Americans, who are confused between religion and culture. Arab and Muslim women immigrants suffered from oppression within their Muslim community, and are criticized for the very simplest deeds. This discrimination does not come from religious beliefs, but rather from cultural and traditional practices.

Due to the misunderstanding between religion and culture, many Arab women immigrants in the United States struggle to adjust to their new culture. This is especially difficult when some women see their subjugation as a religious obligation and try to conform to it.

Arab culture may hold inappropriate practices in the United States, but the fear of losing children to the new culture forces Arab Muslim parents to implement harmful laws on their children to protect them. This pressure has very serious drawbacks for the lives of these children, they feel themselves inferior to their American peers, who are not so pressured by their parents or community. Consequently, the process of acculturation will be affected by the reaction of Arab and Muslim families towards the host culture, the more Arab and Muslim families stick to their religion and culture, the more difficult their acculturation is. Conversely, Arab seculars are more likely to acculturate to the point of assimilation than religious ones.

Hence, Arabs and Muslims in the United States cannot escape the cultural change, many prefer to maintain their religious beliefs and practices in households, like practicing prayers and fasting or celebrating Muslim feasts, while assimilating in their place of work.

This religious and cultural difference is common in the United States, and the American government has adopted a melting pot ideology that recognizes religion and cultural variety; which paves the way to multiculturalism in the United States.

1.11. Multiculturalism in America

The United States is the only country that witnessed a great movement of immigration in the last century. This immigration engendered a new cultural landscape in the United States, which was labeled the melting pot by Israel Zangwill in the early twentieth century to describe this ethnic diversity.

The aim behind such an appellation was to have all these ethnic races melted into and assimilated into the American culture to produce a unique American identity. Yet, this curriculum adopted by the government to accommodate all ethnic races confronts much criticism. Ethnic communities saw in this program a total neglect of their origins, culture, and religion; since these communities came to the United States from all over the world. At this level, the United States substitutes the melting pot for the 'American Mosaic' which is a fair appellation compared with the melting pot. Later on, full recognition of ethnic diversity gave birth to the new era of multiculturalism.

Multiculturalism has been adopted by the American government to reduce tensions between different ethnic groups and create a tolerant atmosphere in the American society. Formal institutions have embraced multicultural policy: "Elementary and secondary schools have adopted curricula to foster understanding

of cultural diversity by exposing students to the customs and traditions of racial and ethnic groups"(Owen 3).

Nowadays, America is a multicultural society that involves different races and cultures, from Native Americans to the Europeans who invaded America seeking a new life, Africans who came to America as slaves, Asians and Arabs, and many other races that travel to America dreaming of a better life.

The United States accepts multiculturalism as a leading policy to make diversity a unique and unified community. But the problem is how multiculturalism is perceived in the United States. David Hollinger identifies two types of multiculturalism: "A 'pluralist' model, which treats groups as permanent and enduring…and a 'cosmopolitan' model, which accepts shifting group boundaries, multiple affiliations, and hybrid identities" (Kymlicka 74). The pluralist model of multiculturalism indicates that different races leaving one country can maintain their religion and cultural identity; it is a closer definition to the salad bowl theory which implicates that people from different origins are mixed together like the salad components, but you can still differentiate between each component. The term pluralism is the opposite of the melting pot theory which tries to melt all ingredients together so you cannot distinguish any of them.

However, cosmopolitan multiculturalism promotes multiple ethnicities and cultures that coexist peacefully in one community, and each ethnic group respects the other. Cosmopolitan multiculturalism is aware of hybrid identities that are the result of mingling two identities, especially through marriage.

The Americans of African origin were the first to protest for their political and social rights as Americans; this step laid to the foundation that encouraged other ethnic groups to demand recognition. Arab and Muslim Americans are also part of

the social and political acceptance and recognition protests. The path was difficult, especially after the terrorist attacks on the Twin Towers on September 11; 2001. Nowadays, Arab and Muslim Americans gain much more acceptance than before. Arab and Muslim Americans have fought stereotypes and prejudices through their sever commitment to the political and social norms of American society, and through literary works that have elucidated much about the Arab and Muslim communities in the United States.

1.11.1. Multiculturalism in American Literature

For many years, multicultural literature has been dominated by white writers, the white dominance in the literary canon was clear to everyone. However, returning back to the formation of the United States, we find different nations like France, England, Spain, Germany, and Africans who were made slaves and brought to America, Asians, Arabs, and without forgetting the native people of America who were totally marginalized through many decades. All these races have contributed to the composition of what is now called America.

These different races have produced literature on American soil, a fact which cannot be denied by history. And even the great white American writers have recognized multiculturalism in their works; for instance, Herman Melville admits multiculturalism in his novel *Redburn* (1850), where he writes:

> Settled by the people of all nations, all nations may claim her for their own. Yet you can not spill a drop of American blood without spilling the blood of the whole world. Be he English, Frenshman, German, Dane, or Scot; the European who scoffs at an American, calls his own brother Raca, and stands in danger in the judgment. We are not a narrow tribe of men, with a bigoted Hebrew nationality---whose

> blood has been debased in the attempt to ennoble it, by maintaining an exclusive succession among ourselves. No: our blood is as the flood of the Amazon, made up of a thousand noble currents all pouring into one (214).

The American government found it a must to recognize the diversity in American literature, and serious steps were taken to introduce this diversity into the teaching curriculum. This ethnic diversity needs to be oriented to respect different cultures, so, the need for multicultural literature is highly required in the American National Educational Syllabus, and the idea that new voices want to convey by teaching multicultural literature is that a new generation will accept cultural diversity and other ethnic ideologies as a part of national heritage.

Donald Doorlag and Rena Lewis (1995) have defended their point of view on the necessity of developing a multicultural education by putting forward the following arguments:

- A society that interweaves the best of all of its cultures reflects a truly mosaic image.
- Multicultural education can restore cultural rights by emphasizing cultural equality and respect.
- Students must learn to respect others.
- Multicultural education provides a more balanced view of U.S. society (qtd. in Ruiz & Ojeda 72).

The quest for multicultural literature emerges with the Civil Rights Movements in the 1950s and thrives later on with the students' movements claiming multicultural literature recognition in the American educational and political system. Protests and claims continued until the late 1990s when American universities and colleges agreed to the inclusion of multicultural literature and gender studies in their

syllabus: "last third of the twentieth century has been the development of women and gender studies and ethnic studies programs or departments and the inclusion of women, African American, and ethnic writers in literary anthologies, curriculum, as well as faculty syllabi and research" (Loris 53).

Ethnic diversity is unquestionable in the United States, the US Census Bureau (2000) revealed that 30 percent of US citizens recognized their ethnic roots, and many others identified themselves as 'mixed'.

The impact of multicultural education is worth considering in the United States, it provides learners as well as teachers with knowledge concerning cultural diversity in the United States and spreads convivial attitudes towards ethnic groups. Furthermore, it bridges the gap between students from all over the world who are pursuing their studies in the United States.

All these mosaics of ethnic groups write in the language of Uncle Sam to better communicate with or dialogue with American society. Novels of various ethnic categories are taught at universities, colleges, and even in primary schools. *Their eyes were watching God* by Zora Neal Hurston (1937), *Native Son* by Richard Wright (1940), Ceremony by Leslie Marmon Silko (1977), and other prominent constellations of African American, Asian, and Native American writers are nowadays the best collections to be taught at American universities.

Arab American literature has also made its place in American multicultural literature thanks to prolific writers like Gibran Khalil Gibran, Ameen Rihani, Naomi Shihab Nye, Mohja Kahf, Laila Halaby, and other Arab American writers, who prioritize defining their Arab and Muslim identity, and clearing up any blemishes and stereotypes drawn from their heritage.

1.12. Arab American Literature

The experiences of the earliest immigrants, who arrived from Arabic-speaking nations and began writing about their lives and the challenges they faced in the new land, formed the foundation of American literature. However, even before the advent of Arab emigrants and their literary production, Arab literature had already encountered American literature. "Al Aaraf," a poem by Edgar Allan Poe published in 1829, is named after the seventh surah of the Quran and describes a location between paradise and hell.

1.13. The Rise of Al Mahjar Literature

Arab American literature was established by the first immigrant writers settled in the United States, known as *Al Mahjar* writers or *Al Mahjar* literature**.** The name *Al Mahjar* was given to them by the literary community in the Arab world, the denotation of the word Mahjar means another place where people can immigrate. It is a new place where people can change something that is hard to change in their place of origin, to be something completely different, as Christopher BIGSBY (2010) put it in a colloquy entitled "American Identities in Relation and Interaction"[1] What's American About America? BIGSBY argues that people who choose America as a place to immigrate are people who want to start another life, and some of them change even their names; these indicate that America means for them a new world that requires new thoughts and new visions.

The *Mahjar* writers conceived that very early and chose the new world to start a new life far from oppression and persecution. They immigrated to America

[1] American Identities in relation and interaction" organisé par le laboratoire Cultures Anglo-Saxonnes (CAS) de l'Université Toulouse II-Le Mirail, 10-11 juin 2010.

seeking new horizons of thought; they were fed up with the prosaic and outmoded use of language, and with religious tyranny and old restrictions. First Mahjar writers had no assimilative tendency; they rather sought pureness and perfection in their works. This literary movement was not considered purely Arab literature, nor as American literature, but a literature in between, as Bhabha (1994) has demonstrated in his cultural theory of *the third space.*

The Mahjar literature refers to Arab written literature produced on the American soil, either in the North or the South of America. The literature produced varied from prose to poetry and even painting and journalism, M.M. Badawi (1975) illustrates who the Mahjarites are by referring to the prominent poets of this movement:

> The *Mahjar* poets, i.e. the Arab poets who emigrated to America, form such a distinct school of writing that they deserve separate treatment. Moreover, they exercised a profound influence upon their contemporaries in the Arab lands, an influence which can be clearly seen not only in the works of minor poets. Both historically and culturally the *Mahjar* poets are an extension of Lebanese and Syrian poetry (179).

These poets and writers were acquainted with classical Arabic literature and culture, and once settled in America, they brought a new spirit to that literature by adopting the western civilization's customs and norms that were flourishing at that time. They liberated themselves from the hackneyed and archaic classical expressions by new and simple colloquial ones. The words of Gibran Khalil Gibran in this context are worth interesting: "You can take the Arabic language that Sibaveyhi Al-Asvad speaks, but leave me the language that a mother speaks with her

child, the lover speaks with his beloved" (qtd. in Siddique 14), This statement summarizes the revolutionary status of the Mahjarites. They were rebellious thinkers; they used their literary experience to promote a new soul in the Arab cultural world.

1.14. The Mahjar Movement's Dimensions and Significance

The Mahjar literature began in the second half of the 19th century. Many writers, poets, and artists left their Arab countries that were under the Ottomans' tyranny; they fled their homelands seeking freedom of thought and expression. A significant number of poets and artists were mainly from Syria and Lebanon, and the majority were Christians who mastered French and English in addition to their mother tongue, Arabic. After leaving their homelands, they settled in the north and south of America.

The outstanding Northern figures were *Gibran Khalil Gibran*, *Abdul Masih Haddad, Mikh'il Nu'aima, Nasib Arida, Nadara Haddad, Iliyas Ataullah, Rasheed Ayyoub, Ilya Abu Madi, William Katisflis,*and *Wadi Bahoot,* these names are the principle members of 'The Pen Association'.

The Mahjar writers soon felt the need to reunite themselves around creative literary organization which may help them in preserving their Arab cultural heritage and national ideologies; so journalism was their first step to reinforce their identity as Arab Americans:

> "They published Arabic newspapers to communicate among themselves. Later, they formed literary circles and published literary magazines and journals under the banner of their circles, and consequently they stepped into writing literary genres. This group

published around 135 newspapers and magazines in Arabic in the United States and Canada before 1980" (Shahidul Islam 9).

By spring of 1920 the Arab American Diaspora created The Pen Association under the most prominent literary figure Gibran Khalil Gibran. The Association also included a well known and significant poets like Nasib Arida, Racheed Ayyoub and Mikha'l Nu'aima. Badawi (1975) writes in this context that:

> The aim of the association was clear: it was to unite their efforts to infuse a new life in modern Arabic literature by turning away from the traditional excessive preoccupation with mere verbal skill, and by seeking to write a literature that suited the requirements of modem times, a literature distinguished primarily by keen sensibility and subtle thought. (182)

These writers charged themselves with the responsibility of restoring the revival of Arabic poetry overseas. The founding fathers of this growing literary movement were interested in engaging their literary output to glorify freedom.

This group of creative minds was clearly influenced by Romanticism[2] and American Transcendentalism[3]. They embraced the romantic trend, which gave them liberty over everything, and they saw that literature and language are vivid bodies that need to be free of imitation and rigid restrictions. The Mahjarites were

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[2] Romanticism: a movement in the arts and literature that originated in the late 18th century, emphasizing inspiration, subjectivity, and the primacy of the individual.

[3] Transcendentalism: In response to rationality, an idealistic philosophical and social movement emerged in New England around 1836. Based on the premise that, in order to understand the nature of reality, one must first examine and analyze the reasoning process that determines the nature of experience, and influenced by romanticism, Platonism, and Kantian philosophy. (Britanica.com).

impressed by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's principles, which glorify the freedom of human beings "Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they" (Goodreads.com).

The major themes that the Mahjar writers tackled were homesickness, pure love, freedom, individualism, and mediation; they also glorified religious tolerance and considered all religions equal as long as they led to God. Mikh'il Nu'aima explained the objectives of their fine literature as follows:

> The literature feeds from the land, air and light of life. The real writer is one who is sensitive, attentive, has a clear point of view to all the processes which occur in real life and the ability to express all these in the right way. This "new spirit" which tries to save the literature from backwardness and imitation, is the hope of today and the pillar for tomorrow… However, it would not be right to reject the classic literature completely for the functioning of the new literary spirit. There are the works of such authors which are used today and will be used as a valuable resource in future. The imitation of these works will bring only detriment to our literature. That's why it is necessary to bring new breath and spirit (qtd. In Jafarov & Ibrahimova 201).

In the South of America, there was another literary society of Arab writers which gained little influence in the hemisphere of Arab American literary history. These Arab immigrant writers settled mainly in Brazil and Argentina, were less educated compared with those of the north, and their financial situation was difficult. Furthermore, their literary activities were non-organized. (Jafarov and Ibrahimova 202)

Meanwhile, these writers did not give up, and they created different literary associations to write about their situation in exile, naming Riwaq-ul-Maari in 1900 by Naum Labki, "Al Rabita—us-Suriya", published in Buenos Aires from 1929 to 1934 by Khalil Saadeh.

"Arrabita-ul-Adabya" was founded by George Saydah in Buebos Aires in 1949, but shortly stopped by the returning of Saydah to Lebanon. The most significant association was "The Andalusian Society" founded in 1933 and presided over by Mishel Maloof and Daoud Shakur as vice president, and it included different outstanding writers, including Rachid Salim El-Khouri, Shukrullah Al-jurr, and the Malouf's family: Chafik Maloof, Ryad Maloof, and George Hasan Maloof.

1.15. Difference between the Pan League and the Andalussian Society

The Pen League association was more liberal in form and content, it sought renovation in everything, Gibran Khalil Gibran, the most prominent founder of this association, always insists on the beauty of reality and tries to adopt simple language far from any classical, rugged style; and they found in America an absolute freedom for their literary output. Gibran insisted on the breaking of norms in literary work and considered it the prime principle of literary renovation, he once said: "If the meaning of beauty of thought requires the breaking of rules, break them. If there is no known word to express your idea, borrow or invent one. If syntax stands in the way of needed or useful express, away with the syntax" (Rahman Talukdar 22).

El Mahjar writers were influenced by American writers such as Thoreau, Whitman, Edgar Allan Poe, and others, "In America, they or rather their intellectual leaders, fell under the influence of the latter-day romanticism and transcendentalism

of American literature, which characterize the work of Emerson and Thoreau, Longfellow, and Whitman"(Badawi 180).

However the Andalusian association's writers were too conservatives in terms of style and content also, and this is due to the nature of the new environment and its culture. Almost all the population of South American was from Spanish ancestors which many of them have Arab roots. The southern writers express their longing and homesickness by naming their association "The Andalusian league" referring to the common themes in both poetries.

1.15.1. Features of Al Mahjar Literature

The Mahjar Literature has various qualities and characteristics that distinguish it from Arab Literature; the most notable features should be summarized in the following subheadings:

1.15.2. Freedom from Traditional Restrictions

The New World has affected the Mahjar literature in different ways, most prominently in terms of liberation from all that seems old and archaic. The new world represents for them a new opportunity to develop their innate talents far from any traditional restrictions. Gibran is the most rebellious writer amongst his contemporaries who seeks new ways of expression and spared no efforts to refresh the Mahjar literature; his ability to change and develop the Arab literary traditions recommended him to be on the board of "The Pan Association League".

The Arab poets who had immigrated to the United States provided the first significant push for a serious break with neo-classicism. Jibran, Nu'aima, and Abu Madi's critical writings, with their iconoclastic goals and energizing insights into new poetic techniques, significantly contributed to shattering the uncritical devotion of a select Arab audience to neoclassical rigidity and traditionalism. A Romantic

current emerged as a result of the Mahjar group's continuous criticism, which was supported by a strong desire for new independence in both art and life.

The Mahjar writers deviated not just from traditional literary conventions, but also from classical Arabic grammatical rules. They fought for freedom in the construction process in all literary forms. The constraints of assonance and embellished figures of speech were abandoned in prose, while rhyme and meter were abandoned in poetry. Much Mahjar verse used rhythmic patterns that favored shorter, simple meters and stanzaic structures. MIkha'Il Nu'alma, for example, wrote loose verses with a pleasant beat. Amin al-Rihani attempted "prosified poetry", imitating the writings of Walt Whitman in 1905.

1.15.3. Individualism and Spiritual Meditation

The Mahjar writers' literary traits vary from one another. Each of them communicates his or her beliefs and ideologies in his or her own way. With their keen interpretations, pictorials, and thoughts, their languages have long been a source of comfort. Its literary approach transformed it into a wonderful poem with musical appeal. They did their best to shape correct phrases and let pleasant echoes ease the reader's mind.

The Mahjar literature was marked by its influence on the romantic trends in America that glorified individualism as a philosophical doctrine. The Mahjar poets see in the individual a total richness that may contribute to the whole body of literature "one for all". Besides the individual aspect of their literary works, spiritual meditation is strongly noticed in the Mahjar literature, *The Procession* is one of the most significant philosophical poems; it is composed of two hundred and three verses. In this poem, Gibran returns to nature and rejects the dominance of industrial life over the individual. Jibran's writings frequently deal with spiritual reflection.

The poem 'I do not know' by Abu Madi is also a lovely example of soul-searching and self-meditation.

1.15.4. The Adoption of Secular Humanism

The Mahjar writers left their homes fleeing persecution, oppression, and all sort of underdevelopment features. They managed to live in a hostile land where everything was different and tried to adjust themselves to it by adopting a universal thought. They saw in secular humanism their refuge, and it is clear in their literary production where they wrote for the value of the human being, whatever his race or religion, they believed in freedom of speech and were tolerant of all religions. They also idealized love, compassion, equality, and justice. The Mahjar wrote that the value of humanity cannot be increased without a free and peaceful homeland. Gibran's words on humanity are worth mentioning in this context:

> Humanity is the spirit of the Supreme Being on earth, and humanity is standing amidst unseen ruins, hiding its nakedness behind tattered rags, shedding tears upon hollow cheeks, calling for its children in pitiful voice. But the children are busy singing the anthem; they are busy sharpening the swords and cannot hear the cries of their mothers (qtd. in Aniseur 158).

Gibran expressed his grief of the thousands of Lebanese who died in the First World War as a result of malnutrition, sickness, and persecution. He encourages the emigrants to donate to the Syrian Welfare Committee and Mount Lebanon.

1.15.5. Longing for Homeland

Nostalgia was a prominent feature that characterized the Mahjar literature. In their unfamiliar surroundings and seclusion, they were haunted by memories of their

fatherland, loved ones they had left behind, and terrible isolation. One thing that all Arab Americans shared in common was a sense of exile, a sense of not belonging. In a place where the language of their literature and customs was not spoken, they felt endangered, which led to the formation of groups and societies and the establishment of their own institutions. A poem written by Ryad Maloof revealed the real suffering of being far from home:

> I wonder, if I could return, dear Lebanon
> If the promises are implemented and the time give the deferment
> If we could pull up the different kinds of grapes (qtd. in Jafarov and Ibrahimova 203).

The Mahjar writers' yearning for their homeland went beyond the fact of just homesickness but rather a national feeling covered with patriotism. Many of them called for the independence of their homelands from the Ottoman Empire and agreed to establish new countries on secular rather than religious principles (Günther and Milich XX).

Eventually, the concept of immigration, or "Al Hijra", runs in the blood of Arabs from the time when God ordered the prophet Mohammed to leave his home and go seek refuge in another place. And this became a tradition among Arabs who were always receptive to this doctrine. The most known migrations in the history of Arabs after the first Hijra of the prophet are those of Banu-Hilal who migrated from the Middle East to the North Africa, where they settled and spread their language and traditions. The Arabs under the Umayyad caliphate [4] also settled in Spain and established a marvelous civilization.

[4] **Umayyad dynasty**, the first great Muslim dynasty to rule the empire of the caliphate (661–750 CE)

In modern times and Besides the different obstacles and malaise in the exile, the Mahjar literary canons have found their path and made all these different hardships a reason to develop and push Arab literature to its best and most flourishing moments in its history. Thus, this upscale position that the Mahjar poets gained is not from nowhere; these poets and writers are from the best pens in their homelands. They chose to immigrate and follow the path of their ancestors to build new and merely perfect schools of Arab literature. They had the same great language competence as those in their homeland but with different literary orientations that carried the spirit of renovation.

1.16. Contemporary Arab American Literature: Concerns and Challenges

The founding fathers of the Mahjar literature have established a significant heritage cherished by all Arabs, either those who are far away from the United States or those leaving on American soil. They paved the way for the upcoming generations, who skillfully flourished Arab American literature.

The period following the Mahjar literature the Arab American literature can be described as ambitionless, for the Arabs living in America were completely busy proving their belonging to America, trying to assimilate with the host culture, and rejecting all that related them to their Arab origins; a fact that puts their identity at stake.

Nevertheless, there were some voices that wrote stories glorifying their Americanness but also with reference to their oriental origins. The Arab American writer Salom Rizk wrote The *Syrian Yankee* in 1943, a story of an immigrant who sought integration in the host culture.

After the 1950s, different factors contributed to the rise of modern Arab American literature. In the aftermath of different issues in the Middle East, noting

the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and the Lebanese Civil War[5], a considerable flux of immigrants has settled in the United States; this generation was better educated than its predecessor (Majaj 2/17).

With the emergence of the Civil Rights and Black Power Movements (1966), wich promoted ethnic groups with more freedom of expression, Arab American literature sought refuge under this anti-segregation wing. The path for the new generation of writers was not easy, Arabs in the United States were suffering from racism and stereotypes, and they tried to express themselves throughout literature; they worked on defining themselves instead of being defined "if we, as Arab Americans, don't define who we are and for what we stand, someone else will do it for us" (Aossy 1).

After several Arab conflicts, especially the Israeli-Palestinian War and the Lebanese Civil War, Arabs started to immigrate to the United States, seeking new opportunities, but upon their arrival they faced different cultural ideologies, which were difficult for them to understand. Among these problems was the issue of identity, from their first step on American soil, they were asked either to change their names or shorten them, and this caused a great shock among new arrivals. Edward Said has described this identity dilemma among new arrivals: "Many travelers find themselves saying of an experience in a new country, that it wasn't what they expected, meaning that it isn't what a book said it would be" (Said 93).

[5] The Lebanese Civil War was both an internal Lebanese affair and a regional conflict involving a host of regional and international actors. It revolved around some of the issues that dominated regional politics in the Middle East in the latter part of the 20th century, including the Palestine-Israel conflict, Cold War competition, Arab nationalism and political Islam (SciencesPo.Fr).

Sam Hamod (1936), an Arab American poet of Lebanese descent, has skillfully stressed the issue of identity in a brilliant way. He discussed in his poem "Dying with the Wrong Name" the situation of immigrants entering Ellis Island in 1800s and early 1900s; and he negotiated the shock of thousands of newly arrived immigrants from different cultural backgrounds when they were asked to give up their names or at least shorten them. Hamod spoke about "something unspeakable is lost" when they shortened their names, their identity was lost; even when they died, they could never be traced because they died with the wrong name.

Dying With The Wrong Name (Part 1)

these men died with the wrong names,
Na'aim Jazeeney, from the beautiful
valley of Jezzine, died as Nephew
Sam.Eh'sine Hussin died without
relatives and because they cut away his
last name
at Ellis Island, there was no way to trace
him back even to Lebanon and Ima'
Brahim had no other name than mother
of Brahim- even my own father lost his,
went from Hussein Hamode Subh' to Sam
Hamod. there is something lost in the
blood,something lost down to the bone in
these small changes. A man in a dark
blue uniform at Ellis Island says, with
tiredness and authority, "You only need
two names in America, "and suddenly
as cleanly as air you've
lost your name. At first, it's hardly even
noticeable – it's easier, you can move
about as an American – but looking back

the loss of your name cuts away
some other part, something
unspeakable is lost.

Identity and its representation among immigrants as well as to Americans is what Hamod highlighted as a significant point in the process of enculturation among Arab and Muslim immigrants. Arab immigrants in the United States found themselves lost between two cultural streams, either keeping their traditions or assimilating into the host culture, which may represent a danger to their identity.

Naomi Shihab Nye (1952), an Arab American writer born to a Palestinian father and American mother, deftly blends the Arab tradition and culture with the highly civilized life in the United States, and she proves that living in America does not require being alienated from the origin culture. Her bicultural identity embraces the cultures by presenting the amalgamation of both Arab heritage and American experience.

Lisa Suhair Majaj (1960), writes, "Nye creates spaces in which Arab and Arab-American experiences can be articulated, not through nostalgic reclamation, but by honoring the diversity of experiences and the necessity of change" (Majaj 5). Nye considers herself a citizen of the world, she has a cosmopolitan view toward everything and encourages diversity. In the *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, Jane Turner writes in this context: "Nye observes the business of living and the continuity among all the world's inhabitants … She is international in scope and internal in focus" (Poetry Foundation.org). Like Sam Hamod, Nye continues highlighting cultural conflicts among Arab Americans; dual identity is the major concern in her literary production. In her famous poem "My Father and the Fig Tree" (2002), Nye uses symbolism to negotiate her dual belongings; the fig tree is a

metaphor that symbolizes the ties of her father with his country, Palestine, which is best known for its abundance of fig trees.

In relation to the gap between the two generations, the poem depicts a long fight between the father and his daughter. The father takes too much time to plant a fig tree in the garden, despite the encouragement of his wife. Nye starts her poem by saying: “For other fruits, my father was indifferent / He'd point at the cherry trees and say, / "See those? I wish they were figs." (1-3) her father was indifferent for any other fruit except the fig one, and he tried to persuade his daughter that figs are the best fruit ever because it is a gift from Allah, and he continues weaving folktales about it even if the tale does not fit he continues to do “In the evening he sat by my beds /weaving folktales like vivid little scarves /They always involved a fig tree / Even when it didn't fit, he'd stick it in.”(5-7). Nye tells us about her experience when she ate a dried fig and shrugged at its taste: “At age six I ate a dried fig and shrugged / "That's not what I'm talking about! he said/ "I'm talking about a fig straight from the earth – gift of Allah!” (13-14-15).

Time passed, and the poet did not see the fig tree until one day her father was chanting in Arabic and called her to see his gift:

> The last time he moved, I got a phone call,
> My father, in Arabic, chanting a song
> I'd never heard. "What's that?"
> He took me out back to the new yard.
> There, in the middle of Dallas, Texas,
> a tree with the largest, fattest,
> sweetest fig in the world.
> "It's a figtree song!" he said,
> plucking his fruits like ripe tokens,
> emblems, assurance
> of a world that was always his own. (31- 41)

Nye gives a wonderful outlet to her father's cultural conflict by finally having planted one figtree, which represents his culture of origin, in the garden in the middle of Dallas, Texas, in reference to the heart of America.

There were many other writers and poets who expressed their dual identity in varied ways; food was one of them. Diana Abu-Jaber (1960), an American writer of a Jordanian father, has presented food as a literary item and considers it a significant theme in discussing her dual identity. She considers Middle Eastern food and flavors as a connection with her father's culture; *The Language of Baklava (*2005) is her novel where she skillfully connects the act of eating with the homeland:

> Baklava is her speciality… When [I] inhale Auntie Aya's Baklava. I press my hand to my sternum, as if I am smelling something too dear for this world. The scent contains the mysteries of time, loss, and grief, as well as promises of journeys and rebirth. I pick up a piece and taste it. I eat and eat. The baklava is so good, it gives me a new way of tasting Arabic food. It is like a poem about deeply bred luxuries of Eastern cultures (191).

Almost all her novels circle around the same theme, which highlights food as a medium of communication between the new and the original. For instance, in Crescent (2003), Sirine, the protagonist, an Arab American woman with an Iraqi father who works as a chef in a Lebanese restaurant, is caught between two cultures; her dishes and her fabulous presence in the café have allowed Arab students and visitors to express their sense of dislocation. Fedda Conrey (2017) illustrates that:

> The most important bridges are Sirine herself and the Middle Eastern food she cooks. From her pivotal position in the kitchen, which opens out to the rest of the café, Sirine serves as an integral connecting link,

> joining together the different communities and individuals of *Crescent*'s ethnic borderland (196).

The importance of food as a symbol of culture for Diana Abu-Jaber, comes directly from her father, she once says: "My father, he used to say, 'I could lecture you about history, I can talk to you about religion and art and culture. But I'd rather give you some falafel," (*opb.org*).

Another well-known Arab American writer is Mohja Kahf, whose literature reflects her rebellious spirit. Mohja Kahf, famous for her scarf, attempts to blend tradition and modern life; her words are adventurous, courageous, and explicit in comparison to those writers of her peers. Kahf has inspired bravery and perseverance to defy the misconceptions constructed by American society about Arab women in her poems "Emails from Scheherazed (2003) and "Haggar (2016).

Allusion is a strong item in Kahf's writing; she often alludes to history to explain the present (Manqoush et al.). More precisely, Kahf allusions are based on women from Islamic history such as Fatima (daughter of the Prophet Mohamed (PBUH)), his wives Khadija and Aicha, Asya, the wife of the Pharaoh, and Sarah and Haggar, the wives of Ibrahim the Prophet. These women were strong, autonomous, and free enough to write their names in history. For Kahf, these women, or mothers, as she calls Sarah and Hagar in "Hagar" poems, are the source of her strength and a strong weapon to unsettle the American stereotypes about Arab and Muslim women as being oppressed and forced to wear veils.

Another distinguished veteran poet that gets famous the spoken poetry is Suheir Hammad. She is famous for using the vernacular in her poetry, Hammad has brilliantly coupled the English language with Arabic; she once said, "I wanted to write more like how I think and speak" (Helal 5).

Excerpts from *Born Palestinian, Born Black*. From "dedication":

his heart transcending his body
he vowed to return to phalasteen
bil roh *bil dem*
with his life with his blood

And from "argela remembrance":

smoking the water pipe
pass the *argela*
head tipped down
to my father
inhaling strawberry tobacco. (Suheir Hammad qtd. In Helal 5)

Like other Arab American writers, Hammad has a sense of dual identity, a hidden struggle between her Americanness and her Palestinian origins. In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, Hammad wrote some verses that show her deep sorrow for what happened: "Please God, let it be a nightmare; wake me now. and Please God, after the second plane, don't let it be anyone who looks like my brothers." (Smith 1-2). Hammad was sad and begged God that all she was seeing on TV would be just a nightmare that would disappear with her awakening.

Laila Halaby, best known for her novels West of the Jordan and Once in a Promised Land, is another prolific writer. Both works shed light on current challenges that Arab Americans face, such as racism, identity building, and, most notably, the aftermath of the 9/11/2001 terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center twin towers. Because she is of Palestinian and Jordanian descent, Halaby addresses the various identity problems of Palestinians in the United States as well as the cultural difficulties that this group of immigrants has in the United States.

Halaby also discusses the impact of the 9/11 terrorist attacks on Arab immigrants in the United States, how Arabs became the most suspicious immigrants, and how American culture discriminated against and mistreated them.

1.17. Conclusion

There is an endless list of Arab American writers, poets, activists, artists, and alike; a considerable number that cannot be displayed in this chapter. Nonetheless, through this short glance at Arab American literature from its inception to the present, writers have clearly moved from "a stance of defensiveness to self-assertion, producing literary texts that speak to their own realities" (Majaj 13/17).

Arab-American authors continue to show the diversity of Arab cultural origins as well as the various ways in which these cultural roots manifest in the United States. The dual identity construction is always at the core of Arab American literature.

Arab-American literature has produced stories and poetry for over a century, and this literary production is increasingly attempting to reshape the reality in which they live. The emerging globe is diverse, with various cultural strands. Diana Abu-Jaber asks an important question: "Why must there be only one home?" (328). It's a wonder that pervades Arab-American writing. Undoubtedly, there has never been a single notion of home that works for everyone. Arab American writers conclude that home can be everywhere. The increasing production of Arab-American literature over the past century reveals that Arab-American writers have transitioned from a defensive to a self-assertive attitude, generating creative pieces that reflect their humble reality. Their art demonstrates that, even though "home" is ultimately only feasible in the mind, it is nevertheless a space with unlimited possibilities.

The second chapter examines the novel The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf by famous author Mohja Kahf. Berry's theory of acculturation serves as the foundation for the analysis. According to this approach, assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization are the four major stages of acculturation. The chapter traces the

journey of the protagonist from her separation phase to her integration phase of acculturation.

Chapter Two: Acculturation Process in Mohja Kahf's The Girl in the Tangerine

2.1. Introduction

Arab-American literature has been part of the diverse landscape of American literature since the nineteenth century. Prominent writers have emerged to flourish the literary and cultural heritage of the Arab immigrants in the United States, from Ameen Rihani and Kahlil Gibran's first literary experiences to the most contemporary Arab American writers, among them the female voices that outnumbered the male ones. It is important to stress the role of Arab American women writers in depicting the actual life of the Arab American woman, who is hyphenated, neither accepted as American nor welcomed as Arab. This complicated situation has given birth to a flood of literary works that fight the stereotypes the west has drawn up on Arab women in general and try to define themselves, as Aossey (2009) puts it:"if [we], as Arab Americans, don't define who we are and for what we stand, someone else will do it for us, and most likely not to our liking "(Al Jadid.com).

Mohja Kahf is a prominent feminist figure in contemporary Arab American literature and a Syrian American who immigrated with her family to America at a very young age. She is known for her direct critiques of western representations of Arab women; she is a feminist activist and a successful novelist and poet. In her novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2006),* she traces Khadra Shamy's trajectory to her spiritual and cultural emancipation. Kahf deals with the story from a feminist point of view, where she brilliantly explores the dual struggle of a Muslim girl living in Indianapolis between her Muslim-based education and American culture, which represents for her a danger coming from American culture.

The study of the current chapter is based on Berry's strategies of acculturation to analyze every acculturation process in Khadra Shamy. The focus

will be on her different attitudes towards the host culture; the analysis also sheds light on Khadra's reaction towards her culture and religion as she discovers that everything she was taught about them is being questioned. Furthermore, the analysis encompasses the different factors that have a direct effect on Khadra's acculturation process.

2.2. Exploring Khadra's Journey through Berry's Acculturation Strategies

Acculturation is often studied as a process of adaptation in the host culture (Schwartz and Zambonga 275); this adaptation mainly occurs among ethnic groups within the host culture; however, individuals also are concerned with this social change, and it is proven "that individuals who are members of cultures in contact will experience various psychological changes, coining the term *psychological acculturation* to refer to this individual level" (Berry 616); and for that purpose, the analysis of any independent individual of a group is best achieved from a psychological acculturation angle, as Berry (1997) suggests:

> The concept of *acculturation* is employed to refer to the cultural changes resulting from these group encounters, while the concepts of *psychological acculturation* and *adaptation* are employed to refer to the psychological changes and eventual outcomes that occur as a result of individuals experiencing acculturation (6).

In the case of Khadra Shamy, the road to cultural adaptation was not easy. Through the protagonist, Khadra Shamy, who was juggled between two strong and contrasting cultures, Kahf investigates the subject of acculturation in its worldwide context.

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf is a novel that explores the life of a Syrian immigrant family called Shamy, a significant name that Kahf gives to her characters. The family immigrated to the USA in order to find new opportunities and make their lives better, but of course with an intention to return to Syria, their original country.

> "Wajdy and Ibtehaj always viewed their stay in America as temporary. That was part of the reason they were always reluctant to buy many things; they'd just be more attachment to leave behind when the time came. Money saved buying beat-up furniture in America was money that could be spent back home in Syria" (Kahf 131).

According to Majaj in her article "Arab American Literature: Origins and Developments (2008)," all Arab immigrants coming from the East were "fully intending to return home one day," and this is what the Shamy family were planning; they immigrated to America for political reasons and considered themselves temporary sojourners, which was not the case afterwards; the Shamy's were granted citizenship and remained in America forever.

As they consider themselves temporary sojourners, they have had to make some important decisions, among them an economical one that involves saving money, and in terms of their private lives, they struggle to raise their children in a host society full of contradictions. The task was not easy for Wajdy and Ibtehaj to teach Islamic values to their children, which is why they were so strict in terms of Islamic principles like salat (prayer), wudu (ablution), hijab (the veil) for their daughter, and other Islamic principles. This severe strategy adopted by the Shamy family towards their children resulted in a set of stressors that slowed Khadra's process of integration within the host culture.

According to a study of acculturation measurement conducted by Berry and colleagues through the combination of acculturation strategies and acculturative stress[6] on immigrants, refugees, sojourners, and native people (Berry & Annis, 1974; Berry, Wintrob, Sindell, & Mawhinney, 1982; Donà & Berry, 1994) (qtd. in Ward & Deuba 423), individuals in the host culture may act differently, each one according to his tendency towards "acculturation indicators such as *club membership*, *measures of ethnic identity*, *language use*, and *media exposure*" (Ward & Deuba 426).

According to Berry et al.(1997), immigrant individuals may pass through different acculturation stages, these stages are defined by Berry as fellow:

> When individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the ***Assimilation*** strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the ***Separation*** alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, ***Integration*** is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then ***Marginalization*** is defined (9).

For *Assimilation* and *Marginalization* Khadra has shown no attitudes, she rather exposes both attitudes of *Separation* to *Integration.*

[6] Acculturative stress refers to the stressors associated with being an immigrant or ethnic minority and going through the acculturative process. (Pediatric Anxiety disorder, 2019) ScienceDirect.com

Khadra builds up a sharp view on the surrounding events; she always judges things either right or wrong. All that is compatible with Islamic values is right, and all that is different is considered wrong, or simply *Haram*. H. Berrezoug (2018) writes in the same context: "Khadra comes to construct a black-and-white view of life and proceeds with her Manichean conception of identity. For Khadra all what is Islamic is valid and ethically right and all that is not Islamic is demonic and ethically wrong" (19).

At this level, Khadra rejects all kind of possible integration: "When individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the *Separation* alternative is defined" (Berry 9). Khadra tended willingly in a *separation* phase of acculturation though she possessed acculturation indicators such as language ability, and contact with nationals (Ward & Deuba 1999). This may qualify her to integrate peacefully in the host culture.

Ward and Deuba (1999) endeavor a research on psychological and socio-cultural adjustment according to Berry's model of acculturation strategies. Both concepts are interrelated in their global context; nevertheless, both concepts are featured separately. For the first, one opts to analyze acculturation adjustment through culture shock, whereas the second sheds light on the ability of the individual to perform daily tasks and interact with host nationals.

Kahf succeeds to explain the psychological and sociocultural adjustments Khadra Shamy endures in her first years in the United States. Kahf, through her protagonist Khadra Shamy, analyses and identifies the conflicts of the protagonist from the psychological and sociocultural adjustments point of view. In other words, Kahf describes the acculturation path of her protagonist through shedding light on

two levels: the first one is within her social environment, including the family and the Islam community represented by the Dawah Center, and the second is through her psychological level, describing her inner voice.

Khadra was living under several stressors, most of them coming from her family, which was the main source of cultural learning. Her family did not provide her with a clear conceptualization of both cultures; their view was rather biased to idealize the Arab and Syrian cultures over the American one. This idealization was given to her without thinking to the upcoming consequences; Khadra blindly follows all what her family says. This attitude sometimes makes her seem ridiculous, even within her family; Khadra proudly wants to emulate the Prophet's life and start making a regime on just dates and water like the Prophet, her mother went furious shouting on her to eat her cooking:

> Khadra went on a regime of dates and water to emulate the diet of the Prophet. " That's ENOUGH," her mother said on the fourth day. "You will eat my cooking!" And she slammed the pot of okra on the kitchen tables so hard it splashed Jihad with hot tomato sauce so he screamed. "look what you made me do!" her mother shouted (Kahf 153).

Whereas her father Wajdy tries to sensitize her on the heavy expenses every week on groceries and explains her that the Prophet ate dates because they were the only food available in that area:

> Do you know how much we spend weekly for groceries? You mother cuts coupons still her hands blister. Do you know how much dates cost? Five or six dollars for a small package that lasts one day with you eating nothing else. *Binti*, the Prophet ate dates because they were the most

> abundant food of his land. You can emulate him by analogy. Not by being ridiculous" (Kahf 154).

In contrast to Khadra Eyad, develops a more balanced level of acculturation, he tries to integrate with the host culture and understand how it works. He also notices Khadra's radical thought when she expresses her devotion to being a girl of the Amal militia in the south Lebanon: "Eyad found Khadra's radicalism bewildering. He was in the swing of an Islamic modernism phase" (Kahf 153).

The roots of Khadra's sense of separation from the host culture began in a very early stage of her life, when Khadra's mother tried to make them understand the differences between them and the others. Ibtihaj created a gap between her children and the host culture, thinking that it was the best way to preserve her children's identity. Therefore, Khadra developed a negative attitudes towards Americans despite being indulged with her brother Eyad and her friends in a very typical American way of living, but she was always blamed from an ethnocentric point of view; in this way Khadra grew as a victim of a wrong ethno-cultural beliefs built by her family.

According to studies conducted by Berry (2001), among immigrants they notice what they coin the *acculturation attitudes,* which include all what an immigrant can do in the host culture, whether he likes it or not, and whether he wants to continue living in that culture or want to leave. Such acculturation attitudes vary from positive to negative ones, in the case of Khadra, she intentionally undergoes negative acculturation attitudes from her mother that leads Khadra unconsciously to a separation phase and generates a sense of antipathy to the American society.

Kahf depicts the growing antipathy and hostility in the novel through different stages in Khadra's life. When Ibtihaj tries to make Khadra responsible about her cleanliness, she shows a mixed attitude towards Americans and their culture by an explicit ethnocentrism, judgment, and acculturative stress:

> Her mother always ran the laundry twice in the Fallen Timbers basement laundry room with the coin machines. Because what if the person who used the washer before you had a dog? You never knew with Americans. Pee, poop, vomit, dog spit, and beer were impurities. Americans didn't care about impurities. They let their dogs rub their balls on the couches they sit on and drool on the beds they sleep in and lick the mouths of their children. How Americans tolerate living in such filth is beyond me, her mother said" (Kahf 4).

According to Oberg (1960), the excessive wash is a symptom of culture shock, and that what Ibtihaj always does with her children, especially with Khadra. Kahf insists on that idea as she mentions the importance of the visit of Téta to America, bringing with her the "scent of laurel soap, *sabun ghar*, into the house (Kahf 69); this implies that the family gives too much importance to purity.

Khadra also experiences some acculturative stress or *culture shock*[7] during her infancy; her parents have transferred their fear of eating pig to their children, they doubt everything, even candy corns. Khadra refuses to eat candy corn in the kindergarten and tells her teacher, Mrs. Brown, that candy corn has pig in it, but her teacher reassures her that candy corns does not contain any pig. Khadra ate the candy corn and put some in her pocket: "But when Eyad saw the candy corn on the

[7] "Culture shock" was first coined by Oberg in 1960 and later on redefined by (Berry, 1970; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) as " Acculturative stress"

bus he said, "Ommm, you ate candy corn. Candy corn has pig!"(Kahf13). Khadra was too embraced and threw them but it was too late, "Khadra was tainted forever… too ashamed to tell her parents, she waited in horror for the bug to grow in her stomach and eat her guts out" (Ibid).

Khadra continued to show attitudes of a cultural separation and a hostile feeling when she judged Livvy that she will enter hell because she believes in God's son; Khadra shows no tolerance to understand others' religion; she only thinks that her religion is right and others obviously are wrong and will go to hell. Livvy cries and thinks that Khadra will not be saved by Jesus: "Because you are not saved," … "You haven't accepted Jesus as your savior" (Kahf 128). After this scene, Khadra and Livvy were no longer friends.

Kahf shows that Khadra is raised in a very hostile environment and her family has a responsibility on that. Khadra grows doubting anything comes from the American culture, but on the other hand, she observes that other Muslims living in America are living the American way_ their dress, food, way of speaking, and even some have changed their names to sound more Americans_ and they are still Muslims and practice their religion in a private way. Of course Khadra at first denied all this and thought that Islam must have only one way.

The acculturation of Khadra was influenced by a set of factors that affect her adaptation on both levels; a psychological level and socio-cultural level (Berry 1997, 1990). According to Berry, acculturation occurs at different rates; changes happen at the psychological level of the individual, and every one may acculturate differently; it depends on some variables such as sex, age, ethnicity that direct the acculturation process; a socio-cultural level, and the degree of cultural pluralism in the host society is well considered. All these factors have affected the little Khadra

negatively, and she has been the subject of different stressors among her family and within the host culture, which suffers bigotry. Both environments help in raising the acculturative stress (Berry 2006) for Khadra and obstructing her adaptation to the new culture. According to Berry et al. (1987), "Marginalization and separation are associated with high levels of acculturative stress" (qtd. in Ward and Duba 424); the religious obligations and the tradition restrictions that were imposed on Khadra makes her reluctant to assimilate in the American culture.

Meanwhile, Khadra rejects many things in the American culture, but in other hand, she enjoys the democracy in America, that gives her the absolute freedom of practicing all what she wants, thinking that these are obviously enfolded under the Islamic umbrella, such as riding the bike and reading Quran in front of men, going to the Mosque at any time, being a member of islamic organizations, and many other habits. So she thinks that living in an Islamic country will give her more opportunities and help her in preserving her religion, but what happens to her in the Holly land, or the land of the prophet, as she calls it, will gradually change Khadra's attitude from cultural separation to one of gradual integration into the American society.

In the swirl of the different social pressures, Khadra's attitude began to change from a radical thought in her teenage years, wearing black headscarves and navy-blue *jilbabs* to a neoclassical one as she grew up, which was less strict and was marked by introducing colors in her dressing. The travel to the pilgrimage (*hadj* time) had shown her a different facet of Muslim communities, which makes her reconsider all what she believes on Islam and Muslims. In this way, Khadra started questioning what she has known and thinking of what she will encounter in her religious and personal life.

The voyage to the pilgrimage has unveiled the perfect image of the Arab Islamic world; her harassment incident with Affaf's Saudi friends because she was American has changed her way of thinking toward the Arab countries as the best places to preserve Islam. The religious liberty that Khadra is enjoying in America has found it impossible in an Arab country like Saudi Arabia; she was prevented from prying *el fajr* (dawn) in the mosque! And she was even escorted by two policemen to the house "… Khadra was back, escorted by two *matawwa* policemen… We found her trying to get to the mosque" (kahf 166); khadra was treated as a sinner! She was totally bewildered trying to clarify her situation in front of her father and their host family "I---just---wanted--- to pray---fajr" (Ibid 167). Khadra was psychologically shocked; she could not realize that Islam is no longer preserved in that places. She now perceives the global difference between the American culture as the culture of religious liberties and the Arab one that restricts everything. She hates that place and wished to get through it as soon as possible, and once on the plane she was relieved: "I'm glad we're through with that place"… Khadra was glad to be going home. "Home"--- she said, without thinking. She pressed her nose against the airplane window…The sweet relief of her own clean bed awaited her there--- and only there, of all the earth" (Kahf 179).

After returning home Khadra was asked for marriage by a Kuwaiti man Jumua Tashkenti under a marriage of convenience; he was the friend of her brother Eyad, and Khadra represents for him the ideal girl:

> "Jumua met her at the point when her black-scarf phase was fading into her neoclassical phase and was impressed…She wore perfect hijab, even a little conservatively for his taste, but that was okay, better that she erred on that side than the other way he thought"(Kahf 201).

Kahf shows us that Khadra married Jumua because her family wanted that, her mother warned that if she did not get married jumua this time she would search for a husband later on when the time was over for any girl, "If you don't marry this one," Ebtihaj said, "you should think about marrying in the next few years, anyway. A girl's window of opportunity narrows after that" (Ibid).

Khadra accepts to marry Jumua, thinking that marriage will provide her more stability and liberty in practicing her beliefs: "Only married people had prime status" (Kahf 221). After that, she went with him to Kuwait, she noticed how people are occupied with superficial matters; upon returning home, clashes between Khadra and Jumua started. He refused that his wife bike! He said that "It's un-Islamic and it displays your body, "he objected" (kahf128), and the issues from that principle of Islamic or non- Islamic rolled on Khadra's life; she does not expect that from him as he also does not find her as he imagined, an obedient housewife!

Khadra made up her mind to separate from Jumua. But she found herself pregnant and quickly decided to get rid of it. Khadra thought that her parent would protect her and understand her motifs, but they completely denied her decision, and more over, the whole community in Indianapolis began gossiping on her.

Khadra's prays *Istikhara* (consultation prayer) and read about abortion in Islam:

> She'd really thought her parents would support her, after she told them how much Consultation she'd prayed on the decision. That's why she told them, expecting them to support her against Jumua, help him why this was okay for her to do… What about all those teaching where abortion was allowed in sharia? One hundred and twenty days… It turned out that nothing she'd read described the real Muslim gut reaction

> to the question of abortion. Imam Ghazali could have an abortion, may be, but she, Khadra, could not (Kahf 245).

Khadra was kept between two dilemmas: Jumua sees her as liberal girl who is affected by the western culture, and the American community thought of Khadra a Muslim strict fanatic. A situation which urges Khadra to react and get rid of the multiple pressures that surrounded her, this acculturative stress was the reason for Khadra to cope with the difficulties and starts to build a kind of balance between her inner cultural conflicts and the external resources. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984) coping with the stress is a kind of "ongoing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific (external and/ or internal) demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the individual" (qtd. in Travlos et al. 131).

Khadra begins to see how much her social environment is leading her towards a very complicated life; her family always interferes in her personal life. Khadra's journey to cultural emancipation continues. She decides to stand up for her rights alone and gets rid of all surrounding stressors; she finally realizes that Islam as a religion is something and Muslims are something else. According to Berry et al. (1987) "Integration is associated with low level stress", Khadra's inner self was demanding relief and peace; she wanted just to live a simple life. The next step after abortion was going right away to Syria, to see her Téta, and revisit her priorities, and to recover herself.

In Syria, Khadra learns a lot about her parents, including their history and how they immigrated to the United States to escape Al Assad's cruel tyranny; by going to Syria, Khadra seeks self-actualization and wants to understand her identity

away from any pressures from her parents in order to continue her life; in other words, she was in search of her identity.

Khadra appreciates being American when she knows how difficult to keep Islam in Arab countries. She begins to understand how lucky she is when her parents immigrated to America, where religious differences are accepted and welcomed.

Khadra's daily discussion with Téta has prompted her self-reconciliation, Téta was her source to know everything about her family and how thing turned in the past. Téta serves as an usher for Khadra to enlighten her vision toward how life should be; Khadra was so close to her Téta than to her mother Ibtihaj, who always blame her daughter of not being ideal Muslim girl.

Khadra's inner conflicts ends in Ghuta, she returns to nature, where she was given the power to let the veil slips on her shoulders; and for the first time enjoys her hair uncovered. At first Khadra tried to veil herself, but she does not want to stain her lovely scarf, which was a gift from Téta, because of the wine-red juices running between her fingers: "Her scarf, Kelly-green chiffon, was slipping off the crown of her head. She reached to pull it back up. Then she stopped, noticing the wine-red juices running between her fingers, and not wishing to stain her lovely scarf" (Kahf 309). And then she decides not to put it again:

> She was in position like the first stand in prayer. A yellow butterfly flittered by. The scarf was slipping off. She shrugged. The chiffon fell across her shoulders. She remembered when she has taken her last swim in the Fallen Timbers pool as a girl. She closed her eyes and let the sun shine through the thin skin of her eyelids, warm her body to the very core of her. She opened her eyes, and she knew deep in the place of yaqin that this was all right, a blessing on her shoulders. *Alhamdu,*

> *alhamdulilah*. The sunlight on her head was a gift from God. Gratitude filled her. *Sami allahu liman hamidah* (ibid).

Each of the first five sentences of the paragraph is followed by a full stop. Kahf wants to convey the feeling of Khadra that each sentence represents an important moment to Khadra in her self-reconciliation.

By the time she returns to America, Khadra was convinced to culturally reintegrate with American standards, and she finally realizes that she is American and that America is her homeland "Homeland America" (Kahf 313).

According to Berry, individuals acculturate differently, and many factors are responsible for the process of acculturation. Each individual passes through psychological changes that may either help him adapt to the new culture or may be a handicap for him to acculturate correctly. These psychological changes are known as "behavioural shifts" (Berry 1980) or "culture learning" (Brislin, Landis,and Brandt 1983) or " social skills acquisition" (Furnham and Bochner 1986); all these terms suggest that immigrants are subjects of learning a new culture, and have to learn some behavioral skills in order to facilitate the acculturation process. Berry and colleagues[8] argue behavioral shifts are necessary for any individual seeking acculturation in a new culture. Back to Argyle's findings (1969), "the working hypothesis of the cultural learning approach is that people in cultural transitions may lack the necessary skills needed to engage the new culture" (qtd. in Sam & Berry 2010), and to overcome all these handicaps, individuals are supposed to learn behavioral shift components such as language to be able to understand the new cultural milieu (Bochner 1972).

[8] The case of Masgoret & Ward (2006), Bochner (1972), Gallois, Franklyn-Stokes, Giles, Coupland (1988); and others, they all agree on the necessity of some behavioral shifts to enhance the process of adaptation.

Khadra Shamy is now an American girl who studies at the college, meets friends, and practices her hobbies like any other girl. Her subject to integration was not so far because Khadra was just fighting a deterministic and inevitably adaptation to the overwhelming culture. At this stage, Khadra starts thinking and doubting everything.

This urgent predicament, as well as the strains in Khadra's life, have compelled her to reconsider everything she has learned from her environment, particularly her family; they were leading her thoughts to a highly auto-narrowed picture of civilizations. Furthermore, they attempted to persuade her that Islam is a religion that is better suited to Arab life and culture. But Khadra discovers that all this was wrong; she witnesses the vulgarity of the Saudi-Arab men, the lack of commitment of Affaf by the Islamic values though she lives in the Land of the Prophet, she also notices how her parents refuse the marriage of Iyad from the Sudanese girl just because she is black:" But for the heaven's sake, she's black as coal!" Wajdy said (kahf 139) "Ibtihaj was silent, but it was clear that black grandchildren were not what she had in mind"…. "Eyad seemed dazed, even paralyzed. The gulf between what they'd taught him and what was happening…was overwhelming" (Ibid). And when Khadra desired to braid her hair like the Black American style, her mother "had vetoed it" as well as Téta who declared astonishly "What, like the tribe of *Zunuj*?... Such pretty hair, not like that repulsive hair of *Abeed"* (Kahf 75); both Ibtihaj and Téta show an ethnocentric opinion toward the black people by depicting them as *Abeed(*slaves). This racism's attitude chocked Khadra and could no longer bear these double standards of her parents and of the Arab culture as well.

According to Ward & Duba (1999), some variables or cultural shifts may help the individual or may not in his adaptation process; the length of residence in the new culture, language ability, and the quantity of contacts with the host national are of great importance to individuals living in multi-cultural society. Khadra was mature enough to analyze her situation; she has a good education and speaks English perfectly, she also has American friends and can live in America without the guardianship of her family. Therefore, she decided to start a new life, a new phase which entails an adaptation strategy.

According to Berry (1997), an individual may pass through two levels of his adaptation process, psychological and sociocultural levels of adaptation. Khadra was psychologically well prepared for the cultural transition. She began thinking about her life in America and how it should be framed according to the environmental needs:

> "She began doubting everything and at the same time she began reading on Islam to construct her own view of it, far from any paternal pressure; "It was the beginning of neoclassical phase. She thirsted now to study the traditional Islamic heritage. It seemed to her answer lay in there somewhere---not in the newfangled Islamic revivalism of her parents and the Dawah, with its odd mixtures of the modern and the Prophetic" (Kahf 194).

Khadra also started to lighten her dresses, showing a new clothing style that included scarves with tiny flowers and different colors, "Khadra put on a white scarf with tiny flowers like a village meadow in spring, and a pale blue blouse and soft floral skirt. Her broadcloth navy jilbab and plain black scarves she shoved to the back of her closet" (Kahf 256-193).

Khadra starts doubting everything she knew before, her parents are no longer her cultural and religious source, she decides to get her knowledge from the original texts "Quoran and *Hadith*,[9]" and she is sure that they work because they have lasted for centuries; "… not there but in the direction of the old Quoranic and hadith sciences, the various branches of *fiqh* and *sharia* studies, and the spiritual wisdom that had been handed down for centuries" (Kahf 194).

The stage of integration is always measured by how few stressors are pervasive with daily life. Khadra has decided to get rid of the stressors that may hamper her adaptation phase or cause for her a malaise in her daily life, starting with her marriage, which was broken up because of the old traditions that her husband Jumua al-Tashkenti imposed on her. She feels herself arms tied, and at the same time could not make him understand what she really was expecting from him. For Islam marriage is not equal to slavery, and what her husband was trying to do through making her a simple housewife is somehow equal to slavery. The prophet never asks his wives to do something for him murmurs to herself, so, how dares this man ask her to prepare him dinner! This is un-Islamic and un-American as well.

Khadra discusses her divorce with her brother Eyad who seems unwilling that his sister gains the label of divorced at her age of twenty one. Khadra goes further when she discovers her pregnancy and decides to abort it because "it was not a fetus yet, not even an embryo. It certainly was not a baby (kahf 247). This sequence of thought was deduced from *Fikh* and *Tafssir*; she uses her right in Islam to abort since this blood clot was not a fetus that carries a soul. Her decision was not welcomed from her parents, and the Dawah Center community gossiped her.

[9] Quoran: the holly book of Muslims. Hadith is the words of the Prophet Mohamed

Khadra decides to travel to Syria to clear her head following her divorce and abortion. She chooses to return to her roots in order to comprehend the nature of her Arab identity and her own past. Her trip to Syria served as an escape from her complicated and difficult existence in Indianapolis. In other words, she intends to distress herself as a result of all the stressors in her life.

Her journey to homeland could by no way be avoided; almost every immigrant from different generations in America chooses to return home for short trips to discover themselves and reconnect their identities with its original place.

So, she meets her Téta in Syria, who clears her thoughts when she recites the story of her parents and their suffering from the Baathist regime in Syria, and what her mother endures from her step-mother, who was a secular, who humiliates her just because she wears the veil. She also discovers that her parents' relatives adjust themselves with the Bathists and consider people like Wajdy and Ebtihaj the source of trouble: "What have we ever got behind Wajdy and his Islamic politics but woe?" (Kahf 280).

Uncle Mazen's wife tells her the story of many young women who wear *hijab* (the veil) and get followed by President Asad's brother Rifat; among them was her daughter Reem, who was coming from seamstress and got stopped by the troop of soldiers, whom they obliged to take off the veil and the manteau as well. Her daughter who was improperly dressed under the manteau because it was hot, she was found three hours later by a stranger; she was disoriented and not speaking, and " that's when your Uncle Mazen had a heart attack, when she was half carried in the door, hair disheveled and half-undressed with those ugly bruises on her arms" (Ibid 282). Uncle Mazen blames Khadra and her family for their misery in Syria, saying

that "Your father and mother. You dissidents. Who politicized hijab but you? Who made life hell for us but you?" (Ibid).

At this level, Khadra realizes how lucky she and her family are because they live in America. In America she wears her *hijab (the veil)* without being persecuted by the regime; yes, she is discriminated but not persecuted. She becomes astonished how people in Syria do not discuss politics in homes because "Walls have ears" as Uncle Mazen says. It is for the second time that Khadra discovers that living in an Arab land was not as perfect as she thought; instead of finding peace in Syria, she finds a total fear; and instead of learning the good conduct from Saudi people, she was disappointed and sexually harassed by Saudi men in full period of *hadj*.

Khadra's journey to her ancestral homeland permits her to re-define her concepts concerning the preservation and status of Islam inside Arab countries. Kahf gives us two examples of disorder in Syria and Saudi Arabia, and this is just allegorical to all Arab countries.

Khadra was in date with her self-reconciliation in the *Ghuta* (a suburban area in southwestern Syria), the most beautiful nature in Syria, which can only reflect pureness; she finally found her solace when she let her veil slipped down on her shoulders and did not mind it; it was necessary step to her cultural metamorphosis:

> The scarf was slipping off. She shrugged. The Chiffon fell across her shoulders…She closed her eyes and let the sun shine through the thin skin of her eyelid, and she knew deep in the place of yakin that it was all right, a blessing on her shoulders. *Alhamdu, alhamdulilah"*…Under the Cherry-tree canopy it had felt fine having her scarf slip off. She was safe; she was among friends (Kahf 309-310).

Aware of what she does, Khadra feels relief by doing so; she is not totally indifferent, but rather bewildered. She is sure of herself that this step is necessary for her coming days in America; however she still feels herself strange without the *hijab* (the veil) that accompanied her so long in her previous life. Kahf describes the scene of bewildering of Khadra in a very excellent way, she makes the scene of the cherry-tree as a symbol of protection for Khadra, something is on her head, not the veil but something natural, the cherry-tree a sort of protection from God. Also the presence of her friends makes her feel secure.

Khadra's unveiling was not pictured as she is doing something wrong but rather a tolerance to herself and her past; she obviously knows that Islam is bigger than to be restricted in a scarf. Trish, the Nabolsy's wife, was an American Muslim who did not wear *hijab* only on prayers and she still be a good Muslim. Her friend Maryam who is an independent woman, is a Muslim that practices Islam in her way, Maryam does not wear the veil; and she does not belong to any Muslim centers, and prays in her house. Khadra noticed that these people are Muslims too; they do practice their religion silently and do not show it to the others or try to make the whole environment know they are the best practitioners. They do it for themselves and this what Khadra lacks.

The idea of matching Islam only to *hijab* was all what bothered Khadra, her life in America without the veil was much more fluent and easier than the black-scarf days:

> "The covered and the uncovered, each mode of being had its moment. She embraced them both. Going out without hijab meant she would have to manifest the quality of modesty in her behavior, she realized one day, with a jolt. It's in how I act, how I move, what I choose, every minute.

> She had to do it on her own, now, without the jumpstart that a jilbab offered. This was a rigorous challenge. Some days she just wanted her old friend hijab standing sentry by her side" (Kahf 312).

Kahf is aware of the importance that the *hijab* represents for Khadra, Khadra's unveiling is not for the sake of being an unveiled woman, the unveiling of Khadra is necessary for continuing her life in the United States without being a subject of discrimination; and the answer to why Khadra takes off the *hijab* comes on the tongue of Bitsy, her Iranian friend, who changes everything that shows she is Muslim or Iranian:

> We changed it when I got my citizenship," she said… "Why?" Khadra said… "Oh," Bitsy shrugged. "So we could do things like, you know, order pizza without the guy on the phone getting all confused, I guess." There was a pause. You changed your name-your name-for the pizza guy? Khadra thought, but didn't say it" And job applications and such,"…"makes things just a whole lot easier" (Kahf 369).

That's the point Kahf makes in her book: being veiled complicates things, which is why some, like Bitsy, chose not to wear the veil, and others even changed their names to sound more American in order to avoid being identified as Muslims or Arabs, or just to avoid Zuhura's tragedy.

Kahf wishes to convey to us through the narratives that Khadra feels better when she is covered, and it is not that she wishes to return to her black-scarf days, but that her body finds its home in her body: "She was beginning to see that, of the covered and uncovered modes, she preferred the covered, after all, and she wore it more often than not. It was a habit—hah, she thought… she was never going back to

being a stickler about hijab. But it was something her body felt at home in" (Kahf 373).

Another image presented on the aftermath of Khadra's unveiling illustrates that life is so crowded that her revelation is unimportant, and life goes on:

> At first she felt like a butterfly pinned in a glass case, splayed out and exposed. How to hold herself? Cars whooshed past her as she walked through busy intersections and she'd feel the unfamiliar rush of air at her neck. Reaching up to touch the soft fabric, she'd find nothing, then touch her hair and neck with startled fingers. The cars honked and made her jump" (Kahf310-311).

Time to return home comes, and Khadra feels herself re-conciliated, she understands that Islam is a religion that can be practiced everywhere, not only in Arab territories, she also knows that people can practice their religion differently and there is no need to ration it through black-and-white mold. Being an Arab in America does not give the right to control the religion or make someone else the ultimate instructor.

The unveiling is not the last step of Khadra towards cultural adaptation, once home, she decided not to return to Indianapolis, where she has grown up; she refused to return to "the community." "Where you cannot live down anything you have done. Where everyone who knows you knows exactly what you are supposed to become. And where, if you try to become anything else, they laugh and spin your head till you give it up" (314). Then, she moves to Philadelphia to study photography because "Photography, what she'd wanted from the start, but had not even let herself acknowledge she wanted, because it was not in the Dawah program, in the Wajdy and Ebtihaj program" (Ibid.,15). Khadra gets rid of all the stressors that

may impede her acculturation process; she knew that if she returns to her first community, she will not succeed to integrate and builds her life in the American society.

As cited in Ward and Duba (1999), an individual may integrate at two cultural adjustment levels; psychological and sociocultural adjustments. the former happens at the level of the individual's psychological status. The various paradigms that produce stress and anxiety in any individual may decide the degree of his adjustment or integration; it is worth mentioning that these paradigms are variables that can be modified based on the situational consequences. Moreover, the socio-cultural adjustment "exhibit different patterns fluctuation over time" (424); which also implies that socio-cultural variables are not static and are always changing. In other words, Khadra undergoes a high degree to psychological adjustment because she simply deconstructs all the stressors and old religious beliefs that surrounded her life before. Nonetheless, Khadra succeeds in making her previous community accept her as she is, and she was able to narrow the distance between the psychological and socio-cultural adjustment, leading to a cultural harmony between them; and according to Ward et al. (1998), "the magnitude of the relationship between psychological and sociocultural adjustment increases over time" (qtd. in Ward and Duba 1999, 425).

Khadra continues her path towards integration and starts working as a morgue photographer, she is relieved to responsible for herself. She meets friends and opens the gate to conversation with them exchanging different perspectives on politics, culture, and religion. And as result, she learns a lot, including how to respect other views; she also begins to reflect on her previous life and attempts to change what she could. She even develops a relation with Shrif, an American-

Tunisian secular man, and later on displays greater interest to Hakim, her childhood friend, when she returns to Indiana. Khadra comes to the point where she overpasses the narrow vision of Islam that she possesses before, and as Corney(2014) states "Arab-Americans use the awareness and knowledge they gain on their return visits to the Arab homeland to develop a type of vision that transcends monolithic and mononational modes of belonging in the US" (67).

Finally, Khadra was at some extent released from her stress and re-integrated in the American society. Kahf, through her protagonist, has fought different stereotypes that Muslim women are entangled in. Khadra, in her journey to integration, breaks down many taboos, the most prominent is the veil, which represents for her a symbol of protection and self esteem in the first part of the novel. However, by the end of the novel she fluctuates between veiling and unveiling as she discovers that her life will be more dynamic and effective without the veil.

Through the story, Khadra revolts against patriarchy; she bravely decides to divorce Jumua and have abortion without the consent of her family. She also travels alone to Syria to discover her origin and history, she refuses to return to Indianapolis and instead chooses Philadelphia; she works and makes her life the way she wants. Khadra chooses to live and "to be" as she told Hakim at the end of the novel.

2.3. The Deconstruction of Homeland and its Contribution to Khadra's Cultural integration

Through her protagonist, Mohja Kahf uses the concept of *home* or *homeland* to refer to the original place where Khadra has grown up, but through the narratives, the reader discovers that there are different places that are labeled *homeland.*

The concept of *home*/ *homeland* in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* denotes a three dimensional perspectives. Kahf juggles with the terms in the narratives purposefully, she wants to show the reader that Khadra is in search of her homeland, though the reader initially thinks that Khadra's homeland is Syria, he will discover through the narratives that Khadra considers many places as her homeland until she finally conceives that America is her homeland.

To better understand the concept homeland in the novel, the notion of homeland is classified into three dimensions as dichotomized in the narratives.

1. *Ancestral Homeland*
2. *The land of the Prophet*
3. *Homeland America*

The journey of Khadra to find her homeland is in fact a journey to find her identity and her belonging. Her memories about Syria were woozy; she barely remembered Syria "although she thought of it whenever she rubbed a little boomerang-shaped scar on her right knee that had been made on a broken tilt in Syria" (Kahf 15).

Kahf's technique in defining homeland was through using snapshots of different places from present to past. At the opening page of the novel, Khadra was furious on "the highway sign that claims "The people of Indiana Welcome you" (Kahf 1), and calls it "liar". Khadra bares a very painful memories in Indianapolis, "returning to this ground that didn't love her, tries to stave the panic in her gut that is entirely the fault of the state of Indiana and the flat, flat land, to which she had never asked to be brought" (Kahf 17); however, Kahf chooses it as the main station to Khadra in order to assess her long trajectories of belonging until she will at the end found relief in accepting to mix between American and Arab-Muslim identities.

Returning back with Khadra in the first part of the novel, when her family decided to embark on *haj,* Khadra was so excited, and by the time the airplane landed, Khadra thought "some *place where we really belong. It is the land of the Prophet. The land of all Muslims"*(Kahf 159). She did not care about leaving Indianapolis because it is not her home

> "The phrase "leaving home" came into her head. But Indianapolis is not my home, she thought indignantly. Catchphrases from Islamic revival nasheeds flashed in her head—how a true Muslim feels at home wherever the call to prayer is sung, how a true Muslim feels no attachment o one nation to another. I don't even care if I never see the Fallen Timbers Complex again, Khadra thought. Over the lump in her throat" (Kahf 157).

Khadra tried at first to identify herself through the land of the Prophet because it is the cradle of Islam, it is a place where every Muslim feels at home. During her journey to Mecca, Khadra discovers truths that she had never been told by her parents; while amused by the *Fadjr Adhan* she asked her relative Affaf, "Where's the mosque whose adhan I heard right outside my window?" The call she had heard had thrilled her, bringing pure glory to all her senses" (Kahf 166). The next day Khadra woke up at dawn and went to pray *El Fadrj* at the nearby mosque. Thirty minutes later, Khadra was caught by two policemen, and brought her home and asked for her *mahram* to talk with, in front of her father, weirdly explained that she just wanted to pray! But her father denied her act, saying that it is wrong and she had to pray at home because women in Saudi Arabia are not allowed to pray outside the house, and not only in the Saudi Kingdom but almost all Arab countries! Khadra was chocked and tried to remind her father of the Islamic principles that he taught her:

> "But, baba, how can women not be allowed?" Khadra had never heard of such thing. No mosque she had ever encountered hadn't had a place for women… Khadra had never heard of such a preposterous thing. It couldn't be right. Being a Muslim *meant* going to the mosque… It doesn't even make sense. Everyone knows women go to the mosque. Women have always gone to the mosque. It's part of Islam" (Kahf 166-167).

Hearing the answer of her father, "you are used to America, binti,"… "In most of Muslim world, it hasn't been the custom for hundreds of years" (Kahf168), ruffled by such a situation Khadra, in a last attempt, tried to make her mother remember what she used to teach her in America about the rights of women in Islam and how " Omar wished his wife would not go to the mosque for fadjr, but he couldn't stop her because he knew it was her right?" Khadra also reminded her parents of the Prophet's saying 'You must never prevent the female servants of God from attending the houses of God? "I told the matawwa that hadith and he laughed—*he laughed* at me, and said 'listen to this *woman* quoting scriptures at *us*" (Kahf 168).

Bewildered by such situation, Khadra was put in a situation full of contradictions: how comes that the smallest practice of Islam is allowed in America while forbidden in the Prophet Mohammed's land?! What a homeland she is looking for? Her journey did not stop here, Khadra was presented as American in front of Affaf's friends "Here she is," "My American Cousin" (Kahf 174), and though Khadra denied that and spoke Arabic to show them that she is not American, she regrettably was harassed by one Saudi guy, and which made her lose her nerves and scream for her relative to take her back home. This unbelievable experience had

shattered the beautiful dream of the Land of the prophet to be her homeland admitted on the plane a place in America like Indianapolis was 'home'.

The fact that Khadra admitted that Indianapolis was her home, at least at that time when she was furious, and the United States could be better place to live than Saudi Arabia. At that moment Khadra was on her to integration without being aware of that. Later on in Indianapolis, following a series of events, including her unsuccessful marriage and abortion, Khadra decides to retreat: "It was time to retreat. She would betake herself unto an eastern place" (Kahf 266).

"I have been waiting for you" (269) Téta said, as she was expecting her return to Syria. Téta was sure in the place of *yaqin* that Khadra's journey will lead her to Syria. The return of Khadra to her origins was for Téta a question of time, she knew that Khadra was living and enduring double conflict; that's of the American culture which is different from her culture of origin and the inner conflict in her family who try to impose on her a strict Muslim lifestyle. So time has come for Khadra to know herself and finds the truth.

"Syria was Téta" (Kahf 271) as Khadra informs us in the narratives by visiting Téta, who is considered as a mother for Wajdy, Khadra is visiting her motherland; this feminist juxtaposition of concept drawn by Kahf melted both concepts together to help the reader understand the nature of relationship of Khadra with Syria as her motherland. Corney explains the use of feminist juxtaposition of the concept of Téta as Syria as follow: "…the gendered representation of the Syrian homeland as a female entity is linked in crucial ways to the recuperation of lost, hidden, or buried stories about the most important female figures in Khadra's life, namely her mother and her Téta"(Corney 74); according to Corney, all the secrets that Khadra discovered about her parents, especially her mother, which is much

more an allegorical to Syria, happened in an female intimate places like aunt's Razane kitchen and Téta's bathroom. Before, in America Khadra failed to define herself in spite of her hard resistance to patriarchal thought, which curbs female liberty; in Syria, all ambiguities run clear, and she finally understood the fear of her mother for her. Ibtihaj, who is the extension of Téta and other Syrian women who fought for their liberty, could not resist and withdraw from the battle to settle down in America and obey her husband and be a shade.

In Syria, Khadra discovered that "there were many Damascuses" (292), "Full of small-town minds—or, following the axiom "Small minds talk about things, mediocre minds talk about people, great minds talk about ideas," it was full of mediocre minds" (291); the binary of being Muslim is being perfect was shattered down in Syria, where there were many Muslims, but they are not perfect; they are mediocre but still Muslims. Her return to Syria helped her deconstruct the myth of home; she discovered the multilayered understandings and visions of homeland. A home land could someone's place of birth, or the place of birth of parents and not children, and it could be the place where someone raised and lived, as the case of Khadra. She admitted Syria as homeland, but as ancestral homeland, the roots and origins of her and her family, her extension; whilst America is home "Homeland America," it cannot deny her ties to the American culture and freedom that enjoyed there. Khadra was so proud and glad that: "…her parents had flown into new air. Home had been left behind, given up. For the utter unknown. What a bitter and marvelous choice"(283). Khadra's veil of ignorance of her history was taken off; she now understands her past and is ready to start a new phase of her life, more aware and stronger. On the plane Khadra took the Tangerine Scarf that her Téta had given her before and decided to wear it; the colors were forbidden before, in her navy

days, she was seeing things either white or black, no in between; now everything has changed:

> On the, she pulled the tangerine silk out of her handbag…Before landing in Chicago, she draped the depatta so it hung from the crown of her head. Not very tightly, Ibtihaj wore it. Loosely, so it moved and slipped about her face and touched her cheek, like the hand of a lover… She wanted them to know at O'Hare, that she was coming in under one of the many signs of the heritage. And she wanted her heart to remember, in the dappled ruffle and rustle of veiling and unveiling, How precious is the heritage! A treasure fire cannot eat (kahf 313).

Corney explains the rejection of the veil was a rejection that veil be a physical marker of un-American religion. Khadra decides to return to America after a long journey of self-discovery fully integrated and determined to stand for her position as a Muslim American woman. In this regard, Corney writes: "This understanding shapes what I refer to as Arab-American' rearrivals in the US after return journeys to an Arab homeland, rearrivals that lead to revised and transformed conceptualizations of citizenship and belonging"(77).

2.4. From Separation to Integration through the Veil Lenses

The veil is recognized in the novel as a symbol of love, freedom, idealism and oppression, and politics. As mentioned in Areen Khalifeh's article "The Symbol of the Veil in Mohja Kahf's The *Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*", Dr. Areen deconstructs the use of the veil through the narratives, where she comes out with a significant concept of the veil in the novel. Kahf each time she mentions the veil was for a purpose: it was a symbol of love when she received it from her Téta, it was a

symbol of freedom when aunt Khadija helped her tie the scarf for prayer. For aunt Khadija the veil is freedom, is the salvation from slavery when women were stood naked and bought in auction, the veil was a symbol of idealism for her community; it is a crown on her head while a sign of oppression for the American society, Khadra was a subject of bigotry in the school by her classmates who did not understand why she was hiding her hair! And the veil was politicized when Khadra saw the woman who was with the Iranians hostages' kidnappers and wished she could be there.

The most important thing behind the different concepts that the veil carries in the novel is that all these concepts were deconstructed in the narratives either by Khadra's community or by American society. The different implications of the veil in the novel lead the reader as well as the critic to understand that Khadra is struggling for one thing, which is her identity and belonging, which can only be accomplished through sociological and psychological adjustment and adaptation to the dominant culture.

The veil in the narratives was a marker of the acculturation trajectory of Khadra; Khadra's first experience with the veil is absolutely different from what she admits at the end of the story. The narratives show us that when Khadra was in her black days scarf, she was totally uncooperative with the American culture and tried to prove that her culture is supreme than that of *Kuffar,* whilst at the end Khadra launched a scream to her community in order to let them be and to stop putting on them.

The relation between the black-days scarf and the separation phase of acculturation was clear at the beginning of the narratives when Khadra wished she could be "one scarf-wearing woman" who took, with other men, some American

Hostages during the revolution" (Kahf 119); according to Berry et al. "individuals generally act in ways that correspond to cultural influences and expectations" (qtd. in Berry 6). At this level, Khadra saw life as the color of her veil, black; this radical engagement was due to the many factors that raised her sense of hostility. Her family and the Dawah community are the main sources of Khadra's cultural knowledge. Both her family and the Dawah center community were convinced that they were teaching pure Islam; they thought that their immigration is for God and no matter if they have no benefits: "It doesn't matter," Khadra's mother said. "We are not in love with the glitter of this world" (Kahf 18). Her early conception of that world was black, as her veil, she convinced herself that this world is not the world that God loves; God loves Muslims and will reward them by the large and magnificent heaven. Khadra wore the *hijab* from an early age and believed that the veil is the crown of any women's head; she continued wearing it in her teenage years and denying any woman who did not wear it or who did not wear it correctly. Khadra developed judgmental visions towards Muslims in the United States, criticizing them whenever the opportunity presented.

Khadra's radical attitudes changed gradually, and she moderated her clothes to lighten them from black to white with tiny flowers, throwing her black veils and navy jilbabs back in the closet declaring the beginning of what she called "her neoclassical phase".

This change, as Berry explains is called adaptation, in which "changes that take place in individuals or groups in response to environmental demands" (13). Khadra understood that she was misled and badly oriented from her family and the Dawah community, and decided to study Islam by her own; "She thirsted now to study the traditional Islamic heritage. It seemed to her the answer lay in there

somewhere—not in the newfangled Islamic revivalism of her parents and the Dawah" (Kahf 194).

The last turning point in the veil story of Khadra was with Téta, whom Khadra loves enormously. Teta was feminist in her times and has insightful vision to the future, she was the only one who questioned Khadra about her choice of Jumua for marriage; no one of her family did. Téta gave Khadra a Tangerine scarf, which bought it from a popular market in Syria which Khadra accepted it with love; the color of the veil means a lot of things; there is no place for the black-days-scarf any more. Khadra decided to wear the Tangerine scarf on the plane some minutes before landing in Chicago and not tighten it the way her mother did but rather loosely. Khadra wanted her family to know her new attitude in the airport: "she wanted them to know at the customs, at the reentry checkpoint,… that she was coming in under one of the many signs of the heritage" (Kahf 313); she wanted to convey that her Tangerine scarf is a signifier of her heritage and not an obligation from God, and she is aware and mature enough to choose her way.

At the end of the novel, Kahf explains everything on the tongue of aunt Ayesha when visiting Zuhura' grave and confesses to Khadra that they put a lot on their children, wanting them to carry their visions:

> We put a lot of weight on your shoulders, didn't we?... " Not just you—all our children."… your mother was, like me. We were both a little jumpy. Afraid of losing something precious. Not only like *that*," she says, nodding in the direction of the grave. "Although that is a terrible part of it. Of being swallowed up by this land, reduced to nothing… And we were so idealistic, oof! Full of zeal! But we put it all on you. Too much. Wanting you to carry

> our vision for us, our identity—our entire identity, on *your* heads, imagine!"… "Forgive us," (Kahf 404-405).

2.5. Conclusion

The acculturation process of immigrants in the United States had been for many years an effervescent debate among the Arab American Diaspora, from Ameen Rihani and Khalil Gibran first literary experience to the most contemporary Arab American writers, acculturation issues were the most discussed.

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf is one of many important works that Arab American writers write to define themselves in hostile environments where they find themselves obliged to cohabit. The sample of characters found in the novel is an allegorical to a great mass of immigrants living in the United States and trying to find a place without touching their Arab and Islamic heritage. Khadra, the protagonist of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* represents many immigrant cases that grew up in America and suffered from the reflections of colliding cultures.

In the swirling events that Khadra was experiencing, she successfully found her way to acculturate and integrate into the host culture. The path to acculturation was not smooth, the radical environment that Khadra lived in made her acculturation very difficult, if not impossible, but her acumen and her willingness to find herself and her identity helped in her transition from the separation phase of acculturation to an integration phase.

The following chapter will deal with an immigrant's different case. Salwa, the protagonist of *Once in the Promised Land* written by Leila Halaby, married a Jordanian immigrant from the United States and moved to live with him there. She willingly sought to follow her dreams and settled in the United States, leaving her

childhood love and beautiful memories to assimilate into American culture. But through the succession of events, Salwa lost her identity forever.

Chapter Three: The Status of Acculturation in the 9/11 Aftermath in Laila Halaby's Once in a Promised Land

3.1. Introduction

Once in a Promised Land is a famous novel written by the American Jordanian Laila Halaby, in which the Arab Muslim agonies after 9/11 are well depicted. The novel, written in 2007, explores the conflicts that a Jordanian couple, Salwa and Jassim, face in the aftermath of the terrible 9/11 attacks. They have been living in the United States for more than 9 years. Jassim is a hydrologist, and Salwa is working in a bank and is considered a successful real estate trainee. The couple lived in Arizona, far away from ground zero where the attacks took place, but they suffered the aftermath of the attacks, and their lives turned upside-down.

Both of them are trying to achieve their American Dream by purchasing all what luxurious. For Salwa, the silky pajamas are the ones she adores most in markets, and she never stops buying them. Jassim owns a very expensive Mercedes Benz that even Americans could not obtain. This pursuit of luxuries is depicted in the story by the narratives of a folktale, which recites the story of Ghula (monster), who lures her victims with the beautiful things in her house and eats them as soon as they are fully indulged in her brilliance. The use of traditional folktales helps in understanding the story and the message behind it.

In the current chapter, the analysis of post-9/11 is required as well as depicting the status of the western media towards Arabs and Muslims and how it disfigured the image of Arabs and Muslims inside and outside the United States.

3.2. Anti-Arab and Muslim Racism after 9/11 Attacks

In the wake of September 9, 2001, the world of Arab-Muslims living in America will change forever and never be the same again. The attacks on New York and Washington by some Muslim extremists, about which the world does not know

the real motives, led to an outraged feeling against all what is Arab and Muslim. Immediately, George W. Bush declared war on Terrorism on October 11, 2001 saying:

> *The attack took place on American soil, but it was an attack on the heart and soul of the civilized world. And the world has come together to fight a new and different war, the first, and we hope the only one, of the 21st century. A war against all those who seek to export terror and a war against those governments that support or shelter them. (NATIONAL ARCHIVE)*

From that speech onward, the United States' authorities collaborated with the media to raise a highly tempered atmosphere of fear mixed with hate towards Arabs and Muslims in particular. For the security of the nation, the authorities launched several acts, among them the Patriot Act, "which enhances the investigative capacities of law enforcement officials to investigate and prevent terrorism" (Khademian 180). Moreover, "cities have hired more police, more equipment has been purchased for first responders" (Ibid). Arab Americans became purchased, and they are all suspected until it is proved the contrary, as Mamdani states "unless proved to be 'good', every Muslim is presumed to be 'bad" (qtd. in Ghouaiel 271).

These security measures targeted mainly Arabs and Muslims. In her study *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience after 9/11,* Louise Cainkar documents the following:

> Mass arrests, secret and indefinite detentions, prolonged detention of 'material witnesses,' closed hearings and the use of secret evidence… FBI home and work visits, wiretapping, seizures of property, removals

> of aliens with technical visa violations, freezing the assets of charities, and mandatory special registration (119 qtd. in Motyl 218).

George W.Bush was clear in his speeches; he declared war on everyone against the American society. On September 20th, 2001, he states: "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists" (Bush 2001), raising the famous discourse of 'us' versus 'them'. This discourse launched a very serious gap between Americans, and Arab-Muslim Americans which resulted in infinite physical and psychological attacks on Arabs and Muslims in the country "In the first nine weeks following 9/11 the ADC reported over 700 violent incidents targeting Arabs, Arab Americans, Muslims, and those perceived to be Arabs or Muslims (Ibish 2003 qtd. in Awad 61).

Mamdni Mahmoud induces the 'us' versus 'them' discourse as "From this point of view, 'bad Muslims' were clearly responsible for terrorism… 'good Muslim' were anxious to clear their names and consciences of this terrible crime and would undoubtedly support 'us' in a war against 'them'" (qtd. in Gouaiel 271).

Under this discrimination discourse conceived by the media, American society constructed the negative image on Arab-Muslims as a dangerous enemy who must be fought inside and outside the country. In this way, the faithfulness of all Arabs and Muslim citizens was questioned. According to Ibish (2003), points out that during the first nine weeks following 9/11, around 80 Arab American or Muslim passengers were illegally removed from airplanes (Awad 61).

The discrimination discourse had shattered of the process of acculturation for the majority of Arab and Muslim Americans, making them think sincerely about their status in a country that blames millions of people for the deeds of some radicals. This issue has made acculturation progress more complex. Many Arab

Muslim citizens are of second or third generation, who barely had relation with their ancestral countries and religion as well. Others are just immigrants who did not believe in God or any other Islamic rituals, and they found themselves questioned and arrested on the basis of their skin and religion.

3.3. The Contribution of Western Media in the Rise of Racism and Islamophobia

The history showed that the west's interests in the east were the main factors behind the negative representation of Arab and Muslim world. In Edward Said's famous book Orientalism (1979), he shows how England justified her presence in Egypt as mandatory because these people 'Egyptian People' could by no means rule themselves and therefore it is necessary for England to rule this country and lead it to civilization. James Balfour[10] explained to the House of Commons in 1910, opening his speech by showing the European supremacy of governing over the eastern one:

> First of all, look at the facts of the case. Western nations as soon as they emerge into history show the beginnings of those capacities for self-government . . .having merits of their own. . . . You may look through the whole history of the Orientals in what is called, broadly speaking, the East, and you never find traces of self_ The Scope of Orientalism government (Said 32).

[10] Arthur James Balfour: prime minister of the United Kingdom (1902-1905), and foreign secretary from 1916 to 1919. He is best remembered for his Balfour Declaration expressing British approval of Zionism (Britanica.com).

The Western world continued justifying its dominance over the Easten countries under several motifs, including justice, and civilization; the media has contributed to and helped in the expansion campaigns by representing the other world as inferior. However, the image that was drawn before 9/11 did not represent Arabs and Muslims as a threat, as Motyle explains in her article "No Longer a Promised Land-The Arab and Muslim Experience in the U.S. After 9/11", where she writes: "Until mid-twentieth century, the figures of the sheikh lusting after Western virgins, the mysterious veiled woman, and the seductive bellydancer dominated representation of Arabs in the U.S. popular culture" (224). Thus things went worse after the Arab/Israeli war in 1967, the oil embargo of 1970's, and the Iranian hostage crisis of 1979; the United States began profiling Arabs as maleficent and a potential threat. Numerous Hollywood movies and scenes came to the forehead of the American film industry, supporting the bad image of a whole community and its religion.

The Western media was indifferent to separate between Muslims and Arabs, for them, Arabs or Muslims are of the same entity. Jack G. Shaheen (1983) reported that the extreme majority of Muslims in the United States are not Arabs, but they neglected that fact and considered all Muslims as Arabs:

> In fact, most of the world's 1.1 billion Muslims are Indonesian, Indian, or Malaysian. Only 12 percent of the world's Muslims are Arab. Yet moviemakers ignore this reality, depicting Arabs and Muslims as one and the same people. Repeatedly, they falsely project all Arabs as Muslims and all Muslims as Arabs. As a result, viewers, too, tend to link the same attributes to both peoples (50).

Hollywood played an important role in distorting the image of Islam and Arabs as "Anti-democratic, irrational, hot-tempered, barbaric, uncultured, lustful, and so on. The media distort many Islamic concepts such as prayer, recitation, and ablution to achieve their aim" (Abdullah 52).

Shaheen has gathered in his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a People* over one thousand stereotypical films on Arabs and Muslims, he wrote:

> [I] document and discuss virtually every feature that Hollywood has ever made— more than 1,000 films, the vast majority of which portray Arabs by distorting at every turn what most Arab men, women, and children are really like. In gathering the evidence for this book, [I] was driven by the need to expose an injustice: cinema's systematic, pervasive, and unapologetic degradation and dehumanization of a people (45).

This dehumanization, as Shaheen said, is done purposefully and steadily, according to him "From 1896 until today, filmmakers have collectively indicted all Arabs as Public Enemy #1—brutal, heartless, uncivilized religious fanatics and money-mad cultural "others" bent on terrorizing civilized Westerners, especially Christians and Jews"(Shaheen 45). And this explains the violent backlash against Arabs and Muslims directly after the 9/11 attacks; it is clear that the media worked to get the final result of kicking all Arabs and Muslim out of America.

There are several films treating the Arabs and Muslims badly; for instance, *True Lies* (1994) and *The Siege* (1998) are two famous films that deal with the absolute abuse not only for Arabs but for holly religious beliefs which were negatively connected to violence. *True Lies* (1994) represented Palestinians as brutal who want to blow off American cities, but the acumen of the US secret agent (Arnold Schwarzenegger) solves America and kills the entire Palestinian terrorist

group, ironically. However *The Siege* (1998) carries the same idea with a main detail that these terrorists were engaged under the eye of the CIA to complete some operations and were left when they accomplish their missions. The movie is meant to strengthen the stereotype of Islam and terrorism, making all Arabs and Muslims potential terrorists. These movies had paved the road to the American administration to get the support of her people and all the western countries to invade Iraq in 1993 and kill thousands of innocent people for no reason.

The Muslim community suffered severely after the attacks, many had been killed, harassed, and lost their jobs and homes as well, and many of them were deported back to their countries for no reason. This Traumatic situation led to a new generation of Arab-American writers who tried to explain things and define themselves for the American community.

3.4. The Impact of Culture Discrimination on the Assimilation of Salwa and Jassim

Salwa and Jassim are Jordanian couple who have been living in the United States for over ten years. Salwa is an American citizen by birth, however Jassim is a hydrologist who works for a American company. Both of them are secular Muslims, Salwa is not a true believer, she does not pray five times a day, and Jassim "does not believe in god" (Halaby 232), but both of them keep the least of their identities at home when speaking Arabic, and fasting during Ramadan, or celebrate *Eid al-Fitr*[11].

For Salwa and Jassim living in America was all what they want, they have no problem with the American culture since they were almost totally assimilated in the

[11] Eid al-Fitr: Festival of Breaking fast for Muslims, it marks the end of Ramadan. From Encyclopedia Britannica

host culture; their origin culture remains shady and they keep just small threads of it. The main problematic in this chapter is what happens to immigrants like Salwa and Jassim who are fully assimilated in the host culture? And to what extent should they keep their assimilation under the discrimination discourse in the aftermath of 9/11.

Salwa and Jassim had been living in the United States for more than ten years, where they shared almost the same values of the host culture. Their lives were similar to the Americans. And more than that, they enjoyed the American life better than many Americans; this status that the Arab couple was living is what sociologists call Assimilation (Gordon 61). Sociologists Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess define assimilation as "Assimilation is a process of interpenetration and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons or groups, and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life" (qtd. in Gordon 62). The terms interpenetration and fusion suit our characters in their lives in America, both of them were sharing the values of the host cultures with their co-workers and friends. This definition implies also the concept of integration. However, our protagonists go beyond integration in the host culture; Salwa and Jassim abandoned their original values in favor of American ones. In this context, Alixa Naff (1983) writes about those immigrants who sought to achieve the American dream: "In their eagerness to succeed, the immigrant generation neglected to preserve their cultural heritage" (qtd. in Karaoui 276); Salwa and Jassim have, correspondingly, assimilated into the American consumerist lifestyle, moving away from their cultural and religious principles.

However, the above definition of assimilation was refined by Gordon (1964), who insists that assimilation cannot be achieved from one side without the

other, which implies that any group or individual who seeks assimilation should be accepted in the host culture as an effective member of the society without being judged on ethnic or religious prejudices:

> In the United States an immigrant is ordinarily considered assimilated as soon as he has acquired the language and the social ritual of the native community and can participate, without encountering prejudice, in the common life, economic and political. The common sense view of the matter is that an immigrant is assimilated as soon as he has shown that he can "get on in the country." This implies among other things that in all the ordinary affairs of life he is able to find a place in the community on the basis of his individual merits without invidious or qualifying reference to his racial origin or to his cultural inheritance (Gordon 63).

The discrimination imperative is well considered in the process of assimilation, as Gordon points out: "Assimilation has not taken place, it is asserted, until the immigrant is able to function in the host community without encountering prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behavior"(Gordon 63). The discrimination discourse against immigrants in the United States and particularly against the Arab and Muslim communities, has raised its intonation since the 9/11 Attacks. Salwa and Jassim are part of the general Arab and Muslim community landscape in the United States and have been the subject of discrimination in spite of their total assimilation into the American culture. Through the narratives, it becomes clear that Salwa and Jassim, an assimilated couple that embodies the American ideals, were still unable to escape the repercussions of the 9/11 Attacks, which challenged both the assimilation and 'melting pot' theories.

To deal with this problematic I divide the acculturation status of Salwa and Jassim into three phases: pre-assimilation, assimilation, and post-assimilation. The analysis will focus to some extent more on Salwa than on Jassim, and that because Salwa is the most discussed character in the novel.

3.4.1. Pre-assimilation of Salwa and Jassim

The assimilation phase of Salwa begins at her birth. Salwa was born in the United States to a Jordanian immigrant parents and then moved to live in Jordan. Despite this, Salwa obtained her citizenship by birth, throughout her upbringing; she developed a love for luxury materials, such as silk pajamas:

> She had twice been cursed early in her life: by place of birth and by a fortuitous gift of silk pajamas… And the only child in her family who happen to be born in America, Salwa had already been the subject of teasing, irresistible pointing and poking and giggling: *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 47).

These words that Salwa heard currently made her feel the difference between herself and the others; she felt that she was of them but not with them. Despite not having any direct memories of the country, she still feels a strong sense of belonging to it, even though she is far away."

Salwa's father was among many people who had a dream and sought to realize it in the United States. The family immigrated and settled in Chicago, besides his brother, who had a restaurant where Salwa was born. Her father worked very hard in his brother's restaurant and wrestled to achieve his American dream, but unfortunately he failed and returned with his family to Jordan:

> I had a brother in Chicago who had a restaurant, and he arranged for me to go. We thought of staying there, but it was too hard on Um Siham. She had three small girls, was pregnant with Salwa, and I was constantly working. My father was ill, as was Um Siham's mother. After Salwa was born, we decided that it was not worth losing our souls (Halaby 70).

Abu Siham explained to Jassim that his situation and Jassim's are different because Jassim is educated and his chance to achieve the American dream is available; "Your life is different, I can see, because you have an education and you are dealing with the good of America. I was working like a dog in a restaurant…I am pleased that Salwa will return to America, the country of her birth, and be offered what is good" (70). It is clear from the words of Salwa's father that he wants his daughter to finish his dream, and take her opportunity in the country where she was born. The American dream had never abandoned his mind; he and all the family kept reminding Salwa of her country of birth. For Salwa, returning to her country of birth was a matter of time. She grew up dreaming about America, she studied banking, which is the symbol of the American life; Salwa was well prepared to live the American dream. And one day at the university, "Salwa's eyes scanned the bulletin boards, landed on a tiny flier:

Water is the key of our survival. A lesson in self-sufficiency.

Please join us this afternoon at 3 PM. For a lecture by Dr.

Jassim Haddad, hydrologist from America.

"that sounds interesting" said Salwa, while her boyfriend Hassan looked at the flyer and asked her " Please tell me What in that sounds interesting", Salwa replied immediately that " I guess it's the 'self-sufficiency' part" but Hassan was sure that is not that part which interested Miss America " You sure it's not the 'from

America part?" Hassan, as he knows his beloved Salwa, was sure that a student of economics and banking would never be interested in hydrology; it was really the 'from America' what attracted Salwa mostly.

Once the hydrologist was presenting his lecture about water shortages in the world and proposing different ways to save water, Miss America was "hypnotized" by his discourse about water and different stories from America, as well as by his "expensive suit he wore" (243). Salwa was fascinated by Jassim's expensive look and his American flavor. She was not even fascinated by Jassim as a person but rather by his relationship to America, and this was her chance to return to her dream land.

After the lecture was finished and everyone had left the room, Salwa met Jassim and introduced herself to him, and this was enough for Jassim to be attracted to her and ask her for marriage; immediately Salwa gave her consent: "I would like that very much. I would like to go to America too". Salwa is clear, she expresses her feelings of joy to go to America and pleasure for marrying Jassim; she behaves as if she has a mission to achieve, and she is ready right that moment to begin her mission. Salwa has given up her childhood love in the sake of her family's American Dream; she was given the opportunity to achieve what her parents had failed to do.

On other hand, Jassim was refusing to return to Jordan because he could not bear the amount of bureaucracy there, "…nine years after he and Salwa had wed, he had no desire to return to Jordan. What would he do there? He couldn't imagine living in that bureaucracy again, had become comfortable in this easy, predictable life." (Halaby71). Jassim has studied Hydrology in Amman and then went to do master's studies in America for the sake to solve water problems in Jordan:

> from the first moment that Jassim set foot on American desert soil for his graduate education, he had been ready, willing, and able to return to Jordan upon completion of his studies, to implement all that he would learn. America's ease and comfort was not so much greater that Jordan's that he considered staying (Halaby 62).

Jassim's intention to return home and contribute in the improvement of water harvesting was irreversible, he returned home as soon as he finished his master studies fully intended to help his country to develop new strategies concerning water; but what he found was a total ignorance of his projects which disappointed him forever "… but his ideas for improvement of existing projects were largely ignored" (62). Jassim decided to return to America for PhD studies and "still filled with dreams of saving Jordan from drought and dependency" (63). After he defended his thesis, he was supposed to return back to his country but a phone call from his friend Marcus who was a partner at a consulting firm asked him to stay just for one more year to work with him and gain experience. For Jassim it did not seem for him a good idea and tried to apologized but Marcus insisted by proposing him a very alluring opportunity "Really, Jassim, you could give it a year and then go home. I can arrange for you to stay. And it may not matter to you, but I can offer you a substantially higher salary than what you'd get in Jordan. Plus, it's experience" (64). These words were the prelude of the American dream trap and Jassim starts to think and compare America to Jordan: "…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. Even with all the American and European support, the ministry was nothing in comparison to Marcus's form" (65).

3.4.2. Assimilation Phase

The life of the Jordanian couple in America was steady, wealthy, and happy; the couple seems to enjoy life in the United States. Salwa and Jassim show no cultural segments of their origins, in other hand, they were totally assimilated into the American life. Salwa and Jassim are both secular Muslims.

Jassim's routine life was strict, he insists on finding balance in the very early morning before he starts working:

> One minute before Jassim Haddad's alarm was scheduled to hammer the quiet morning, his eyes opened, and he lay awake in the darkened silence…Jassim delighted in the stillness the morning offered, a time before emotions were awake, a time for contemplation. This day was no exception as he got up, washed his face, brushed his teeth, and relieved himself, the beginning of a morning ritual as close to prayer as he could allow… Jassim did not believe in God, but he did believe in balance. At five o'clock, with the day still veiled, Jassim found balance (Halaby 3).

From the beginning of the narratives, Halaby reveals that Jassim does not believe in god; instead, he believes in balance. He also admires the stillness the morning offered to him. Jassim was absorbed by the American lifestyle, however, he tries to replace the ablution and the *fadjr(* down*)* prayer by swimming in the fitness bar; "Four days a week he woke up at this time, usually a minute or two before the alarm, so he could drive to the fitness bar, swim, come home, and still be able to spend the morning time with his wife, Salwa" (Halaby 3). Jassim replaces the Muslim ablution and *fadjr (*down*)* prayer with this ritual swim. Jassim is steadily swallowed by this lifestyle, and his faith in god has diminished:

> "Years passed, and hid lung capacity increased as his belief in god dwindled. He began to create challenges for himself, physical ones at first, like learning to swim. Like going underwater to the end of the pool and back. Like lifting weights. Or staying awake all night. Or sitting completely still for hours at a stretch. As he taught his body to fight instinct, so his mind rejected the notion of God"(Halaby 46).

Jassim was enjoying his luxurious life, his extravagant salary allowed him to buy a Mercedes sedan with $50.000; and own a very comfortable house. In the novel, Halaby describes both the car and the house in the same level of luxury:

> That afternoon, driving up recently repaved asphalt to his nestled-in-the-hills home, Jassim pulled up his glinty Mercedes next to one of many identical expectant mailboxes, each painted a muted rusty brown. He lifted out the pile of mail and, without looking at it, dropped it onto the leather seat next to him, then pulled the car smoothly and silently over pebbles into his curved driveway and stopped under the acacia tree, whose canopy protected the car from the afternoon sun. The door of his car and the door of his house were across from each other, the steps he would take on an invisible line at a ninety-degree angle from both car and door. Briefcase, burdens, and mail in hand, leather shoes crunching over pebbles, he went up one, two, three wide brick steps and through the heavy wood door into an extremely cool house (22-23).

The luxurious life that Jassim was living gave him a false sense of assimilation, and the more he indulged in American consumerism, the more he felt assimilated. This false sense of assimilation took him far away from his original culture and religion too. Jassim substituted the Fajr (dawn) prayer with swimming

and driving at a very early time of day! For Jassim, finding balance in the morning was all that a man could reach. However, the more he excelled in swimming and driving his luxurious car, the more his faith in God diminished; "Driving alone in the dark, alone anywhere, anytime, filled Jassim with peace and pleasure; driving was a secret drug, a secret god" (Halaby 3).

Food is another kettle of fish that Halaby uses in the narratives to show the easy life that the couple is living. Jassim finds life more enjoyable and appreciates it when ordering food, a service that is not provided in many Arab countries and it is not even welcomed:

> He… opened the tidy white refrigerator. No leftovers. Then to the freezer. No leftovers. One package of frozen chicken. He stood thinking about the possibilities contained in this frozen chicken and decided that he could not cook, could not bring himself to prepare food, that this would be a good time for ordering out. Thankful for the luxury of living in a country where any kind of food was minutes away, he got the pile of menus from a drawer beneath the counter and began picking through. Ethiopian—too far away. Italian—no. Pizza—no. Thai…yes, Thai food would be perfect (Halaby131).

The life of the couple was free from any signs of traditional cooking; neither Jassim nor Salwa speaks about Jordanian food. This adaptation of the American lifestyle is an important segment of the assimilated process the couple is going through.

In the same line of luxurious life, Salwa was living her American dream in her way; she expresses her devotion to luxuries through her unlimited gluttony of consumerism. Salwa spends a lot of time in malls for searching her silky pajamas or

other expensive articles; "Shopping was soothing experience" (28). Salwa's fascination of silky pajamas goes back to her infancy when she was given a royal blue pair of them from her aunt when she visited Thailand. Since then, Miss America has been drawn to silk and sexy sleepwear. Her interest in silky and sexy lingerie developed further after moving to America and becoming a compulsive consumer:

> For the first few years after she returned with her new husband to the country of her birth, her pajama purchases were in much the same style as the original pajamas she had worn as a child, with long pants and a long-sleeved shirt with tiny buttons. As she became more accustomed to American life, however, her pajamas narrowed to fit her body more precisely. She still favored the sets with long pants, but on top she wore a lacy camisole and a flimsy robe that tied over it. As her years away from home lengthened and her susceptibility to American marketing increased, her pajamas transformed, morphed from elegant and flowing to tight, more revealing, more alluring (Halaby 48).

To some extent, Salwa was aware of her assimilation status and she wanted to assimilate into American culture. However, when she became pregnant, her consciousness awakened and she realized that she did not want her child will be raised solely in American culture context:

> All those years of schizophrenic reaction to American culture, disdain for the superficial, which she had buried with each new purchase and promotion, a spray of loathing she had denied in order to justify her current arrangement—it all burst forward as if she were seeing it for the

> first time, as though she had not spent the past nine years living this very life. *It is different now,* she thought. *If I am pregnant, I cannot raise my child here, away from everything I know. If I am pregnant* (Halaby 54)

So, her assimilation status was fake, and she was aware of that but chose to pursue the American dream no matter what the cost. Salwa had discarded her feelings toward Palestinian refugee rights, and she no longer advocated for their right of return. Her love of consumerism prevented her from seeing the reality of the situation, and she continued living a pleasurable life. In this regard, Carol. F. Conrey goes further in her analysis to accuse Salwa of betraying the Palestinian case when she leaves Hassan Shaheed, the Palestinian refugee, to marry Jassim:

> While Salwa herself was never portrayed as being overly political, even when in Jordan, her decision to marry Jassim marks an attendant yet unstated decision to forgo a commitment to the Palestinian cause. For, by marrying Jassim, Salwa breaks her unspoken engagement to Hassan Shaheed, a Palestinian refugee boy she grew up with, whom, with his " handsome face, sense of humor, and political activism," Salwa regards "as a symbol of Palestine" (154-155).

The *Ghula* to which Halaby refers in the story, which is an allegory to America, has succeeded in alluring Miss America with the so-called American Dream. Salwa was not like Nus Nsayes in the folk story, who uses his cunning to escape the appeal of the *Ghula*; instead, she is aware of her situation, but "this was the life she had chosen, but not the life she wanted" (Halaby 91).

Salwa's yearning for a baby reminds her of her grandmother's folk tale of the "woman who could not get pregnant. Years passed, and her yearning for a baby grew and grew. One day as she was working in her house, she heard a merchant's

cry through her window: "Pregnancy apples from the mountain! Pregnancy apples from the mountain!" (Halaby93). The woman was happy that the old man told her if she ate one apple she will be pregnant. So, she bought one and took it to home to eat later. But her husband ate the half of the apple, which is why she gave birth of Nus Nsayes, which means a boy with some disabilities. But this small boy was the cleverest child in the village and could, with his cunning, kills the *Ghula* and save all the children from being eaten and swollen by her fake allure. Salwa also wants a baby, and she deliberately did not take birth control pills without the consent of her husband, and she conceived. Salwa's inner consciousness wants from that baby to reconcile her with Jassim, be her shelter in that country, just like Nus Nsayes did, and save the entire village from the *Ghula's* evil. But unfortunately, this baby savior did not come, and she miscarried.

3.4.3. Post-Assimilation Phase

In the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, the American political and social landscape has dramatically changed to be very hostile to Arabs and Muslims. Gordon points out that assimilation is fulfilled only if it is from both sides, means that the received society should accept the assimilated individual as a member without treating him on this basis of skin, color, or religion; "Assimilation has not taken place, it is asserted, until the immigrant is able to function in the host community without encountering prejudiced attitudes or discriminatory behavior" (63).

After the 9/11 attacks, a series of racist events were being recorded throughout the country, it was a rage against all that is Arab and Muslim; hopelessly,

the couple tried to convince themselves and their relatives that the attacks were too far and that they feared their backlash danger:

> Both his and Salwa's families had telephoned shortly after it happened, which was also beyond his comprehension. They were all intelligent human beings and knew that America was a large country and that New York was on the East Coast, and yet they had called to see if he and Salwa were safe. It was ridiculous, and he had told his father so. "Baba, we are so far away, there is nothing to worry about" (Halaby 21).

Salwa and Jassim were quite sure that it had nothing to do with them, but Randa has another opinion:

> Rand is worried about her kids, thinks someone might try to hurt them,". Jassim denied this and tell Salwa "Why anyone would 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." Salwa sadly added "What does a Sikh have to do with anything? (Halaby 21).

Unfortunately, Salwa and Jassim are the subject of racist behavior in their surrounding environment, though they were too attached to the American culture and did not reflect Islam in their behaviors. The couple was aware of this strange and inexplicable reaction from the American government and people as well; desperately, they tried to prove their Americaness, hoping that it would keep them attached to their dream land. Each of Salwa and Jassim delves in an auto-destruction following on the 9/11 backlash, which results in questioning their existence in the United States and to a clear separation from the American culture.

3.4.3.1. Salwa and Self-Deconstruction

"This was the life she had chosen, but it was not the life she wanted" (Halaby 91), this sentence reveals the alluring life Salwa chose to uncover her hidden identity. Before delving into the reasons which led to the deconstruction of Salwa, it is worth considering both environments in which she lived and highlighting what Camilleri & Malewska called "the distinction between "traditional" and "industrial" societies"(45), which have a significant impact on the social evolution of immigrants' identities. Salwa comes from a traditional society, which is "characterized by the consensus of the entire group on collective "models," (ibid), to an industrial society that "marked independence from the models that govern the larger society" (ibid). This shift from the traditional to the complex creates a void in the life of Salwa which tries to fill it with lies.

Through the narratives, Salwa mentions many lies in her life, which implies that she has an inner struggle between her chosen life and the life she wanted.

The biggest lie that Salwa has gone through is her conception without the consent of her husband. Jassim refused to have babies for the reason that "Humans were so odd, to give birth to creatures that were totally powerless and dependent for so many years. Evolutionarily speaking, it was amazing anyone survived. At this point, there was no way their lives could accommodate a child, since they had no family around to help" (Halaby 110). For Salwa having a baby was a must. Her mother was very upset for Salwa and thinks that "*Women are made to have children. A relationship is strengthened by having children, and a couple who does not have children is unnatural"*(Halaby90). Between her devotion to have a baby and her husband's refusal, Salwa chooses to lie; she also tries to justify her lie and adapts herself with the new situation rather than communicate with her husband and

explains her love to have a baby: "Women's tongues spat stories in Arabic and English of distracted women and absentminded mothers who had forgotten to take their pills, sometimes missing a day or two. True, a few weeks down the road often found them pregnant, which was usually the reason for the story to be told in the first place" (Halaby 10). Having a baby for Salwa was a matter of life, a matter of existence, and a matter of filling a void! "*…For a few years now I've felt that I've been missing something in my life. That's why I got a real estate license. It wasn't enough, though. I think having a child will fill that void. I am going to try to get pregnant, even though Jassim says he doesn't want a child"(ibid)*; the void that Salwa feels has become her motivation for self-deconstruction, giving her a reason not only to lie at her husband but also betray him.

For around 10 years in the United States, Salwa was missing something; though it had all been what she dreamed of before, but she was always missing something. Through the narratives, it seems that she misses her husband, who worked hard to give her the life she wanted, but within this, he neglected her:

> She had not thought to fine-tune her wishes, had just assumed that *fulfilling* would come along automatically with *American freedom.* Tucked in the word *freedom,* somewhere near the double *e,* was the code that for a husband to offer his wife the freedom to do as she pleased, his attention would have to be drawn elsewhere. Therein lay the problem—that in Jassim's enthusiasm for his work and in his offer of the life she wanted, he had somehow neglected her"(Halaby 99).

The void reflects the hollowness of her identity, the identity of Salwa was fragile and lacks what Caroline Rosenthal (2003) points out as *continuity* and *coherence* which are defined as "Continuity refers to the temporal aspect; we stay

the same person over time, while coherence refers to a sameness of character and behavior"(7).

In terms of coherence, Salwa was Muslim and had lived much of her life with her family in Jordan. There is no sign in the novel that Salwa was a religious, but she was to some extent conservative to the norms of that society when she still lived in Jordan. Salwa, and once in America, totally forgets those norms to embrace a life of liberty and consumerism. And in term of continuity, Salwa breaks it when she chooses to marry Jassim in order to move to America over her childhood love, Hassan Shaheed.

However, if we consider "that identity is something we *consistently* have to work at… and identity I *alterity* rather than *sameness*" (Rosenthal 8); thus we can give to Salwa a pretext of her non-continuity and non-coherence saying that she wants to built her new identity according to the new norms of the society she is living in. Nevertheless, this pretext is going to vanish when she found herself "lying in an American hospital bed, disfigured and barely conscious" (Halaby 328).

In her last attempt to reconcile with the American society after the 'twin towers' attacks, she enters into a love affair with Jake, her co-worker at the bank and much younger than her. Salwa has no intention to have any relation with Jake, but this later followed her everywhere and he tried to be kind to her all the time, and tries to fascinate her by all means. His interest in Salwa reflects the stereotypical view of west towards the east. Jake's perception of Salwa was related to his previous beliefs about the Arab world as exotic and Arab language as the language of opium:

> He could learn the language of opium (and since he told no one his reason for taking the class, no one could correct him and tell him that Arabic was quite definitely not the language of opium). He also thought

> it might seem exotic if he spoke a distant foreign language…He had not yet realized that the short foreign lady who worked at the bank where he landed a part-time job spoke Arabic. Nor did he have any idea that Arabic would soon become one of the hottest language classes at the university" (Halaby 52).

Halaby in this passage explains the real motives behind the interest of Jake toward Salwa; however, Salwa was attracted to Jack due to the void she lived after her miscarriage, and to prove her Americaness to herself and experience more liberty in America " Her American Freedom had given her exactly that: American freedom"(Halaby 202). According to Mudasir a. Bhat (2014), Jake represents the Americaness as his fathers were diplomats and he lived the typical American way besides his whiteness; "… He represents an all American lineage. Jake's behavior, physical appearances, and life style are often described as American"(113). Salwa's inner psyche refused to be with Jake, but somehow something else urges her to do it and finish with that step:

> Jake." A statement. An invitation. It was a matter of time, minutes, hours, days, Salwa knew, before they were intimate; they were in a line at an amusement park ride, with an undefined wait time in anticipation of a few seconds of contained terror/pleasure and the probability of returning safely to earth minutes later. Alive but somehow changed. For one clear, thinking moment she could see that the words they shared or disagreed over did not matter, that her connection with Jake was primal and already decided (Halaby 203).

Salwa's previous cultural background as a raised Arab and Muslim girl does not prevent her from being manipulated by an American drug dealer man, and she

unfortunately follows him and starts lying on her husband to find ways to meet Jake; "When Jake left, she called Jassim's cell number and left a message, promising to be home by ten, saying that she was having dinner with coworkers. Only the tip of a lie, an accidental plural" ibid. Salwa continued meeting and having sex with Jake under a feeling of guilt and shame of what she is doing:

> Salwa's inner voice had grown weary, unwilling to battle, and so had turned off the light and gone to bed. Salwa, who at the moment of her birth was twice displaced from lands holier than this, allowed an American boy to push off her shoes with his toes, to unbutton her shirt and remove it, allowed him to unzip her skirt and place her clothes neatly on a chair next to the futons (Halaby 210).

After several meetings with Jake, Salwa feels disgusted of what she did and decides to go to Randa and confess to her, and so she does to find the solution in Randa's preposition to leave everything and return to Jordan "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"* (Halaby 288). Salwa agrees and "resolved to fly away and tuck herself into the safety of her of her true home… The ugliness was simply moister and stickier"(289). Accordingly, the target of Salwa now is a safety place, and Jordan is the safest place in the word that she can hide from the *ghula,* which clearly stands for America; and thanks God, Salwa seems she will get through all this sooner:

> Many years passed and the girl grew plumper but sadder, longing for her home and yet somehow unable to return. Each time the girl mentioned her homesickness, the old woman offered her a new gift to assuage her

> sadness, until finally the old woman decided it was time for her ghula self to reappear and her feast to be eaten (Halaby 333).

She returns home to tell her husband that she will go home in the three coming days. Jassim is baffled by the unexpected decision and tries to understand what is happening. He tells her that he is ready to build a family if that is the reason for her leaving, "Salwa, habibti. I am sorry that I have kept you from having a family. I am ready now. Whether we are here or somewhere else, I am ready for a family. If that is still what you want" (302); but Salwa"s bitterness of what she did is much more than could be cured by having a baby. She knows that her identity is endangered in this country, so returning back to her family could contribute to reconciling with her culture of origin; and she confess to her husband that "I'm sorry I have not been a better wife"(303). Salwa fails to be a good wife, as she herself has acknowledged. She is struggling to maintain her identity, which certainly would prevent her from drowning in host and non-benign culture. At this stage, Salwa moved from the stage of acculturation to an enculturation mode which could potentially allow her to rediscover and embrace her culture of origin. Accordingly, in this context Herskovits (1948) describes enculturation as "The process of socialization to, and maintenance of, the norms of one's indigenous culture, including the salient values, ideas, and concepts"(qtd. in Kim 142).

"*While (she) still can*" (289), Salwa gets up early on Saturday to "began the business of preparing herself for the departure" (306), she automatically makes a shopping list, and in the bottom of her list was "a reminder to go and say goodbye to Jake. Invisible, because that way no one would know that she planned to do such a foolish thing. As if a reminder was necessary"(316). In doing so, Salwa was expiring her chance in leaving America and regaining her identity;"*While (she) still can*". By

the time Jake opens the door he looks so weird, he does not expect her to come but he insists on her to enter his house, which was out of order with a dirty smelled air, "This state of disorder should have been enough to shake any fairy-tale princess back to reality…The state of disorder that was his apartment overwhelmed her so completely that it blurred her senses and smudged her vision"(317). Salwa feels that something is going wrong but does not react or withdraw; she enters to tell Jake that she has some family business in Jordan and she has to stop with him because "*You told Sweeney what we did. Because you see me as an older woman. There is no love in that"(*Halaby318). Furious in hearing those words, Jake suddenly changed and uttered contemptuous and sardonic words, which totally baffled Salwa " So you're running back to the pigsty you came from", and attacks her with a Japanese picture silver frame, which at first Salwa thought would be a gift from Jake, but she was as usual mistaken:

> She saw that he was holding something rectangular that caught the sun. A part of her brain processed that he was giving her a gift, a picture, and that for some reason he was lifting it into the air. In one powerful blink, it came down on her cheek, just below her eye, and she felt as if her face had been sliced with something that was part sledgehammer, part knife. She screamed and bent her head forward, covered her face, caught her blood. Her brain saw, after it happened, that he was holding the Japanese painting, the one lovely thing she had found in his apartment. And as she realized this, that it was the corner of the heavy silver frame that had sliced into her face, she felt a blow again, on the top of her head. She was amazed at the force and the pain (Halaby 321).

At her scream, two gardeners whom she saw when she entered Jake's apartment ran to rescue her and called the police and the ambulance. Salwa was choked and "lay bathed in shame" (ibid), while she was hearing the sirens approaching, she hoped that this was not true and wished that "She would have given the world to have found the rewind button. She would have pressed nine years. And she would never have said yes to Dr. Haddad" (ibid). Salwa opens her eyes in the hospital awkwardly ashamed, her husband besides holding her hand and wondering what Salwa be incorporated into, knew very well that his wife has nothing to do with this drug dealer whom the police found a" meth lab"(242) in his apartment; the police reassured Jassem that" It's possible that she was simply in the wrong place at the wrong time"(227).

At that moment, Salwa has totally expired her "*While (she) still can"* chance in returning home safe and holy. She ends up lying in an American hospital disfigured and between reality and non-reality which was described by Halaby as " it occurred to Salwa, who was there and wasn't there"(226).

Ironically, Salwa was rescued by two men who are not Americans and whom Salwa underestimated and recognized within an ethnic context. The day she found her car robbed, she "wondered if he knew, or even if he had been responsible"(316). Salwa's attitude toward these immigrant gardeners is the same attitude that white Americans have toward Arabs, but Salwa does not grasp this since she recognizes herself within a white American context.

Salwa was hit by Jake by "the Japanese painting, the one lovely thing she had found in his apartment" (321), this Japanese painting reminds the readers of the miserable moments the Japanese immigrant lived in the USA after the attacks of Pearl Harbor. Halaby makes an analogy between both attacks; the Pearl Harbor

attacks and the 9/11 attacks. Through the narratives, Salwa admired that painting, as Jake told her that it represents happiness:

> This is from a Japanese myth about a young woman who searches for happiness, and each time she thinks she has found it, it escapes her. Happiness takes different forms, which are represented by different animals in different pictures… In her search for happiness, the woman loses her own beauty, which was one of the things that brought her happiness in the first place, but she didn't realize it until after she lost it (209).

Jake, under the influence of drugs, insulted Salwa by telling her that she is running to the pigsty she came from, he insulted her by reminding her of her Arabness, and that she does not belong to the white mainstream and she is in his world like a pig! And the act of hitting her is an attempt to "define the boundaries of whiteness" (Cainkar 52 qtd. in Bhat113). Jake's sentiments to Salwa were terrible, indicating a deep hatred to the Arab world. For Jake, Salwa was a symbol of exoticism that led him learn the "language of the opium", Jake's interest in Salwa is covered with the orientalist view of the east toward the west and that the west must be manipulated and governed by the white. Jake's obsession to Salwa "Which brought him to the gorgeous Arab" is dimensioned by superiority, for him, Salwa is treated as a mere object of pleasure, with no right to leave him unless he rejects her. Therefore, in a blink, she is transformed from being a source of desire to becoming an unhealthy obsession. He liked her, liked the cadence of her words when she spoke, but overriding all his thinking about her was a gigantic need to be with her physically.

Salwa fails to retain her identity while she can still can enjoy life in the United States, but Salwa chooses to experience the freedom given on American soil " Her American freedom had given her exactly that: American freedom".

3.4.3.2. Jassim the Patriarchal Prisoner

The ideal world that Jassim has built through his stay in America starts to fall apart with the down of 9/11 attacks when everything changes forever, especially for the Arab Muslims in America and throughout the world as well.

Jassim is a successful hydrologist who works for an American company charged for rainwater harvesting. His work allows him to live a luxurious life. He does not believe in God, but rather he believes in balance, and "he is enthralled by American ways of doing things, of the diurnal routine he establishes for himself and which lends to his life a delusory sense of order and fixity" (Nash 113). Jassim likes to be perfect and likes his American way of doing things, and like all Americans, he was against the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and felt sorry for those who passed away in these attacks; "his brain seized on picture after picture, humans leaping from impossible heights, plumes of smoke filling the air and then charging down the narrow streets" (Halaby21). Jassim has nothing to do with these attacks, but in some way he will pay for it because of his Arab and Muslim origins. Shortly after the attacks, both families phoned to ask about their children. Jassim's reaction to the family inquiries was weird and out of his comprehension: "They were all intelligent human beings and knew that America was a large country and that New York was on the East Coast, and yet they had called to see if he and Salwa were safe. It was ridiculous, and he had told his father so. "Baba, we are so far away, there is nothing to worry about" (Halaby 21).

Jassim saw no connection between what happened in New York and the office girls' suspicious attitudes toward him, although he is polite and nice to them: "Why? Surely not because of what happened in New York? He had as little connection to those men as they did, and there was no way he could accept that anyone would be able to believe him capable of sharing in their extremist philosophy. No, he was not indulging this notion" (Halaby 22). Jassim's journey of malaise did not stop at the suspicion of those girls or others; he then encountered a former retired marine in the health club, where he harassed Jassim with unpleasant questions about Salwa and Jordan, making Jassim uncomfortable and wishing to get rid of the current situation: "He wanted to know about my wife, talked about beautiful Arab women. About how he understood why *you fellas cover them up.* I thought he was crass and arrogant. *A bull. A bulldozer.* He wouldn't stop talking while I was taking my shower. First time I've ever met him and he acts as though he's got the right to all my information"(halaby 35).

Jassim was stunned; how could this man get the right to his information? Jack Franks also did some spy work with Salwa in the Bank, she was a little bit disturbed with this behavior: "Jack Franks became a gray thought in their house" [2](36). According to Steven Salaita "Jack Franks symbolizes a type of political culture following September 11" (93), this political culture was launched directly after the 9/11 attacks when President Bush asked the nation to be vigilant of predictable attacks from the Arab and Muslim community. This racist discourse led to catastrophic results, like crimes and individual harassments. According to Motyle, "The government's message that Arab and Muslim Americans were enemies of the nation who deserved punishment encouraged Americans to engage in harassment

and hate crimes against members of these communities" (222), due to this discourse, Jassim was the target of Bella, the secretary in Marcus Firm:

> Bella called the FBI on you a couple of days after it happened, told them you were a rich Arab with access to the city's water supply and you didn't seem very upset by what had happened. It seemed the FBI was not interested at first. Bella started to keep a notebook on you. She wrote down everything you said, what you wore, how you seemed. Then two months or so ago she said that she thought something was wrong, that your behavior changed. That you seemed bothered and that she was going to call the FBI on you again. Report you" (Halaby 271).

Bella is one of many Americans who were mobilized by the American National Security Agency[12] to be vigilant against Arabs and Muslims, and to report every tiny behavior of them to protect their country from possible attacks. This phenomenon following the 9/11 is referred to as "Imperative Patriotism" coined by Salaita, it was a kind of national vigilance adopting the "us" and "them" binary, and the good and the bad Arabs. According to Salaita (2011):

> Imperative patriotism relies on a certain ethnic imagery to produce a distinction between "us" and "them," with "us" representing good Americans and "them" representing evildoers. Stereotypical imagery of the Middle Eastern male—beard, dark skin, menacing eyes, and so forth—accompanies representation of "them." Americans such as Jassim

[12] National Security Agency: The National Security Agency (NSA) is a federal government intelligence agency that is part of the United States Department of Defense and is managed under the authority of the director of national intelligence (DNI).

> who are unfortunate enough to resemble that image automatically become threatening (88).

Unfortunately, things for Jassim were getting worse after he accidently hit and killed a teenage boy called Evan Parker, who bears hostile sentiments against Arabs and Muslims. He wanted that "Arabic people should all be kicked out of this country, rounded up, and throw out… He wished he could kill an Arab" (201); he wanted to take his part of revenge for what happened to the World Trade Center. The police investigations have proved that it was an accident and there is no intention of killing, however, Jassim suffers a lot from the FBI members, who tacitly put the death of the boy on the Jassim's shoulders, finding the link between Arabs and Muslims as motive to do that, especially since Evan Parker was an anti-terrorist boy.

The investigations of the FBI let to the firing of Jassim from his work, because clients did not want to work with an Arab anymore. Clearly, this accident had pulled him out of the American happy endings and marginalized him from the luxury life he was enjoying. At the moment of the accident, Jassim tried to behave like Americans, looking at Evan lying on the ground, he reassured his friend not to be worry, and things were going to be alright: "It's going to be alright," Jasssim said, saying words he did not believe, trying to make that ultimate jump into American life, the one that promises a happy ending for everyone if you just believe it hard enough" (119). Jassim is aware of the catastrophic situation he is passing through, and there is no fairytale ending for Arabs in the United States; especially at these hard moments that the whole nation is going through. This car accident unfortunately "Reveal to Jassim his delusional and false sense of citizenship and belonging in the US" (Conery 153), Jassim enters in a whirling circle of mixed

thought where his American identity quarrels to control the situation, but his consciousness is aware that his American citizenship is going to be in question; Conery indicates in this context that:

> With exclusionary conceptualizations of US citizenship following the attacks of 9/11 defining good citizenship as docile citizenship, it has been a challenge for Arab-Americans to overturn such definitions, especially with the loud and persistent demonization of Arabs and Muslims still fully operational on the national level. (154)

The FBI members demanded to see Jassim and talked to him, where they asked him about the accident, about his changed behavior, and about Salwa and the huge sum of money she sent "To Jordon the day after the Twin Towers fell" (Halaby 269). Jassim tries to be calm and responds that he is like all Americans "I swim, I work, I go home Not unlike the rest of America, I suspect." but Agent Fletcher surprised Jassim by telling him that "the rest of America does not have access to the entire city's water supply with the means to tamper with it"(232)

Bewildered, Jassim lost his balance and tried to find his American self in the arms of an American white woman, a waitress at Denny's, who afforded him some instant comfort and with whom he found some of his lost balance. As Salwa, Jassim harbors himself in an American white context to stay in the American mainstream; he accepts to befriend a white woman, though she does not belong to his upper class. The white context is the one that could provide protection for Arabs in the United States; that is why Jassim and Salwa found refuge in the American white context: "The white label remained the one label that can protect them from losing the semblance of 'American' status" (qtd. in Bhat 113).

Jassim's relationship with Penny was not planned, it came haphazardly in the restaurant after a sudden fatigue, "Jassim felt loneliness creep up and grab him around the throat, pressing and squeezing until the world moved and he felt he would vomit…*Heart attack—I'm having a heart attack.* He forced himself to breathe…It took a minute, but finally he could feel his heart shifting gears and gliding back to its normal pattern. The nausea passed" (Halaby 154). Penny observes that Jassim is looking ill "You looked kind of queasy, like you were going to be sick… Sounds like a panic attack to me" (ibid), Jassim does not recognize what a panic attack is, and she continues explaining that "it's where you have too much crap loaded in your head and sometimes you just get this electric shock that bangs everything together and for a minute you think you're going to die, or puke, or pass out, but then it passes"(Ibid). Assuming that Jassim was such an immigrant who refuses to be identified by his Arab background, he automatically finds relief in her discussion; he dives in her world in hope to find satisfaction: "Jassim's innate attraction to Penny, then, arises from a certain feeling of alienation that he imagines Penny can satisfy"(Salaita 91). Meanwhile, Penny, who represents the political culture following the 9/ 11 attacks, hated everything related to the Arab world and felt pride when the president talked on TV. She wished:

> If she had had money, she would have sent it to him; if she had been younger, she would have enlisted, showed all those terrorists what Americans were made of, how they were continuing the great history of this country, getting out there and saving poor people from the oppression of living in their backward countries (Kahf 280).

But this prejudice against Arabs as backward terrorists disappears when she speaks about Jassim to her friend, she insists that Jassim "is so different from those

people", and that he is a civilized man who has lived in America for a many years. For Penny, Jassim could by no means be judged with those terrorists because he stands with the American side; he is a wealthy scientist, and she is dazed by his lifestyle. Penny is not the only one who defended Jassim, Marcus is also on the right side of Jassim and defends him blindly saying that Jassim is a scientist and scientists are not terrorists. But, under the pressure of some clients who refuse to work with Jassim anymore and the FBI which clearly considers Jassim a threat, Marcus fired Jassim:

> Jassim, lately I have been under a lot of pressure, a lot of pressure. Things are different now."…"Jassim, in the past you have done some of the best work I have seen; you have been a huge asset to this company. Things have changed in the past months, though. Your work is faltering."
> "Are you warning me, Marcus?" Marcus felt sick to his stomach. "I'm letting you go. I have to. We have lost several contracts. Several. These contracts are our livelihood. No contracts, no business."
> "And why have we lost these contracts?"
> "Because of you."(Halaby296).

Returning home, broken by the fact that he was fired from his best friend, and trying to catch up on the threads of all that happened to him; he comes to the conclusion that his life in America has been blown off by his Arab origins, and attributed to Islam. Jassim could not imagine that the American people and government were treating him as a suspect; he was still thinking that Americans were good people:

> In more than a decade of good citizenship, he had never for a minute imagined that his successes would be crossed out by a government

> censor's permanent marker, that his mission would be absorbed by his nationality, or that Homeland Security would have anything to do with him. 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 299).

To this end, Jassim is supposed to reveal his agonies to his beautiful wife; he waits for her to tell her his story from the accident day until his firing moment. Jassim puts on the scene and expected that everything will go on as he wants. Meanwhile, and as his wife entered the house, he wanted really to tell her everything in one sentence, but he hesitated as always. Jassim's patriarchal background prevented him of being too easygoing; he believes that as a man, he should present himself as strong in front of a woman. However, another voice in his mind urges him to tell his wife everything; perhaps that will help him to overcome that crisis together. He managed to tell her the story while she was sitting, and attentively listening to him, Jassim started by telling her "about Evan, Evan's mother, not going swimming, becoming obsessed with Evan's world, and finally, most painfully, the changes at work, the investigation"(300). At this moment, and before telling her about Marcus betrayal, Salwa was sitting on her knees by his side trying to console him and tried to make him see the real world they were living in. She made an analogy of the same accident if it was done by an American; they would not scrutinize that deal, but what really made them furious is the Arab identity:

> "…do you see, Jassim? If we had been home and you had hit that boy, his family would have gotten involved from the beginning. Here, no one cared until they found out who you were, and now they've made it grounds for a federal investigation. It's crazy —they're not looking at

> who you are as a person, at all the great work you've done. They're looking at the fact that you're an Arab. Do you think any American would be scrutinized in this way? (301).

Jassim was convinced by his wife's righteous depiction of the reality facing him, but as she continued speaking, he failed to tell her about Marcus betrayal. He could not stop her while she was speaking, not because he loved her, but more or less because his patriarchal background prevented him from being spontaneous with his wife.

At the end of the novel, when Salwa was lying disfigured in the hospital, Jassim realized his failure in coping with the American society: he failed in making his life beautiful as Salwa was expecting, he failed to have children, he failed to keep his wife far from troubles; and most importantly, he failed in preserving his identity and failed in integrating into the American society as he was clearly rejected by this latter.

Both Salwa and Jassim suffer a split in their identities while trying to assimilate into the American culture. Before, they thought that life in America was better than their home because things were so easygoing and life was so luxurious; but at the end of the story, both of them realized the price they paid for this luxurious life.

3.5. Conclusion

Through the analysis of the novel *Once in a Promised Land*, Halaby is focusing on the sensibilities raised in the aftermath of 9/11 and their consequences for both Americans and Arab Americans living in the United States.

The novel is a cautionary tale that warns Americans "to transcend binary discourses in order to avoid further crises from escalating either within or beyond American borderline" (Lloyd 3). Halaby blames both sides for the bad consequences following the 9/11 incident. She blames Americans through the story for their binary discourses and the double standards they used in dealing with Arab Americans, like when Jake hit Salwa, the officer insisted that Jake was "high in drug". However, when Jassim accidently hit and killed the boy, the FBI treated him as a suspect, and consequently, Jassim lost his job. Halaby also criticizes Arab Americans, who disclaim their origins and embrace the American Dream blindly, thinking that the American culture is perfect and without blemishes. However, the reality is that their culture of origin is by no means compatible with the American one; therefore, many Arab Americans like Jassim and Salwa have lost their identities and find themselves living the American Nightmare.

Chapter Four: Comparative Discussion on the Acculturative Strategy for Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad

4.1. Introduction

The current chapter examines the differences and similarities of acculturation strategies including the integration phase of Khadra Shamy in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and the assimilation phase of Salwa Haddad in *Once in a Promised Land*.

This analysis is meant to discuss the differences and similarities between integration and assimilation in both novels by adopting a methodology of comparison based on different logics. The current comparative study is adopted from Lesly Barlett and Frances Varvus' (2017) article, *Comparative Case Studies: An Innovative Approach*.

The first analysis goes through miscellaneous units dealt with in both novels, like: the general settings of both novels; Islam, identity, racism, and so forth. The second logic is "processual logic [that] seeks to trace across individuals" (Bartlett & Vavrus 8); this latter allows us to compare the attitudes and behaviors of the main protagonists and characters in both novels.

4.2. Setting the Scenes

In order to perform the comparative analysis of both novels, we need to display both novels' backgrounds.

4.3. The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf

The novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* is a bildungsroman that is to some extent an autobiographical. The novel is written by Mohja Kahf, who was born in Syria and moved to the United States when she was three and a half. Her parents moved to the United States as students and lived in Arizona. There is a similarity between the life of Kahf and the general setting of the novel. Kahf uses a non-linear

plot to narrate the story of a Syrian family who immigrates to the United States, and uses flashbacks, which give the reader a thorough estimation of the story.

The events of the novel take place in the 1970s, when the writer jumps between three places: the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Syria.

The story is told in an omniscient narrator who uses flashbacks and flash-forwards. The characters in the story vary from the dynamically developing to flat, and round. Khadra is the main protagonist in the story; the novel traces her path from separation to acculturation in the American culture with reference to other characters that have direct and indirect influence on her acculturation. There is no antagonist in the story to whom Khadra may have conflict. Instead, there is a difficult surrounding and a harsh situation that lead Khadra to fight for her freedom.

Khadra has a linear thought, and she is clear in every stage that has passed through. She was convincible in her attitudes, and through the story the reader feels that Khadra believes in what she is doing.

The plot is spinning around a young girl called Khadra, whose name connotatively means immature, young, and naïve. Khadra immigrates with her family to the United States, fleeing persecution from Al Assad regime. At the age of four, Khadra finds herself in a dissimilar culture. She grew up in a conservative family, where Chariaa Laws were strictly respected. Khadra has two other brothers whose lives seem different than hers; they have more liberty than Khadra; and this is because Khadra is a girl. And that is because women in Islamic communities are more bound by religious laws. According to this situation, Khadra grows up with a confusing identity; she is Syrian and lives in America, and there are no similarities between both cultures. Furthermore, she thinks of the Americans as Kuffar and

impure. This ethnocentric perspective will make her suffer to understand the reality of things.

In this novel, Mohja Kahf explores miscellaneous themes that are strongly related to the Arab and Muslim community in the United States. Islam, identity constructions, racial discrimination, and ethnocentrism are the most questioned themes in the novel. The aim of Kahf behind exploring such themes in her novel, especially after the 9/11 attacks, goes back to the critical situation of Arabs and Muslims are living in the United States and the stereotypes that the West made of the eastern countries as ignorant, vulgar, and terrorists.

Kahf uses a mixed language of English and Arabic, she is a hybrid writer, and she clearly wants her identity to be reflected in her language. She skillfully mingled between both languages to create a rich and powerful linguistic diversity that makes her a distinguished writer. The novel includes verses from the Quran, epigraphs in the opening of chapters written by famous worldwide writers, and American slang. She writes in "COPULATION IN ENGLISH" (2016) "We are going to dip English backward/ by its Shakespearean tresses/ arcing its spine like a crescent/ we are going to rewrite English in Arabic"[13]. Panavelil (2010) writes in this context: "Kahf celebrates Arabic language and culture and identity even as she creates a new language that can negotiate the passage between Arab and American making space for both without any apology" (133).

The use of Arabic is also related to Syrian traditions in the novel, especially the preparation of food. That was of much importance to show the hybrid side of

[13] https://ericryangrant.com/2016/01/20/mohja-kahfs-copulation-in-english/

Arabs in the United States "For *Kibbeh*[14] was great and complex task, requiring a whole clan in the kitchen" (Kahf 189). Kahf also introduces Ramadan to the American reader "From when Khadra first became aware of Ramadan, she begged her mother to be allowed to fast. Because you got to wake up in the dark dewy predawn" the writer introduces the *Suhour* to the Americans as part of Ramadan rituals "Khadra's mother and father padded around in the little kitchen, blearly-eyed, setting out *suhoor* food on the hipped Formica table"(Kahf 105).

Unlike Salwa, Khadra was involved in family receptions, where they discussed with their friends the actual issues of Arab Muslims in the world. Khadra was portrayed in the novel as an engaged political girl who fights for the rights of Muslims in the United States; she even wants to be a member of the Amal Militia!

> If [I] were an Amal girl," Khadra said, on purpose choosing to identify with the sect opposite her Sunni background, "they'd have to torture me to try and make me tell them anything. Uh-huh. They'd have to kill me, like Sumaya." Sumaya, the first Muslim martyr, died under torture, killed horribly with a spear thrust upward through her-by her master, an enemy of Islam (Kahf 153).

Unlike Salwa, Khadra grows up hearing about Arab conflict with Israel and the America conflict with Iran. She then, indulges herself in political activism at University; she participates in campus demonstrations. Political activism for Khadra was her outlet to defend the right of Muslims in America and be the one of the prominent female activist figures at university. But Khadra confronts some restrictions from her family because they fear that she will meet the same fate as

[14] *Kibbeh :Traditional Syrian dish*

Zuhura. However, her husband Juma who tries to hinder her activism career just because he is jealous says: "Every time she went out in a campus demonstration, Juma complained. "Does it have you be you?" he asked. "Let somebody else demonstrate. There is no shortage of people. Does it have to be my wife?"(Kahf 241).

4.4. Once in a Promised Land

A novel written by Laila Halaby, an Arab American who was born to a Jordanian father and an American mother, and lived most of her life in Arizona. There is a similarity between the life of Halaby and the setting of the novel.

The events of the novel took place between the United States and Jordan in a non-linear plot where the writer uses flashbacks from the past to clear up events in the present. The events take place at the moment of the 9/11 attacks, the writer uses flashbacks to some events in Jordan that have an important impact on the lives of the characters at the moment of narrating.

The story is written from a third-person omniscient point of view, where the reader knows every single detail about characters. The characters in the novel vary from dynamic and developing characters to round, flat, and antagonistic characters. Unlike Mohja Kahf, Laila Halaby narrowed her characters, and all the story is spinning around the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks.

Salwa is the main protagonist of the story, and she is the antagonist herself. From the beginning of the story, Halaby portrayed Salwa as a beautiful girl who was born in the United States and liked wearing silk pajamas as a symbol for luxury. As she was called *Miss America*, Salwas' thought was automatically directed to everything coming from America or sounded American. She even gave up her

childhood friend, Hassan, to marry a Doctor coming from America to present a lecture on water harvesting at the university. This depiction reveals that the protagonist is someone who would sacrifice to achieve her goals. The result is that Salwa continues to get rid of anything that would prevent her from living her American dream, including her own identity, until she is completely destroyed.

The fallout of Salwa is happening during the 9/11 attacks, which puts her life with Jassim in America in danger. The couple enjoys the luxurious and easy life in the United States, they live in a purely American way; there are no hints to traditional food, discussions on their original country, or even religion.

Salwa is presented as a non-linear thought; she is always struggling with herself. Sometimes, she does not want to do something but finds herself doing it, she also thinks in English when it is an American problem; and this is due to her shame from what she was doing with Jack.

Halaby introduces folklore tales to mirror the hybrid identity of Salwa, the use of *Nus Nsayes* vs. the *Ghula* is an alternative folklore story that reflects the ending of Salwa in the United States. The *Ghula*, which means the monster in Arabic culture, is the metaphoric representation of America; and *Nus Nsayes* is only Hassan who loves her and cares about her. The folklore tale alludes to the attraction of Salwa and Jassim to the easy and luxurious life in America which is just a trap of the American Dream.

Halaby also uses some Arabic expressions on the tongue of Salwa to show off the impact of the culture of origin. Arabic in the novel is also spoken by Americans like Jake, who managed to take Arabic courses after 9/11 to understand how these terrorists think and to show the interculturality between the American culture and the Arabic one.

Salwa is also portrayed as having two faces, one for herself, and the other face for the Americans "Her doctor came into the room, and Salwa applied her made in America face for the rest of the visit" (Halaby 60). She also forces herself to behave like Americans, in many situations, Salwa tries to think and behave like Americans in an attempt to achieve total assimilation; "Salwa tried to focus, to put her entire being into her work. That was the American way, after all, wasn't it? Let your soul get sucked out but work hard in the meantime" (Halaby 189).

Salwa's luxurious life and her pursuit of the American Dream have distantanced her from any political activism that claims the return of refugees to Palestine. Her marriage to Jassim and her move to live in the United States have disconnected her from all that links her to her roots "… her connection to America has obviously won over her bond to Palestine placing her on the side of the powerful part, or the 'colonizer'"(Karaoui 280). In fact, Salwa abandoned the case of Palestine, the day she broke up with her childhood love to marry Jassim who she saw just once at the university, in order to live her American Dream. Hassan for Salwa was Palestine "Salwa was appreciative of Hassan's handsome face, sense of humor, and political activism, saw him as a symbol of Palestine, and Hassan was smitten with Salwa, who in his eyes was the definition of perfection" (Halaby 240).

4.5. Investigating Common Themes in both Novels

Themes in Arab American literature have evolved over the years according to the needs of the Arab community in the United States. Back to the Mahjar literature, where homesickness, liberty from old norms, pure love, and admiring nature were the famous and major themes tackled at that time. But nothing stays as it begins, the Arab-American literature has shifted its attention

towards exploring themes related identity, religion, stereotypes, integration, and assimilation issues among Arabs in the United States. And the most crucial topics are racism and post 9/11 dilemma. This turn of Arab America literature was also directed by the western Orientalist discourse about Arab and Muslim communities, which is defined as the superior and the inferior stereotypical perspective; "There are Westerners, and there are Orientals. The former dominate; the latter must be dominated, which usually means having their land occupied, their internal affairs rigidly controlled, their blood and treasure put at the disposal of one or another Western power" (Said 36). In this critical situation, Arab American writers start writing on current issues, defining their position in the United States as an ethnic community that, by law, has all its rights as American citizens. This is what Orfalea (2006) points out in his essay *The Arab American Novel,* "Because humanness has been so lucking in American novels that treat Arabs in English […]. The Arab American novelist has indeed a mission beyond the normal one of making art. The Arab American novelist is giving birth to images of humanness" (117).

Arab American writers start writing on the actual issues, raising their interests, and defining their status in the United States by composing novels that describe the real life and interests of the Arab community in the United States. Mohja Kahf and Laila Halaby are distinguished Arab American female writers, who eloquently dust off different Arab American issues. Both writers afford the readers stories that reflect the real preoccupations of Arabs living in the United States.

The novels *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf,* written by Mohja Kahf and *Once in a Promised Land,* written by Laila Halaby, discuss some common themes, including Islam, identity, racial discrimination, and acculturation. The first novel

was written in 2007 by Mohja Kahf, a Syrian who immigrated to the United States at a very young age. The second novel is written by Laila Halaby, who was born in Jordan to a Jordanian father and an American mother.

In order to compare the acculturation conflicts in both novels, the analysis is going through two levels, the first one is to expose the themes selected by both writers in both novels and see how they are treating them. Secondly, the analysis will shed light on the protagonists from both novels to examine and discuss their reactions toward these themes presented in novels and how they move from one acculturative strategy to another.

4.5.1. The Status of Islam in the United States before and after the 9/11 Events

Both novels shed light on Islam as an important factor in the integration or assimilation of characters. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and *Once in a Promised Land,* both writers discuss the issue of Islam in the Arab American community; however, each writer highlights the point differently.

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf is an outstanding novel that Islam is the main issue around which the events enfold; as Steven Salaita observes: "most Arab American novelists treated the culture and practice of Islam [in the United States] either tangentially or intermittently. In Kahf's novel, however, Islam is a primary theme, one that she explores as a highly diverse set of beliefs and customs" (*Salaita* 32).

Through the narrative, we assume that the story is a representation of Islam in American society through an "individual experience of a Muslim American girl as a member of a triple minority in American society" (ling 94). In fact, Kahf

represents Islam in the narrative through her different characters to show the non-Muslim readers that Islam has only one source, which is the Quran; however, Muslims interpret it differently according to their culture.

These individual experiences narrated in the novel illustrate different socio-cultural and political apprehensions of ethno-cultural communities concerning their integration in a totally dissimilar environment.

In an interview on the Morning Edition News with Debora Amos (2006), Kahf says that "*You don't realize when you are in minority culture that people look at you as if you are this alien thing, you really don't"*. Kahf highlights the status of Muslims as a minor ethnic culture group that is different from the rest of the mainstream culture, and she stresses this in her novel. Islam means for the Shamy's a life style and not just a religion practiced from time to time. Islam for the Shamy's, who represent the Syrian and Arab Muslim communities in the United States, encompasses eating, sleeping, dressing, social relations, rituals, speaking, and so forth. Khadra has breathed Islam since her birth and considers it a major aspect of her life. She asks about everything how is done the Islamic way, and what it means to be a good Muslim and a bad Muslim shaping in her mind a mannequin point of view about Islam. Khadra grows up holding a sharp view on Islam, it is either white or black; either you are a good Muslim according to her point of view or you are a secular Muslim. One time she asked her aunt Khadija, who used to be Kacey before she converted to Islam: "was that when you finally became a real Muslim?" Aunt Khadija's answer bewildered Khadra because she gave her a very simple definition of Islam:

> What is a real Muslim, Khadra?" she asked, "When you do the five pillars," Khadra shrugged, "you know, and follow the Quran and the

> Prophet and the *hijab* and follow the Islamic way of life and— "Aunt Khadija Said gently, "Shahada. That's all. Belief that God is One. When that enters your heart and you surrender to it, you are a Muslim."
>
> Khadra felt alarm. It wasn't that simple. Her parent said so. Yu have to *practice* Islam to be a real Muslim (Kahf 24).

The answer of Aunt Khadija represents the universal understanding of Islam, which chocks Khadra as she believes it more complex than that. Khadra would not understand the words of Aunt Khadija until the end of the narratives, when she recognizes the simplicity of Islam.

Kahf, through her protagonist Khadra, sheds light on the ethnic perspective of Islam, and how these minor communities adopt a neurocentric vision of Islam according to their cultural background. For Khadra's family, there is a Muslim and there is a real Muslim, they split the concept into two dimensions and start to deliver ethnocentric judgments on newly converted Muslims, and even on Muslims living in America.

Moreover, they consider Islam a lifestyle, and require all the members of the family to fellow a certain way of living. However, Khadra tries to impose her lifestyle on others, like her friend Joy, who is Iranian and was so bored of Khadra's instructions of *Hallal* and *Haram:*

> Joy looked up. The sign read "Japanese Restaurant and Sushi Bar."…"It's just a Sushi Bar, Khadra."… "Well I don't know what Sushi is, but a bar is a bar. I can't go inside a bar." "It's not a bar-bar! Like, not a pub or a tavern or a beer house. Sushi is seafood, Okay?...As part of the first generation in her family to go to college, she had enough to deal with, without some little Arab girl from a privileged college-educated family

> trying to tell her what was acceptable and what was not in the "Islamic lifestyle." As if Islam was a lifestyle. Instead of a faith" (Kahf 185).

Khadra's father dedicated himself to the Dawah Center to accomplish the missionary duty, though his enrollment in the Dawah Center does not provide him with the necessary income to live in the United States. Through the narratives, Wajdy considers himself the one who knows Islam, while others are barely knowledgeable. Khadra's parents are devout Muslims who think of themselves as superior. And that is why they enter the Dawah Center: to teach the real Islam to people.

Khadra follows her father's instructions blindly, thinking of her family and her Syrian origins as the best and the closet to God. Kahf introduces a short event in the story showing that Khadra, the young innocent girl, believes everything her father is saying, even if it is a joke:

> One time her father told her Shakespeare was really Arab. "Just look at his name: It's an Anglicization of Sheikh Zubayr," he said, with a straight face. She insisted on it for fifteen minutes to her language-arts teacher the next day. When she got home and related the story, her father threw his head back and laughed, and only then told her he'd been joking (Kahf 121).

Khadra's understanding of Islam then was associated with the obedience of her parents; the fact that makes her far from observing the reality of Islam. At the end of the novel, Khadra realizes that her parent misleads her, but she forgives them and decided to start a new life. She then started searching about Islam in the Quran and Sunnah. Kahf's story highlights the importance of teaching Islam the right way because any bias in religious teaching may create a social gap and mislead people.

In *Once in a Promised land*, Laila Halaby discusses the issue of Islam from the binary position of religious vs. the secular point of view. Halaby examines the theme of Islam in the western civilizational thinking, where Islam's values are discussed through the degree of women's immersion in civilized democratic principles. Where men are best considered for their western liberal attitudes and their liberty is measured by their adaptation to secular life.

But Halaby proves that these measures were completely neglected after the 9/11 attacks and replaced by an offensive discourse against all that is under the Islamic umbrella. This action is conducted against every Arab Muslim in the United States, and no Arab Muslim is excluded, even those who are secular Muslims like Jassim:

> The repetition across the genre of experiences of exclusion from the nation for Muslim characters leads to the conclusion that even when they have done all of the "right" things by being good capitalists and citizens, by rejecting their Arab/Muslim identity and by seeking inclusion to the American melting pot, exclusion and ostracism are the only available outcomes for Muslims in the post-9/11 context (Gissane 186).

Through the narratives, Halaby elucidates that Arab Americans relate Islam to their culture; she also brings attention that religion is part of their cultural background. For instance, when Salwa was suffering from a spilt in her personality, she went to her friend Randa, who advised her to immediately 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"...* "It will help you to see things as they are, and it's been years since you visited. Right now is a good time.

> Look, a lot has happened in the last few months, and being home will be good for you (Halaby 288).

Randa, a Lebanese immigrant, who accommodates her life in America without forgetting her cultural background, knows that Salwa will recover herself only if she gets contact with her cultural background; and she insists on Salwa to go home "Go home. Be yourself. Tell the people at your work that you have a family emergency and go." *While you still can.* They both knew that Randa was right and Salwa was wrong" (Halaby 289).

At the very beginning of the narratives, Halaby shows that her protagonists have nothing to do with religion and that these characters are living the typical American way: "Jassim did not believe in God, but he did believe in Balance. At five o'clock, with the day still veiled, Jassim found Balance" (Halaby 3).

For Jassim, waking up very early in the morning to find balance and go to swim "Four days a week he woke up at this time, usually a minute or two before the alarm, so he could drive to the Fitness Bar, swim, come home, and still be able to spend morning time with his wife, Salwa" (Ibid). Jassim substitutes the dawn prayer by waking up early to go to the Fitness Bar to swim, an action that replaces the ablution before prayer in Islam. This becomes a routine for Jassim, his love for water has decreased his faith to God "Years passed, and his lung capacity increased as his belief in God dwindled" (Halaby 46).

However, his secular attitude, his American living routine, and his successful career as a hydrologist did not intercede for the FBI agents. After the 9/11 attacks, the American public was enraged and wanted revenge from any Arab-Muslim. Jassim finds himself the subject of an FBI investigation after he accidentally kills a boy, who bears hostile sentiments to Arab-Muslims. The FBI agents ask Jassim

about his life, whether he is a practicing Muslim, and whether he goes to mosque or not:

> "How often do you pray in a mosque?"
> "I have not prayed in a mosque since I was a young man."
> "And why is that?"
> Jassim thought for a moment. *Because I don't believe in God,"*(Halaby 232).

The FBI agents want a scapegoat to absorb the fury of the American public, and Jassim seems to be one. Though Jassim did not do anything wrong, and has no criminal records; he is unfortunately treated from an Arab-Muslim terrorist's perspective.

In other hand, Salwa is portrayed as non-practiced woman who "actively assimilates into the host land identity and lives an independent life of responsibility, confidence and character"(Chandio & Khan 44). There is no hint in the narrative that shows Salwa speaking about her faith, or doing prayer. Instead, she substitutes her shy and reserved personality with an extrovert one. Salwa neglects all Islamic teachings to be a secular Muslim, for instance, she is a part-time real estate agent, usually, this job needs a partner to avoid any harassing activities that an agent may confront; but Salwa "discharges such important undertakings with a great deal of responsibility, positivity and productivity"(Ibid 44).

Salwa's assimilative susceptibility leads to her ignorance of Islamic religion; she consciously chooses to neglect her religion and replace it with excessive consumerism.

Although Salwa was portrayed as non-practicing Muslim, she still uses some Islamic expressions like "There is no god but God"(Halaby 89), and she always express her thankfulness by " Thanks God"(59), and "God protects you" (Ibid90) when she often speaks to her friend Randa. But these religious expressions do not

necessary reflect Salwa's degree of devotion, these are just habitual expressions used by all Arabs inside or outside the United States.

Salwa, while looking to console herself for her miscarriage, chooses to be in relationship with an American white man rather than looking for comfort in her religion. She then indulged herself in an asexual affair with Jake, a part-time worker. Though she knows that she is doing wrong, something in her tells her to finish what she begins:

> Jake." A statement. An invitation. It was a matter of time, minutes, hours, days, Salwa knew, before they were intimate; they were in a line at an amusement park ride, with an undefined wait time in anticipation of a few seconds of contained terror/pleasure and the probability of returning safely to earth minutes later. Alive but somehow changed. For one clear, thinking moment she could see that the words they shared or disagreed over did not matter, that her connection with Jake was primal and already decided (Halaby 203).

In the narratives, Salwa does not drink wine, but she does not mind if it is served on the same table: "Let me get us something to drink. Wine?" "No. thank you. Soda or sparkling water is fine."(205)

Islam was the subject of irony from Jake when he told her about a verse in Quran that says "that when a man and a woman are alone, the Devil makes the third party. Do you believe that?" Salwa responded wisely, which proves that she is aware of this actual situation with him, however, Jake passed over her, saying to underestimate the Quranic verse "Eating a good lasagna dinner does not count as the Devil" (Halaby 208). Salwa does not even correct Jake or tries to make him

understand the wisdom behind this verse; she simply ignores the conversation about it.

Islam for Salwa and Jassim was just a title or a reference, but they never give it importance in their lives. The ignorance of their religion does not give them what they want in the United States, because when the 9/11 attacks occurred, Muslims were the first to be chased and accused of the terrorist attacks.

4.5.2. Identity and Belonging

Both writers explore identity, homesickness, and belonging; however, each writer develops them from different perspectives. Identity issues are the core study of both writers; their characters are struggling during their journeys to prove their existence in the United States in the way they think it is adequate for them and their cultural background.

Defining Identity, Deng (1995) states that identity is: " the way individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, language, and culture"(1). In Kahf's novel, the protagonist tries to define herself according to her race, ethnic group, and culture. But she understands at the end that she has to define herself within the culture in which she lives, and keeps only her religion as an American Muslim.

Khadra develops her identity from an acculturation perspective. She then, steps her journey of identity construction through the other existing characters in the narratives that help her define where she stands. Kahf endows Khadra with critical thinking, which helps her detect what is right for her and what is not in keeping with the nature of American culture.

For Khadra, being a good Muslim is what shapes her identity. In her journey to self-discovery, she unconsciously wants to prove that being Arab and Muslim is the perfect identity. However, after visiting the Land of the Prophet and then Syria, she definitely chooses to be in the hyphen.

For Khadra it was an oxymoronic situation where they obtain the American citizenship while considering all its culture non-convenient for them. It was confusing for Khadra to hold the American identity; she did not understand her father's decision: "We are going to court to become U.S. citizens," Wajdy said one morning… Eyad guffawed and Khadra laughed. Surely their father wasn't serious. Becoming citizens had never been part of the picture". Kahf describes that morning when they were going to obtain the American citizenship as if they were going to a funeral: "It was a cloudy and confusing day. Ebtihaj looked as if she had been crying all the wounded afternoon. The five of them walked into the Marion County Courthouse in Indianapolis like a family in mourning"(Kahf 141).

Khadra feels guilty about being naturalized: "To her, taking citizenship felt like giving up, giving in" (Ibid). Khadra does not cease to find her identity, although she was already naturalized to American citizenship; "Wasn't she supposed to be an Islamic warrior woman" (Ibid).

For the coming years, Khadra tries to locate herself in a very strict Islamic community, looking for a sharp definition of Islam as being either *haram* or *hallal.* Khadra's parents did not give her a space where she could express herself and think about her identity. Instead, they guide her according to their perspective in an attempt to create a perfect Islamic model. As the narrative progresses, Khadra experiences different situations, where she comes close to forging her identity.

After her unsuccessful trip for *el Hadj*, it was clear for Khadra that she was misled by her family into believing in Islam the way they wanted and not the way it would be. After her return from the pilgrimage trip, she was engaged to a Kuwaiti student, Juma al-Tashkenti.

Khadra's marriage to Jumua was an attempt to delve in an Arab identity. For Juma's choice, Khadra "Fit the profile of the wife Jumua always knew he'd have. An observant Muslim, of course, but also a modern, educated woman, not old-fashioned and boring" (Kahf 222). But this modern perspective to his wife doesn't prevent his patriarchal background to forbidden Khadra from riding the bicycle, and considers her just a wife who has to cook and obey him. He sees her from one perspective: "you are my wife" (Ibid 242). Khadra could no more bear a life in which she has to be seen only as the "wife" of Juma; she reveals to her brother that "I don't know if I can stay married to him, Eyad. I feel like I can't go on in this marriage without killing off the 'me' that I am" (ibid 242); she gets an abortion and divorces from Jumua to start a new phase in her life. It was not easy for Khadra to convince her family for abortion because it is forbidden; however, she confidently relies on *Ijtihad* in Islam to find that women are allowed to get abortions within the first 120 days of pregnancy. Kahf highlights the need of Muslim women in the United States to have what Islam has endowed them, their basic rights: "Islam has endowed Muslim Arab women with rights that, if only they know about them and ask for them, they will definitely enjoy a dignified life"(Abdelrazek 3).

Khadra's critical mind starts questioning who she is. She realizes that she has never looked for herself, her pure identity; she spent her previous years trying to adjust herself to satisfy others:

> She didn't renew the lease on the apartment. Didn't care that the semester was beginning. Didn't care what would happen with her IU degree. Medical technology? She couldn't think of anything more meaningless to her. It was all part of some previous life lived by some other Khadra who accepted things she didn't really want, who didn't really know what she wanted and took whatever was foisted on her without examining it…She loathed that girl, that Khadra. Despised her. Blamed her for it all. Wanted to scratch her face, to hurt her, wanted to cut her-she looked dully at a razor, one of Juma's, forgotten in the back of a bathroom drawer. Wanted her dead (Ibid 263).

At these moments of emotional emptiness, "Where do you go when your first life is coming to an end" She decides to return "back where she came from: Syria" in order to understand herself, and Téta is her address. Téta was such an influential woman that Khadra admires, she considers her Syria: "Syria was Téta", she learns a lot from her grandmother, who teaches her how to be tolerant and not perceive things as black or white. Téta has a Jewish friend whom she always considers "them", but she finds that things may carry long-term dimensions that Khadra needs to develop her new identity.

In Syria, Khadra discovers all her parents' history with El Assad regime and how they fight for their religious freedom and choose America as their second home. She also meets the mythical poet, who is just her alter ego, who prompts her to surpass her past and urges her to see the future from a confident perspective and choose the life that she wants.

Khadra conceives that she cannot be stripped of her Muslim identity; in fact, she is Muslim, be it in America, Kuwait, or Syria. She returns to America fully

determined to change her life radically; and be what she has to be. She chooses to be an American Muslim, and returns to Indianapolis as a photographer, independent, knowing what she wants; and more importantly; that knowing her religion and respecting others' ones.

Kahf chooses to end the narrative with a car race, where they all reunite to support Hanifa in the race that was "itself a revolutionary gesture but one that entwines Khadra's future and her realization of an embrace that is open and, in her words, of pure surrender"(Mehta 127).

Khadra and Hakim, her childhood boyfriend, were sitting together, supporting Hanifa in her battle in the field of race-car, seeing her crash against the wall, they panic; but she manages to return to the race, and all the scene of the race are representations of all Arab-American women struggling to find their identity:

> Is she out of the race? No! she's back! Cries the announcer. She's regrouping-I'm regrouping too, Khadra thinks with elation, and she is full of gratitude-she's gathering speed-and there she goes! and Khadra and her camera are lockstep with her friend for a cart-wheeling second, clicking away, and the crowd cheers as one, and in that shutter-click instant, she knows she is where she belongs, doing what she must do, with intent, with abandon. And it is glorious, it is divine, and Khadra's own work takes her there: into the state of pure surrender (Kahf 441).

In contrast to Khadra Shamy, Salwa's quest for identity takes a reverse line. She is "Salwa is Palestinian by blood, Jordanian by residence, and American by citizenship'' (Halaby 70). She lived in Jordan for a considerable time, where she studied and finished her BM degree in economics. Her move to the United States was through her marriage to Jassim.

Although she is American by citizenship, Salwa lived her first part of life in Jordan, and she was imbued with oriental culture. She was called Miss America because she likes luxuries and water "Salwa is Palestinian by blood, Jordanian by residence, and American by citizenship. That's why she uses so much water and has taste for luxury. We tease her that she is really from the first world. A colonizer. You see, she even studies money!"(Ibid).

Halaby depicts the identity of Salwa through the fairy tale that she uses in the narratives. Her fairy tale focuses on a peasant girl who "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" (Halaby 331). The girl is Salwa, who is born too far from her native land, the land of olive trees and falafel (pepper), she is born to parents who, through immigration to the new land, believe that they could change their faith and their destiny. The girl was so beautiful and charming, that made the *Gula* jealous from her and wanted her for herself. The Gula was intelligent and knew that she could never get the girl by using a trick. She then took her wild threads and began to:

> Stitch them under the baby's skin in all sorts of places—between finger joints, next to her nipples, under her eyes, at the base of her neck. When the ghula was done, the baby lay asleep with a thousand and one red threads hanging from 331 her. The ghula held the ends of the threads together and pulled a skein from under one of her large, dangling breasts. After she secured them, threads to skein, she said some magic ghula words and the threads became invisible (Halaby 331).

The ghula in the narrative is an allegory for the United States, and the threads are the luxury materials that Salwa is attached to. Once in America, Salwa assimilates immediately into the host culture and tries to find an identity that suits the American context better.

Salwa delves into the American consumerism culture, and together with Jassim, they choose to be in the upper intermediate class. Their productive jobs reduce their home return possibility, they enjoy their luxurious life to the degree that they do not discuss any issues related to their original country, and as Halaby puts it in the novel, " America, once tasted, is hard to spit out"(46).

However, Salwa's maternal instinct drives her to question her life in America and her relationship with Jassim:

> All those years of schizophrenic reaction to American culture, disdain for the superficial, which she had buried with each new purchase and promotion, a spray of loathing she had denied in order to justify her current arrangement—it all burst forward as if she were seeing it for the first time, as though she had not spent the past nine years living this very life. *It is different now,* she thought. *If I am pregnant, I cannot raise my child here, away from everything I know. If I am pregnant.* In the brightness of the day, such an idea seemed impossible, and again she forced it away, tried to drink her soda and read through list after list (Halaby 54).

Salwa's subconscious mind refused the actual identity, though Salwa enjoys it. She knew that this life is too hard to be an American fairytale, and her fake identity could not resist too much and started to persist from time to time in the narratives, "…her thoughts edged on the idea that her life was just fine and it was

time to move on, to accept how things were with Jassim, and stop trying to force everything to fit into an American tale" (Halaby 159).

Meanwhile, Salwa's situation was so complicated that she knew everything, but she could not react to correct her wrong beliefs on the beauty of America. For Halaby, Salwa suffers the curse of America:

> What Jassim didn't know and what Salwa hadn't fully realized yet was that in breathing her first breath on American soil, she had been cursed. Because while place of birth does not alter genetic material, it does stitch itself under the skin and stay attached by virtue of invisible threads, so that if a person leaves that place for somewhere else, there is always an uncomfortable tugging as the silken (in her case) threads are pulled taut. And if the person returns to her place of birth, especially after a great deal of time has elapsed, quite often the threads have knotted or tangled somewhere between here and there, there and here, causing the person countless awkward moments. Sometimes the knot of crossed threads becomes so thick that it creates a painful and constant yanking no matter where the person finds herself. At that point the best thing to do may be to snip off the threads completely, but that is a last resort, as it is painful and traumatic (49).

Salwa's American identity was hampered by the "*imperative patriotism*" theory, which "relies on a certain ethnic imagery to produce a distinction between "us" and "them," with "us" representing good Americans and "them" representing evildoers"(Salaita 88).

Salwa was completely bewildered when her boss, Joan, gave her American flag decal in order to show her position:

> Honey, I wanted to give you these." She held out her hands; each contained an American flag decal. "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." Salwa stared at the decals,… and tried to remember what each stood for, wondering why it would matter where on her car she placed it. "I bought one for your husband too." Joan smiled at her, and Salwa stared at the cracks in her thick and too-dark foundation. Joan always referred to Jassim as "your husband," as though the six letters that filled his name in English were too scary, as though in trying to say them she might trip, or show some secret, private part of herself. And then to imagine placing a seventy-five-cent decal on his $50,000 car (Halaby 55).

In this passage, Salwa reveals many things. She unveils the strange attitude of Joan toward her and especially toward Jassim, whom she called "your husband". Salwa wonders why Joan never says the name of Jassim, as if his name scares her.

Salwa also grasps the word "where you stand", which disturbs her because her assimilation is being questioned. Salwa thought that her Americaness is clear to everyone, so why will people know where she stands; and would the American flag decals let people know where she stands? Salwa realizes that her identity would never reach the satisfaction of American society. In fact, she knows that her friend Joan loves her and does so because she is afraid that Salwa gets hurt by the outraged American people who think of any Arab or Muslim as a terrorist. Knowing all these circumstances, Salwa is still blinded by her assimilative tendency.

In her negligence to be identified as Arab, Salwa enters into a sexual affair with a white American to prove her Americaness and her whiteness. She also fears

being marginalized by any ethnic group, even if it is the group that she really belongs to. Halaby insists that after all that Salwa knows about the actual differences between her original culture and the American one, she can not resist the allures that Jake symbolizes:

> She hesitated. Truthfully, the minute he opened the door her resolve had melted, slid through the gaps between the stairs, and landed dead on the concrete below. "Really, I should go." "Salwa, look, I understand that this isn't right. But we enjoy each other's company and I make a killer lasagna. So come eat, we'll talk some, and then you can go home and we can do our best to return to normal. As friends." Against all that she knew to be right in the world, and well aware that *as friends* was one of those lines Americans tossed back and forth without meaning, she entered his apartment and stood, awkward, out of place. Visitor Parking. She looked around. A black leather couch faced an enormous television. "Both hand-me-downs," he said, following her gaze. "From my brother, the official adult in the family." Jazz tingled quietly out of giant speakers. (What was it about Americans and speakers and music?) The tidy living room faced a massive pine tree outside. A dining area and a tiny kitchen clustered on one side, and on the other side a narrow hallway stretched, she guessed, to the bathroom and bedroom. The small dining table was set with candles and one pink rose, none of which Salwa had expected (Halaby 207).

The way Salwa is scrutinizing the house and the several questions that come to her mind about American culture show that Salwa is far from being American, and she is just forcing herself to be on the American side.

Salwa's relationship with Jake is her killer bullet that pulled her from the assimilative tendency to an open situation of distress and regret, which inevitably will lead to a cultural separation. The day Salwa wants to get her identity back, she stupidly goes to bid farewell to Jake; he insults her for being from an environment of pigs! "I said you're running back to the pigsty you came from" (Halaby 320). For him, Salwa will never be an American; he refuses her, and his attraction to her is the same as the attraction of the west to the east.

Lying disfigured in the hospital, Salwa wonders if she will never come to the United States:

> Though Salwa was able to open one of her eyes, she kept it closed, hoping that she might be able to delay reality a bit long…And still she was not sure what was real and what was imagined. She lay alternating between pain, excruciating pain in her face and hand and head, and a groggy, dreamy state where she was watching her life from outside her body (Halaby 326).

To this end, Salwa fails to construct a balanced identity where she integrates in the American society while preserving her cultural background. Unlike Khadra, who succeeds in understanding her identity and works to integrate in the American society, which she considers her home. After a long struggle with American stereotypes and the patriarchal Arab culture, Khadra finally comes out with a balanced identity where she balances her ethnic backgrounds with her life in the United States. Khadra and Salwa have a contrastive relationship; each one starts from the other's end point.

4.5.3. Discrimination

Both novels deal abundantly with the subject of racism and discrimination. This issue has been covered by almost all Arab-American writers since the first decades of the twentieth century. However, Arab immigrants try to overcome such situations through work and intermarriage:

> Although they were barred from a broad range of institutions run by mainstream whites, they settled in urban and rural areas, ran businesses, worked in factories, built institutions, flourished artistically, held government office in a number of places, achieved a degree of economic success, and led social lives that were intertwined with members of white ethnic groups and often resulted in intermarriage (Cainkar 243).

The results of intermarriage may pave the way for many ethnic groups to integrate or assimilate into American culture; however, this is not always the case. Not all Arab Americans could benefit from intermarriage or seek adaptation and integration through it. In the case of Khadra Shamy or Salwa Haddad, two immigrants sought integration and assimilation in the host culture via social interaction. Unfortunately, they both face multilayered discrimination from the host culture and from their own cultural environments.

Discrimination in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* is detected early in the novel during a quarrel between Eyad and the neighborhood kid Brian "Brian Lott, whyn't you go pick on someone your own size?" Eyad yelled at the boy on the dirt bike. "Fuck you, raghead:" Brian shouted back. "We're gonna get all you fuckers!" He wheelied on "Fuckers."(Kahf 5). Then, Wajdy believes that everything may get over through communication, he goes to talk to Brian's parents, but he is totally disappointed when they scream at his face, asking him to get back from where they

come; " ACCUSING MY CHILDREN—OFF MY PORCH—BACK WHERE YOU PEOPLE COME FROM!". This inhospitality is inevitable thing due to the supremacy of whiteness in the United States, and the binary discourse of 'us' versus 'them' from one side, and from another side Arab Muslims think of themselves as the most pure people in the whole world and are the subjects of racism from Americans.

Kahf emphasizes this through the general atmosphere at the community of the Dawah Center community: "members of the Dawah community imagine Americans to be a singular kind of people of a single race, ethnicity, and religion; they also see themselves as a singular "us," the victims of white American racism. Such perceptions make it easy to obscure internal prejudices, gender oppression, and outright racism"(Aghasi 608).

The American people are known for their separation from the "other", Benjamin DeMott, an American cultural critic, describes Americans in this context as "Americans today suffer from a distinctive, though by no means exclusively American, form of myopia"(Gunn 175). This myopia has widened the gap between the American people and other ethnic groups, and Arab-Americans have suffered from this American myopia for a long time. Kahf shows in the novel that Americans go beyond this myopia to judge every single Arab Americans through the deeds of foreign Arab or Muslim people outside America. They consider these Arab Americans an extension of the Arab-Muslims living in other countries. From this perspective, Americans develop a social hostility towards Arab Americans, which leads to racial discrimination. In the novel, Kahf sheds light on the 1979 Iran hostage crisis and its impact on Arab Muslims living in the United States; America considers every Arab Muslim a threat:

> America was mad at Khadra personally, the Shamy family, and all the other Muslims of Indianapolis. Simmonsville residents who didn't know the Shah of Iran from Joe Schmoe yelled 'Long live the Shah!' as their Muslim neighbors got out of their cars and went into the blue house on New Harmony Drive. Vandalism of the Dawah Center with soap and white spray paint was something the police couldn't seem to stop; they only came and took pictures every time it happened(Kahf 119).

Kahf also discusses discrimination toward blacks, and the murder of Zuhura by the racial organization Ku Klux Klan shows the bitterness and suffering of the black community in the United States. Kahf also highlights the issue of American media and their prejudice in dealing with crimes related to ethnic communities, like the murder of Zuhura. Zuhura, a black Muslim student, who was raped and killed for her political activism, the news papers did not deal with the crime as an American social issue, instead, they consider Zuhura a foreign student:

> It called Zuhura "a young black woman" and didn't mention that she was Muslim at all. On the other hand, the Indianapolis Star pretended like race wasn't there at all, calling Zuhura a "foreign woman" and "an IU international student," as if her family didn't live right there in town. The Indianapolis News article treated it like just some random crime, giving it one tiny paragraph in the back pages (Kahf 95).

The local media did not give too much importance to the crime, and detectives tried to put the crime under *honor killing*, "*The Indianapolis Star* reported on him (*her fiancé Luqman)* being a suspect: *Murder possible Honor Killing—Middle Eastern Connection,* they said with the sidebar on "the oppression of women in Islam"(Kahf 97).

Discrimination within the Muslim community is also discussed in the novel, Khadra's parents idealism of equality in Islam is shaken off when Khadra wants to braid her hair like her friend Tayiba, her Téta definitely objected considering her granddaughter as beautiful and superior to those *Abeed*; this reaction bewildered Khadra:

> "Why can't I braid my hair too?" she whined when she got home. Her mother had vetoed it. Eyad was pushing jihad in his plastic Big Wheel on the tiny back patio. "What, like the tribe of Zunuj?" Teta said from her lawn chair. Eyad looked up at the odd word, Zunuj. Teta stroked Khadra's coarse brown hair."Such pretty hair, not like that repulsive hair of Abeed, all kinky and unnatural" (Kahf 75).

Khadra reacts and tells her Téta not to utter such words to her friends because it is *Haram:*

> Khadra pushed her hand away angrily. "You can't say that." "Say what?" `Abeed, "Eyad chimed in. "That's haram." "Again with the haram, this child. What did I do that's haram this time, hmm, te'eburni?" "It's haram to be racist," Khadra protested. "Eyad! Isn't it haram to be racist?"… Testa looked bewildered. Hurt. "What? That's just what we say in Syria. I am not a racist (Kahf 75-67).

According to Téta, she does not consider saying these derogatory names on Black Americans as *Haram*, for her it is always the case in Syria when they say things like that.

Another example of discrimination attitude shown by Khadra's family is when her brother Eyad wants to marry Maha Abdul-Kadir, the daughter of a

Sudanese immigrant doctor. Khadra likes the girl because she represents the real Muslim girl:

> The girl had impeccable character, was active at the mosque, and wore flawless hijab with not a hair showing. And, definitely, she was a native speaker of Arabic, with a pure accent, and a fluency aided by the private Arabic tutors her father had hired. She was splendidly qualified to teach their future children the language of the Quran. Piety, character, beauty, brains, the right language, the right home culture-what more to ask in a bride? (Kahf 138).

But unfortunately, her parents have another point of view on the girl because she is not white! They refused Eyad marriage to Maha "But for heaven's sake, she's black as coal!"(139). Eyad is chocked by what his parents thought of Black people, and this is not what they taught them before "Eyad seemed dazed, even paralyzed. The gulf between what they'd taught him and what was happening" (Ibid).

No matter how long or short this kind of discussion about the narratives is, Kahf wants to convey that if just Muslim immigrants understand their religion in the right way, they will at least avoid such internal racist prejudices about each other.

In *Once in a Promised Land*, Halaby focuses on discrimination after the 9/11 attacks and how this incident has debunked American policy towards Arab immigrants in the United States.

After 9/11, a mainstream prejudice raised in the American public's mind identified as '*Islamophobia'*. The Americans were victims of their fear of the other, and the media increased that sense of fear to make it a phobia from Arabs and Muslims. Arab Americans found themselves after these attacks in front of all kinds of accusations; they faced all sorts of discrimination through acts of violence and

dehumanization. This anti-Arab stream did not differentiate between good Arabs and bad Arabs, all Arabs fell in the same line of discrimination. Salaita observes in the same context that "no single event shaped the destiny of Arab Americans more than 9/11. After 9/11, the Arab American community was thrust into the spotlight"(77). He argues that this Semitism attracted more attention to the existence of the Arab Muslim community. They have been scrutinized for every single movement. And from another side, Arab Americans felt the burden of Attacks on them.

These xenophobic sentiments went beyond Arab Muslims to include all other ethnic groups from the Orient "These sentiments played an enormous role in creating the sort of xenophobic culture that prompted physical attacks— leading, in some cases, to murder—on Arab Americans and those perceived to be Arab Americans (Sikhs, South Asians, Central Asians, Hispanics)" (Salaita 88). The country enters a sort of internal conflicts between Americans and other ethnic groups, especially Arab Muslims; this is what makes the concept of 'otherness' increase to generate a nationalistic outlook of 'imperative patriotism'.

Halaby depicts the discrimination status that Arabs encountered after 9/11 in her *novel Once in a Promised Land*. Through the story of Salwa and Jassim, Halaby describes the black Tuesday September 9, 2001, when Jassim was preparing himself to go to the fitness bar while Salwa was still in bed enjoying her last peaceful morning. The following days of that Tuesday witnessed a terrible counter attacks on Arabs living in the United States, blaming them and charging them with the responsibility of the attacks; "…due to the nationality of the 9/11 perpetrators, the first reaction of the majority of Americans was to blame Muslim and Arab citizens for the attacks. As a result, the Arab American community felt itself in the "enemy

camp" and automatically excluded from the larger American grieving process" (Abu-Ras et al. 226).

Salwa and Jassim felt the drastic change in American society towards Muslims and Arabs, however, Jassim still rejects reality, Jassim thinks that people are not ignorant enough to accuse innocent people: "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" (Halaby 21). Jassim ignores that a Sikh is wrongly killed in retaliation for believing him an Arab!

Discrimination against Arab-Muslims continues to manifest in American society. People are becoming more patriotic; they interpret their patriotism by hanging American flags everywhere:

> After the terrorist attacks, patriotic sentiment surged in the United states, expressed through signs and songs that represent American strength and identity. For many Americans, displaying such symbols as the American flag reaffirmed their loyalty to the nation and allowed them to show their solidarity with others… however, patriotic displays were used to harm and to isolate Muslims (Peek 68).

Salwa feels the burden of the current situation when Joan gives her American flag decals to put them on her car, Joan bought flag decals for Jassim too. She justifies that by saying, "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 55). Joan wants Salwa and her husband to show their position concerning the attacks, either with us or against us. While driving home, Salwa's eyes pay attention to the number of flags: "Her eyes counted four American flags, three in stores and one flying from a car… five on mailboxes, and one in the corner

of a picture window. Seven flags in less than a mile of houses." (Halaby 56), she turns on the radio "A man's voice blared out: "Is anyone fed up yet? Is anyone sick of nothing being done about all those Arab terrorists? In the name of Jesus Christ! They live with us. Among us! Mahzlims who are just waiting to attack us" (Ibid 56).

Salwa could no longer bear that hostility against people who have nothing to do with the attacks. She loves America; it gives her all she dreams of. Salwa reveals to Jassim that she is fed up with that American patriotism that spoils everything "It was knocked in the head by American patriotism" (Halaby 57).

At this point, Jassim is still thinking about how all this mess will pass. However, Salwa knows very well that Jassim's exotic appearance is not welcome in actual America:

> "Salwa wanted to shake him, to scream that for God's sake, somebody could report him, have them both deported because his eyebrows were too thick, his accent was not welcome, especially in his line of work. Perhaps closing reality out allowed him the luxury of focusing completely, without distraction, on his work" (Halaby 58).

Unfortunately, Salwa is right, and Jassim's life turns upside down. Jassim was the subject of FBI investigations, and lost his job as a result of these investigations. The irony is that he was reported by a secretary, who told the FBI that Jassim was not normal after the attacks. The action of reporting was the main stream for all Americans especially after the government's warning to "stay alert" (Peek 68).

In the bank, Salwa's oriental look urges a client to ask about Salwa's origins, and knowing that she is American and raised in Jordan, she refuses to deal with her business matter with her: "I think I'd like to work with someone else…I think I'd

feel more comfortable working with someone I can understand better…I don't want anything to do with you people" (Halaby 114).

To this end, both Salwa's and Jassim's lives began to unravel, they both tried to get their Americaness back through their indulgence in relationships with Americans. Unfortunately, this was not the perfect idea, and both of them have lost themself to America.

4.6. Conclusion

Laila Halaby and Mohja Kahf are both Arab American writers who take responsibility to define Arab-Muslims and defend their rights in the United States as Arab American citizens.

Both novels, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), and *Once in a Promised Land* (2007), discuss themes that have a strong relationship with the Arab and Muslim communities in the United States. Both novels try to make things clear for the American reader; they write stories that reflect real people. They write on love, hate, passion, eagerness, identity, language, food, and dress; they also write on integration and assimilation, separation and marginalization, and most importantly, they write to clarify some American stereotypes of Arabs as savages and backwards: "The works endorse, by and large, American stereotypes of Arab male savagery and Arab female victimization through exaggerated and insensitive portrayal of a 'backward Arabia'" (Al Maleh 41).

In this chapter, a comparison is made between both novels, where different themes are discussed according to the writers' views. On the other hand hand, these themes are also discussed according to the main characters in both novels.

Each writer has her own perspective on dealing with these themes; however, both of them have the same purpose, which is to define themselves to each other. The story in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* takes place in the 1970's. Kahf depicts this period and how Arab Americans are facing difficulties to adapt with the new culture. However, *Once in a Promised Land* depicts the lives of Arab Americans who assimilate into the American culture, while; they still suffer from anti-Arab racism and discrimination.

In furtherance of this, one can observe that both novels complete each other, for any reader who wants to examine the integration history of Arab-Americans; these novels are his best choice.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The aim of the current thesis is to highlight the different issues facing Arab immigrants in the United States related to cultural change and its drawbacks in their daily lives. The study focuses on the process of shifting from the status of enculturation to the acculturation phase for Arab Americans, with reference to the different problems engendered by this shift. Acculturation is a cultural phenomenon that touches almost every immigrant in the world at different levels. For some, assimilation is the best way to live peacefully in the host culture, for others, integration is the most appropriate way to adjust to a different culture, for it gives them the opportunity to keep some of their identity. However, there are many immigrants in the United States who consider separation the best way to maintain their identity and culture in front of the host culture; while others prefer to avoid both cultures and live in marginalization.

The research claim is to discuss the different attitudes of Arab Americans towards the new culture through the projection of two prominent literary works written by Arab American women writers: *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), by Mohja Kahf, and *Once in a Promised Land* (2007), by Laila Halaby. The study comes to the answer to the main research question: What are the predominant strategies that might characterize the shift from enculturation to acculturation in the selected novels? According to Berry et al., individuals living in very dissimilar cultures acculturate differently according to different variables, including: language and education. Furthermore, Berry suggests four main strategies for acculturation that are worth considering: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. These strategies represent the means by which immigrants shift to acculturation, and

each individual or group of immigrants will take the path to acculturation through these strategies.

Khadra Shamy suffers a separation phase in her early years, and this is due to her parents, who oblige her to maintain their Syrian cultural habits and traditions considering them as part of the Islam religion. Khadra was wrongly taught the principles of Islam, since her parents did not provide her with the correct version of Islam. Instead, they raised her to see people only as either bad or good Muslims; and made her think that she and her family are the best Muslims ever, who try to teach other ignorant Muslims their religion. Khadra shifts from the separation phase to the integration phase when she realizes that her life in the United States is better than in Arab countries, and that she enjoys religious liberty in the United States better than in Arab countries. Khadra's well education and her mastery English language helped her make the decision to safely integrate into the American culture and become an American Muslim.

The case of Salwa Haddad is totally different; Halaby discusses the same issues raised by Kahf in the case of Khadra. Both of them put forward the issue of identity and acculturation, but each one tackled it from a different angle. Salwa was born in the United States to a Jordanian family that immigrated to the United States seeking the American Dream. But they returned to Jordan shortly after Salwa was born. Salwa grew up dreaming of her country of birth, and once the opportunity presented itself through the proposal of Dr. Jassim, she accepted it without the least reflection. Jassim Haddad is a successful hydrologist who lives in America. Salwa moves to live with Jassim in the United States, totally assimilating into its culture, and works hard to achieve her American Dream.

In *Once in a Promised Land*, Salwa and Jassim were assimilated into the American culture, and there is no hint of their original culture in their daily lives. Meanwhile, the 9/11 terrorist attacks have revealed that their assimilation was from one side only, that is to say, the American society did not accept their assimilation. After the attacks; Americans showed hostile sentiments towards all Arabs and Muslims living in the United States; and even those who looked like Arabs were a subject of discrimination. Salwa and Jassim start questioning their existence in the United States in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks. Racism and discrimination toward all that is Arab and Muslim have blown off their dreams and their assimilation phase. At the end, Salwa moves from the assimilation phase to the separation phase after being hit by Jack, wishing she would have never come to the United States.

The use of the storytelling of Laila Halaby has given a charm to the novel, as this fairy tale evokes some cultural implication, which helps the reader better understand the moral of the story.

The current research tends to clarify the role and degrees of acculturation in the lives of Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad. Our protagonists react differently to the host culture due to their different historical backgrounds Khadra Shamy traveled to the United States at the age of four. Her parents escaped the Assad regime in Syria and found asylum in the United States. Khadra's acculturation was quite slow, her strong relationship with her family, and her denial of accepting the American culture as an alternative to the Syrian culture, have delayed her integration into the American culture. Therefore, she lived many years in a separation phase of acculturation until she started questioning her beliefs and discovered that her knowledge about Islam was mixed with Syrian traditions. At this point, Khadra

decided to integrate into the host culture, as she found that the American culture provides her with more freedom to practice Islam than many Arab countries do.

Meanwhile, Salwa Haddad was born in the United States to Jordanian parents, and shortly after her birth, they returned to Jordan. She grew up and studied in Jordan, but she keeps dreaming of returning to America, her country of birth her family calls her Ms. America, Salwa shows a tendency towards luxuries and consumerism, and always dreams of returning to the United States. Salwa met Jassim, the successful hydrologist, who lives in America, and was very happy to marry him and return to the United States, her place of birth. Once in the United States, Salwa assimilates totally into the host culture, and works hard to fulfill her American dream. Salwa Haddad lost her identity while immerging in American consumerism culture; she also lost her values when she let herself be with Jake, the young white trainee. At the end, Salwa found herself in critical moments; she refused to do what she was doing but insisted on continuing everything. Her friend advised her to return to Jordan for a while to rebuild herself; unfortunately, while she was preparing herself to return, she went to bid Farwell to Jake, who, under the influence of drug, hit her and scarred her face. Finally, she found herself in the hospital, losing everything beautiful in her life. Salwa failed to acculturate safely, and the fact that she neglected her identity in the host culture puts her in a hypercritical situation.

Acculturation permits both protagonists to enjoy freedom and liberty in the United States; however, they react differently towards it. For Khadra, the liberty she gains in the United States helps her build her new identity, making a connection between her life in the United States and her life in the Arab countries. She proudly chooses to be an American Muslim citizen.

However, Salwa reacts differently to the liberty she finds in the United States; hence, she defines liberty as the freedom to do whatever she wants, even if this freedom is against her religion and cultural principles.

Based on a comparative study, the fourth chapter exposes the different variables that play an important role in the acculturation of both protagonists. Religion defines the path of acculturation for both protagonists, for Khadra Shamy, Islam takes a very important place in her life, every deed was measured by Islamic values; however, Salwa neglects Islam and lives a secular life; and this makes the difference in their acculturation process. Identity is also another factor affected by acculturation; for instance, Khadra Shamy, through the years, develops an identity related to Islam; she respects her origins as being Muslim and Arab. Meanwhile, she integrates into the American culture without hurting or affecting her identity. For Salwa, her perspective of identity was different, she developed her identity according to the American values of consumerism; the result is that Salwa was totally assimilated into American life.

Consequently, contact with the host culture has affected both protagonists, but each reacts differently. The fundamental cause of this difference is rooted in their historical immigration backgrounds.

Eventually, the move from enculturation to acculturation is not always safe, and may engender different problems for the individual as well as for the host culture. The United States is aware of such an issue, and has set up different programs for the new immigrants to integrate safely into the new culture:

> "On average, about 1 million immigrants arrive in the U.S. each year, and state legislators have been notable innovators in helping them integrate. They have passed laws to help immigrants learn English

> through public education systems, remove barriers to professional licenses, navigate the naturalization process, and learn American norms and values"(Chanda, NCSL).

John Berry (2005), claims that it is highly indispensible for the United States to develop policies to make immigrants integrate safely into the American culture, as well as for the Americans to accept immigrants as American citizens: "Acculturation and adaptation are now reasonably well understood; I believe that we are in position to pursue the development of policies and programs to promote successful outcomes for all parties involved in the contact situation" (700).

The United States recommends the role of immigrants in the social and economic growth of the country. It was acclaimed that the United States was founded as a nation based on immigrant collaborations, and they are considered an important part of the American population; John F. Kennedy (1958) states that "Every American who has ever lived, with the exception of one group, was either an immigrant himself or a descendant of immigrant" (NCSL).

Accordingly, this research, entitled "From Enculturation to Acculturation in Arab American Literature in the Global Era: the Case of Mohja Kahf' *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007)", is just a prelude to a huge and interesting field of research that may at several times sort out with diverse results, and this is due to perpetual variations in the Arab immigrant circumstances in the United States.

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Appendices: The Summaries of Novels

Appendix A: The Summary of Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*

The Novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* is considered one of the most influential novels in the history of Arab American literature. The story revolves around a Syrian family who immigrated to the United States escaping the tyranny of El Assad regime. The family tries to live in the United States without being absorbed by the host culture, because their original culture is completely incompatible with it, so, they try to keep themselves as far as possible from indulging themselves in the American culture.

The novel is written in form of a bildungsroman which traces the cultural conflicts in the life of Khadra Shamy through different steps. Khadra was in a tight knit cultural environment, where Islamic values are shortened in *Hallal* and *Haram*. Kahf depicts that situation when little Khadra goes to school and was given candy corn, but little Khadra refuses to eat them and say to her kindergarten's teacher "I can't eat this…There is a pig in it"(13) her teacher assures her that these candy corn contains no pig, and she was convincing enough that makes Khadra eats them. When her brother saw the candy corn in her pocket, her tells her that this contains pig, and little Khadra was dreadfully ashamed to tell her parents so; and she waited for bugs to grow in her stomach and "eat her guts out" (13) as she was taught by her parents of course.

Khadra grows with her brothers and African Americans Muslim friends where they all suffered discrimination from the host culture, they were called by their classmates as "raghead". Khadra's cultural gap widens when her mother told her that these Americans are considered Kuffar and they will go to hell. From this ethnocentric view, Khadra build her opinion to separate herself from the American

culture and focus her life to spread the message of the Prophet Mohamed through the Dawah Center which her parents were members in. They teach newly converted Muslims the pillars of Islam and make them understand the message of The Prophet Mohamed. At this phase of the life of Khadra could build no relations except her childhood African Americans Tayiba, Zuhura, and Hakim who were very cautious with her because she was modeling things in her hallal and haram radar as Hakim told her at the end of the novel "You don't remember what a big mouth you were?... how noisy you were?... How you interfered with me, Hanifa, everybody? Tried to root out every nonconformist blip on your little halal-and-haram radar?" (395).

In the midst of these events, Zuhura the best African American friend of Khadra was found dead. She was killed by the Ku Klux Klan, Zuhura was a Muslim activist student at University and has a strong charisma that affects other young women, and her death was treated by the local press as a random crime! This upset Khadra too much that she could never forget this injustice and double standards from the American society.

During her journey, Khadra starts to discover the contradictions that her community is living in; her voyage to pilgrimage had blown off her perfect idea about the Muslim community in Saudi Arabia. And after her unsuccessful marriage from Jumua, which failed mainly of the patriarchal standards that bound her husband's beliefs.

After her divorce, Khadra travelled to Syria to see her Téta who welcomed her and told her the full story of her parents and how they were persecuted from Al Assad regime. In Syria Khadra discovers multiculturalism through her encounter with her Téta's Jew friend, and how this community forms a part of the Syrian history. Once she returned to the United States, Khadra escaped from Indianapolis to

live in Philadelphia. She could no more bear the contradictions of the Dawah Community.

After moving to Philadelphia, Khadra started to study photography, she also opened her mind to other cultures and befriended a secular Muslim from Iran, she also entered in a relation with an Arab Muslim immigrant from Tunisia. She changed her style of clothing from more dark to a colored one, she also decided to make the scarf only in occasions and needless to be seen as a suspected Muslim.

Kahf highlights different issues and spotlights some important concepts like "what is a real Muslim," how to be a Muslim feminist, an Arab, a Hoosier, and an American. And as the events rolled on, Khadra delves in each of these identities to build her new identity where she melted all these components (Carroll and Graf 2006).

The Biography of Mohja Kahf

She was born in Damascus, Syria, in 1967, and is an Arab American poet and writer. She immigrated to the United States in 1971 to escape persecution under the Al Assad regime, a theme that she explores in her novel The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf. She earned a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Rutgers University and is now an associate professor of comparative literature and a member of the King Fahd Center for Middle East and Islamic Studies at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville (PoemHunter.com).

Kahf delves into key issues affecting the Arab American community in particular and the Arab world in general. She emphasizes cultural differences between Muslim-Americans, religious and secular, Islam, Christianity, morality, gender relations, and Muslim oppressed women who faced patriarchal

discrimination within the Muslim community; she also addresses issues such as sexuality, politics, and identity. She is the author of the poetry collections Hagar Poems (2016) and Emails from Scheherazad (2003), as well as the novel The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2006). Kahf co-writes a sexuality section for the website Muslim Wake Up. Western Representation of the Muslim Woman: From Termagant to Odalisque (1999) (poetryfoundation.org) is one of her nonfiction works.

Appendix B: The summary of Laila Halaby's Once in a Promised Land

The events of *Once in a Promised Land* revolve around an Arab American couple from Palestinian-Jordanian origins living in the United States. The story begun in the United States, the day of the terrorist attacks of 9/11, describing how Jassim Haddad was living a luxurious steady life with his beautiful wife Salwa; and steadily everything begun to unravel in the aftermath of these terrorists attacks. The story is told in nonchronological narrative techniques where the writer uses flash-forwards and flashbacks scenes in a much crafted way.

Jassim and Salwa left the desert of Jordan to settle in the desert of Arizona where they kept recycling themselves in what Pierre Bourdieu calls the Social Reproduction. This theory suggests that immigrants could not separate themselves from their previous environment even if they want to do. The couple settled in Tucson and established a very luxurious life even Americans could not live, and this one reason that makes many Americans held grudge against them. Jassim is a hydrologist, and his wife, Salwa, is a banker and a successful real estate broker, who left her childhood lover Hassan to the American Dream, they have lived in Tucson for more than ten years. They both achieve success in their work and are seemed to be well accepted in the American society, and they live their American Dream perfectly.

The couple seems to be happy, but for Salwa it is not the case, she wants to a mother however Jassim refuses that and prefers to live freely and without responsibilities. Salwa's strong emotions to be a mum prompt her to conceive from Jassim without his consent, and she pretends to forget taking her contraception pills.

Unfortunately, Salwa miscarriages her baby, the fact that makes her lost and not knowing what she wants. In this obscure phase of her life in America, Salwa befriended Jake, a white American co-worker, and even have a sexual relation with him seeking something she does not know; the fact which widens her relation with Jassim.

In other hand, Jassim's bad luck when he goes swimming finds the swimming pool closed because someone has pooped in it. Instead Jassim decided to take a ride with in his Mercedes Benz, thinking in both the terrorists' attacks and the inexplicable reaction of Americans to every Muslim in the United States; and Salwa miscarriage. At that moment two boys on their skateboards moving on zigzagging on the street, and in three or four second the boy hits the car and falls down without any movements. Jassim stopped his car and calls the 911, Jassim checked the boy, he seems unconscious; the emergency team arrives and takes the boy to the hospital and Jassim is now under the investigation of the police. He retells them the entire story and that everything happens so fast, and that the boy who hits the car and not Jassim who hits him with his car. All what Jassim said was approved by the witnesses who were near to the accidents.

All this happen to the couple while their relatives in Jordan are worried about them and fearing the repercussion of Arab Muslim in America. Actually, their worries were right; the accident triggers the FBI to persecute Jassim and makes from him a suspect that may cause harm to the American community of Tucson as he has the "access to the entire city's water supply" (Halaby 232).

Skillfully observed and surprisingly real, Halaby depicts the immigrant experience in the United States exposing the bleaker side of the American society,

where prejudice, stereotypes, and discrimination emerges where you do not expect it, and even in the highest ranking of government.

The FBI investigations over Jassim lead to the loss of his job with Marcus' company, and suddenly, Jassim finds himself out of the beautiful luxurious life that he used to live "and for the first time he felt unsettled in his beloved America, vaguely longed for home"(165). And ironically, Jassim also finds relief in the arms of Penny, a white American woman.

Meanwhile, Salwa was still dating Jake, she knew what she is doing is wrong but she could not stop it. She visited Randa, her Arab friend, and told her the whole story, Randa recommends her to leave the United States to Jordan in order to recover herself from what she did with Jake. Salwa decided to leave the United States, but in her way she thought of saying hello to Jake who assaults her and attacks her with the picture frame which disfigured her beauty forever.

This horrible accident awakes her from her America Dream, and sees clearly the worsening of her situation in the Promised Land. This accident may or may not consolidate her relation with her husband Jassim who feels himself responsible of what things turn on.

The writer lets the end of the story open to all interpretations, and this reflects the actual situation of all Arab Muslim community in the United States at that time.

The biography of Laila Halaby

She was born in Beirut to a Jordanian father and an American mother. She grew up and spent mostly of her life in Arizona, she has traveled a fair amount, and has lived for some years on the East and West Coasts, the Midwest, and in Jordan and Italy. She is well educated; she earned an undergraduate degree in Italian and Arabic, and two Masters Degrees, in Arabic Literature and in Counseling. She is currently working as an Outreach Counselor for the University of Arizona's College of Public Health.

Her recent publication *my name on his tongue*, is a memoir in poems. She is the writer of the novels *West of the Jordan* (winner of a PEN/Beyond Margins Award) and *Once in a Promised Land* (a Barnes and Noble Discover Great New Authors selection; also named by the Washington Post as one of the 100 best works of fiction for 2007) were both published by Beacon Press.

In addition to fiction and poetry, she craftily write stories for children, including a book entitled *Tracks in the Sand (not published yet)*, this book gathers Palestinian Folktales that she gathered from children during sojourn in Jordan when she was studying folklore on a Fulbright scholarship.

She is currently working on her most recent project, a novel in which one of the main characters is an American soldier returning home to the United States after serving three tours in Iraq, and the writing and research for this novel has resulted in the formation of a creative writing class for veterans (adapted from lailahalaby.net/bio/).

Authors Interviews

Appendix C: A Conversation with Laila Halaby By Ishak Berrabbah

Ishak Berrebbah (IB): You have contributed remarkably to the contemporary Arab American literary canon, given that your fiction has been acknowledged positively by many literary critics such as Steven Salaita (2011) and Amal Talaat Abdelrazak (2008). Is there a link between your fiction and your life in any aspect? In other words, do your life experiences have an impact on the shaping of your fiction?

Laila Halaby (LH): I think just my existence shaped it, the fact that I was always between, so I think that was what drove me to fiction in the first place, the fact that I never really felt this Arab Americanness has its own culture. I had that American mom and a Jordanian father and it was not a cohesive blending. I think to make sense of that I wrote stories and I think that's where it came from. I think the various stories that developed often come from the things that I see and I want to work through, and I want to understand better. You know it is not so much that I am having these experiences necessarily, but maybe I am puzzled by them or seeing them around. When I started *Once in a Promised Land* I lived in Los Angeles, in Westwood, and there were so many young Iranian men there and they were so confident. I look at this and I say to myself "you are foreigners and you are so much more confident than even Americans. How does that happen?" I would see this all the time and wonder and wonder and I then thought what would shake that confidence and that was how I had the idea of the accident, so the whole book [*Once in a Promised Land*] started from that corner and that tends to be how my writings evolve. So yes and no, to answer your question.

IB: Further to this, the repercussions of 9/11 events on the lives of Arabs in the USA are quite apparent in your novel Once in a Promised Land (2007). Jassim, for instance, endures intense security surveillance by the FBI (2007, 234–35), racist treatment, and mostly onerous stereotypes because he is identified as an Arab and potential terrorist (2007, 223). In this regard, drawing on Jassim's experiences, do

you think Orientalist stereotypes and assumptions determine the way Arabs in the USA negotiate their racial and cultural identities?

LH: I think they do. I am hopeful that this is less true now, as you have more Arabs and Muslims living and being seen. But certainly when Hollywood was the reference point, I think that was a huge factor in spreading Orientalist stereotypes. I think there is a sort of implicit bias, and inherent racism with white privilege. I think that is what I really want to explore. We all carry some ideas about other people and they are buried very deep, and we are going to act on that and then we are going to see these repercussions.

IB: In relation to the last question, in your short article titled "Dare I Ask?" (2008), published by Beacon Broadside, you position yourself as the ambassador of your culture when you say: "I am always happy to offer any understanding I can to offset American 'Jahiliyya,' or generalized ignorance of other cultures." Your words, as stated, hold implicit criticism of American Orientalist stereotypes that govern Arab cultural and racial identities. Given that your statement was made more than a decade ago, do you think Orientalist assumptions are still perpetuated nowadays? And do you think that Arab writers should carry on in the mission of challenging and correcting stereotypes about Arabs and Muslims in their literary output and writings?

LH: I encourage Arab writers to write. So the first part of that definitely, but as to the second part, I think that there is a certain expectation that if you are an Arab writer you write about just Arabs and you address these things directly. I think I have big issues with that. I think, as an artist, you do what you do, and because you are an artist you do what matters to you, to create characters in a certain way. I remember listening to that Australian comedian Hannah Gadsby, she is lesbian and she said she would do shows and people would say, you are not lesbian enough and that there are not enough lesbian jokes. She goes, like, "I have been on the stage the whole time." That to me sums it up – I am writing this, my books are published, you don't get to tell me what the contents should be, the important thing is the fact that they get published. I think there are people who are driven to writing to correct these things [stereotypes] and if that's your passion then that's what you should do, you know. You have to write your world and I think that's the

basic thing. My integrity in my writing is more important to me than to write about a certain thing and I would expect that of any artist in any sphere. In 2003 there were very few Arab American writings or Arab writings in English, it is not as if we had a bookshelf in a bookstore, so I think you are supposed to have a bookshelf in a bookstore, and I think, why am I not an American writer? Why can't you see me as an American writer? Why do I have to be a category? I am an Arab and I write. I mean do we talk about Steve Jobs being Syrian – no! But he was! I think it's so important that we don't have to dictate who we are and how we are because we are Arabs or Muslims or Japanese or Lesbian or whatever.

IB: In Once in a Promised Land, Jassim and Salwa seem to avoid the Arab community after 9/11 events. The former for instance spends his time with Penny, a white American waitress, and the latter accompanies Jack, an employee at a bank and drug dealer. This can be interpreted, as Valassopoulos argues, as an attempt to "reject the allure of an ethnonational-centred community that might offer a buffer against the feelings of victimhood or marginalization in post-9/11 USA" (2014, 600). Can this be understood as a particular type of allegiance to the white American community, anti-essentialist behaviour towards the Arab community, and a confirmation of US citizenship for the sake of social inclusion?

LH: None of the above. I believe that their isolation was a biproduct of their basically chasing the American Dream; they are busy, they are working. So their social bonds are so diminished because they, both of them, are focused or maybe hyper-focused on their work place. I don't think either of them is going and hanging out with groups of Americans, they each have these also dysfunctional connections or maybe superficial connections that then become bigger because they feel untethered. They are not rejecting the Arab community and running to the American community and hanging out or having barbecues or whatever. I think they are just very isolated generally and that is the cause of their problems.

IB: In your novel Once in a Promised Land, moreover, you demonstrate a combination of Arabic storytelling and folktales – drawing on a Sheherazadian style of narration – and Western fairy tales. For example, in addition to the stories told by Salwa's grandmother in the narratives, the narration in the novel starts with "Kān ya makān fī qadīm al-zamān" (2007, VII). This is the Arabic version of "once

upon a time." Does this reflect an implicit conflict between East and West? Or is it a strategic manifestation of your hyphenated identity?

LH: Maybe an implicit "different perspective" rather than conflict. And also an implicit projection of belonging rather than strategic manifestation of my hyphenated identity.

IB: The novel also shows how food importantly constructs immigrants' cultural memory and actualizes their feeling of home. This is demonstrated through the characters Jassim and Randa. The former remembers a lunch of roasted lamb with garlic once taken at his uncle's farm back home (2007, 39). The latter is addicted to Lebanese coffee that "boiled away thousands of miles of homesickness" (2007, 283–84). As such, what is your opinion about the role of culinary practices in shaping Arab immigrants' identity in the USA and mitigating their diasporic experiences?

LH: We ground to what is familiar and what nurtures us, right? So I am sure you see this all the time with other people who are from other places. How many times have I said that a restaurant has opened here, and I say "that's home food," it tastes like home food, I mean that's what we're looking for. It is not just a fancy restaurant. I think that's universal not just for Arabs. It is a connecting point, food has a lot of power. Although it is sometimes taken to the extremes, like have you seen the chocolate-Hummus, chocolate-Hummus! [Laughs] Who does that? Just wrong, wrong! But I see this with other friends, that we all have that little thing that tastes like home. Maybe I have a friend who is depressed: I have to make Taboulah and that would be fine. I mean that seems like such a weird comfort food to me. But I think we all have something that connects us to home.

IB: The relationship between culinary practices and the construction of Arab American identity is apparent in other contemporary novels, such as Diana Abu-Jaber's Crescent (2003). This might show that there is relationship between you and other Arab American novelists. Do you feel yourself to be part of a particular writing community? In other words, do you feel yourself to be part of a genre?

LH: Yes, you know, it's the same tribe. And there are some stellar writers. There is that sweet part that we are all American writers and we would like to be recognized as such, not marginalized. I think this is less true now, we are less marginalized. I think there is more awareness and more technology, and globalization that has that side effect, people are integrating more.

IB: Arab American identity has always been regarded as hybrid, heterogeneous, and dynamic, amongst other key terms, and it has evolved through generations. As a final question in this lovely interview, what is your opinion about the "nature," and also the future, of Arab American identity?

LH: Actually I don't think Arab American identity has always been regarded as hybrid, heterogeneous and dynamic. I think it has been historically seen as this kind of flat thing and it is only in the last few years that it really evolved into this multifaceted thing you are describing to me. So, you know, I think like any group of people in this country, I think, it will evolve, but not evolve just for the sake of evolving. It will evolve as people become more and more immersed in American culture. It is complex and its complexity makes it more visible.

Appendix D: An Interview with Mohja Kahf

December 7, 200612:01 AM ET

DEBORAH AMOS, host:

Mohja Khaf has some things she wants you to know about Muslims in America. “The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf” is her new novel - the story of Khadra Shamy, a Syrian girl transplanted to the American Midwest in the 1970s.

The author, a professor of comparative literature at the University of Arkansas, borrowed details from her own life. Her family was part of the Islamic Society of North America, a conservative religious organization. But she insists this is not an autobiography. It is the story of growing up an American Muslim and the particular pitfalls of American culture - some large, writes Khaf, some as small as a piece of candy.

Ms. MOJHA KHAF (Author, “The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf”): Mrs. Brown, the kindergarten teacher, poured the candy corn into a little flowered plastic cup on Khadra's desk. Khadra said, I can't eat this, her round baby-fat face grave. Why not, sweetie? Mrs. Brown said, bending low so her white face was next to Khadra. There's a pig in it! Mrs. Brown laughed a pretty laugh and said, no, there isn't a pig in it, dear.

AMOS: Mrs. Brown was wrong, but then how was she to know the dietary restrictions of Muslims.

Ms. KHAF: But when her brother Hiyad(ph) saw the candy corn on the bus he said, Oohmmm, you ate candy corn! Candy corn has pig! Nuh-uh! But it did, and it was too late to throw it up. Khadra was tainted forever.

AMOS: How is growing up a Muslim in America different than growing up in a mainstream religion?

Ms. KHAF: You don't realize when you're in a minority culture that people look at you as if you're this alien thing. You really don't! Because once, my best friend and I were in a store and a group of Amish women came in. And my friend and I, you know, were like, I wonder how they live? I wonder what they do? And then after we got out of the store, we looked at

each other and we said, do you suppose people look at us the way we just looked at the Amish? And we looked at each other and said, yeah, I guess that's how people look at Muslims, especially, you know, women - we were both women who wore a hijab - and that was sort of a revelation.

AMOS: The hijab, the Islamic headscarf, stands out in American culture and sometimes so does prayer: Five times a day, an obligation for religious Muslims, times set by the rise and the set of the sun.

Ms. KHAF: Once, lost, trying to get to Mishawaka, they even prayed next to a giant roadside egg. Twelve foot high, made of concrete. The lettering beneath it declared, Greetings from Mentone, Indiana, the Egg Basket of the Midwest.

People always get all worked up over the fact that Muslims pray with their butts in the air. And then Western photographers - when do they photograph Muslims during prayer? When they have their butts in the air. You know, I wanted to take a different look at that posture. It's really an embrace of the earth. It's very grounding.

And so I went back to the form. Only seven surfaces should touch the earth: palm, palm, knee, knee, foot, foot. Those six plus the plane of your face that touches the earth. And how vulnerable of a position is that?

AMOS: The novel is structured around the rhythms of prayer. In real life, the novelist writes about topics outside of religion. For example, an online sex column for a journal called Muslim, Wake Up. Advice that sometimes comes in the form of short stories, stories that have earned Khaf some disapproval from more conservative Muslims.

Ms. KHAF: I really don't get that. These things that I wrote about sexuality on the Web just jump right out of conversations with tons of girlfriends, aunts and nieces and sisters and sisters-in-law and so on. I come from these vibrant women's cultures where women talk about this together.

AMOS: There are tons of online sex columns.

Ms. KHAF: Mm-hmm.

AMOS: Is yours different because you're a Muslim?

Ms. KHAF: Oh, right, yes, because I mean in Western languages not many of those sex columns reflect the shape of Muslim culture around those issues. For example, the encounter between two virgins on their wedding night. How often is that a topic of "Sex and the City" when that show was on or whatever the latest hot thing is, you know. The sexual innocence of religious men, how about that? I mean that is sort of one kind of sweet aspect of religious sub-cultures.

And so there are many interesting moments that I have never seen reflected in, you know, Redbook.

AMOS: You meet young adults as a professor. Do they know more now than they did when you were growing up in the middle of the country about Islam, about Muslims, about that culture?

Ms. KHAF: They seem to think they know more, but they don't know more. They just - they just know worse. And I mean worse as an adverb modifying know. Can you do that?

AMOS: Do you think in some ways that "The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf" - do you think that the novel explains some things?

Ms. KHAF: Damn right I do. Can I say that?

AMOS: Mohja Khaf. Her novel, "The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf."

(Soundbite of music)

AMOS: You can hear and read more excerpts from "The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf" on our Web site, NPR.org.

You're listening to MORNING EDITION from NPR News. I'm Deborah Amos.

STEVE INSKEEP, host:

And I'm Steve Inskeep.

ملخص

يلقي البحث الحالي الضوء على عملية التثاقف بين العرب الأمريكيين. استنادًا إلى نظرية التثاقف لبيري ، والتي تركز على استراتيجيات التثاقف ؛ الاستيعاب والتكامل والفصل والتهميش. تم تحقيق التحليل من خلال روايتين بارزتين كتبتهما كاتبتان أمريكيتان عربيتان. تركز الدراسة على التكيف الثقاف لخضرة شامي في "الفتاة في وشاح اليوسفي" (2006) لمهجة قحف ، وحالة استيعاب سلوى حداد في رواية "مرة في أرض الميعاد" (2007) ، بقلم ليلى حلبي. كشفت الدراسة أن بطلتا الروايتين تتكيفان بشكل مختلف في الثقافة المضيفة. لقد أحدثت خلفياتهم المختلفة، ووضعهم الاجتماعي، ووجودهم في الولايات المتحدة كل الاختلاف في عمليتهم التثقيفية..

الكلمات المفتاحية: التثاقف ، الأدب العربي الأمريكي ، التكيف ، الاستيعاب ، الانثقاف ، التمركز العرقي ، الانفصال

Résumé

La recherche actuelle met en lumière le processus d'acculturation chez les Arabo-Américains. Basé sur la théorie de l'acculturation de Berry, qui se concentre sur les stratégies d'acculturation ; assimilation, intégration, séparation et marginalisation. L'analyse est réalisée à travers deux romans de premier plan écrits par deux écrivaines arabo-américaines. L'étude porte sur l'adaptation à l'acculturation de Khadra Shamy dans The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2006), de Mohja Kahf, et sur le statut d'assimilation de Salwa Haddad dans Once in a Promised Land (2007), écrit par Leila Halaby. L'étude a révélé que les protagonistes des deux romans s'acculturent différemment à la culture d'accueil. Leurs origines différentes, leur statut social et leur raison d'être aux États-Unis ont fait toute la différence dans leur processus d'acculturation.

Mots clés : Acculturation, Littérature Arabo-américaine, Adaptation, Assimilation, Enculturation, Ethnocentrisme, Séparation.

Summary

The current research sheds light on the acculturation process among Arab-Americans. Based on Berry's acculturation theory, which focuses on acculturation strategies; assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. The analysis is achieved through two prominent novels written by Arab American female writers. The study focuses on the acculturation adjustment of Khadra Shamy in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), by Mohja Kahf, and the assimilation status of Salwa Haddad in *Once in a Promised Land* (2007), written by Leila Halaby. The study revealed that the protagonists of both novels acculturate differently to the host culture. Their different backgrounds, social status, and their purpose in living in the United States have made all the difference in their acculturative process.

Key Words: Acculturation, Arab American literature, Adaptation, Assimilation, Enculturation, Ethnocentrism, Separation.

Summary

of

From Enculturation to Acculturation in Arab American Literature in the Global Era: the case study of Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land* (2007)

For more than one hundred fifty years, Arab Americans have been struggling to find a convenient place among the cultural diversity momentum in the United States. Meanwhile, the Arab American Diaspora had been purposely ignored and badly represented in American society; the mass media, the cinema, and the Orientalists disfigured the Arab image. Furthermore, the 9/11 events have unraveled all that the Arab and Muslim communities have built for more than a century. These facts have complicated the mission of Arab writers, if not made it impossible. But new Arab writers have raised their voices after the terrorist attacks to defend their existence in the United States and to prove that America is their homeland and terrorism is not part of their history, neither as Arabs nor as Americans.

The writings of this new generation of Arab American writers have touched on sensitive issues that the majority of Arab immigrants suffered in the United States; among these issues, identity problems constitute the great mass of contemporary Arab American literature. This thesis sheds light on the different struggles among Arab American immigrants in their acculturation journey, and analyzes how immigrants react and acculturate differently to American culture.

The events of 9/11 have also shaped the writing of Arab Americans, making them more vigilant towards identity issues; and how they defend themselves in front of the huge

backlash of Americans against Arab immigrants in the United States. This thesis studied this issue and discussed the different issues related to the acculturation process among Arab immigrants in the United States, raising the main research question: What are the predominant strategies that might characterize the shift from enculturation to acculturation in the selected novels?

Two major novels are studied to elucidate that immigrants are reflected by the novels' characters; the study is done through Berry's theory of acculturation. The selected novels are *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006), written by Mohja Kahf, and *Once in a Promised Land* (2007), written by Laila Halaby. The analysis of the first novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, shows that some Arab immigrants were too reluctant to acculturate with the host culture and preferred to maintain their original culture. However, the second novel, *Once in a Promised Land*, displays a different attitude towards Arab immigrants who choose to assimilate totally into host culture. Both novels address the issue of the acculturation of Arab immigrants, employing Berry's strategies of acculturation.

Acculturation and enculturation are the major concepts that bound the current study, for enculturation, it represents a social phenomenon and is described as the first acquisition of one's culture that includes values and behaviors that are necessary for the communities' survival. Melville J. Herskovits (1948) "described enculturation as the process of socialization into, and maintenance of, the norms of one's indigenous culture, such as the salient values, ideas, and concepts" (qtd in. Kim & Alamilla 5).

On the other hand, acculturation is a concept that explains the cultural change resulted from the meeting of two or more cultures, it is defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936) as fellows: "Acculturation comprehends those

phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (149).

The core of this study is to explore the different levels of conflict among Arab Americans in order to maintain their identity in the United States. Chen writes in this context that whenever immigrants are confronted with a new host culture**,** "as soon as they arrive in the targeted country, a certain amount of adjustment is inevitable … [t]he process of acculturation occurs when immigrants try to re-organize their lives in the unfamiliar environment even if they are still surrounded by close relational ties. The range of acculturation can be enormous" (1). Thus, this study deals with the acculturation strategies that occur when Arabs immigrate to the United States. For instance, not all Arabs immigrating to the USA have the same degree of cultural resistance to their first culture. According to Berry (1997), acculturation occurs at three levels: assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization, and he defines them as:

> When individuals do not wish to maintain their cultural identity and seek daily interaction with other cultures, the *Assimilation* strategy is defined. In contrast, when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the ***Separation*** alternative is defined. When there is an interest in both maintaining one's original culture, while in daily interactions with other groups, ***Integration*** is the option; here, there is some degree of cultural integrity maintained, while at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network. Finally, when there is little possibility or interest in cultural maintenance (often for reasons of enforced

cultural loss), and little interest in having relations with others (often for reasons of exclusion or discrimination) then ***Marginalisation*** is defined (9).

The study of acculturation strategies in both novels involves the analysis of different cultural components like culture, Islam, identity construction, belonging, discrimination, and the 9/11 attacks and their impact on Arab Americans. Hence, to explore these variables, a set of sub-research questions are raised as fellows:

- What are the predominant strategies that might characterize the shift from enculturation to acculturation in the selected novels?
- To what extent do Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad acculturate to the American culture?
- Why do Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad acculturate differently?
- What role does enculturation play in the acculturation of Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad?

Besides the acculturation theory selected to study both novels, the Kalervo Oberg theory of culture shock (1960) is combined with the previous theory of acculturation to elucidate the cultural differences of Arab immigrants in the United States. Culture shock may occur among immigrants because of the radical change in tradition and culture.

The thesis is composed of four chapters. The first chapter is a review of the previous literature concerning culture, acculturation theories, and other important concepts related to the study. This is the first part of the chapter, the second part reviews Arab American literature from its early beginnings with El Mahjar literature and its founders to the most recent writings, and the most prominent Arab American

literature with a bias toward the women Arab American writers. This part also enfolds themes and major issues that led to the rise of a considerable constellation of Arab American women writers, who make it a responsibility to clear up their position from terrorism and to define themselves to the world instead of being defined by others, as Aossey claims "if we, as Arab Americans, don't define who we are and for what we stand, someone else will do it for us" (50).

The second chapter analyzes the integration journey of Khadra Shamy in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (*2006). The study focuses on Khadra's shift from an enculturation phase-sticking of the original culture to an integration phase. Khadra's struggle is centered on how she adopts the new culture, which is obviously an overwhelmed culture, while keeping her identity and culture. The study is based on Berry's strategies of acculturation to analyze every acculturation process of Khadra Shamy, whose path of adaptation to the host culture was not easy. Kahf examines the question of acculturation in its global context through the protagonist, Khadra Shamy, who was juggled between two strong, distinct cultures.

The third chapter explores the effect of the 9/11 attacks on Salwa and Jassim, an Arab American couple, on their assimilation phase in *Once in a Promised Land* (2007). Both Salwa and Jassim were assimilated into the host culture; however, their marriage and their lives in the United States begun to unravel after the 9/11 attacks as they were spotted as probable danger. The chapter also examines the anti-Arab sentiments in the United States and the stereotypes drawn up about Arabs as terrorists. Moreover, the American Dream and its impact on the couple are discussed in this chapter. The couple chooses to delve into American consumerist culture and consider the American lifestyle as their perfect model. However, all this was

overturned after the 9/11 attacks, as they began to question their existence in the United States.

The fourth chapter examines the differences and similarities of the acculturation strategy in both novels. The study encompasses various themes explored in the novels discussed in chapters two and three. The comparison tends to illustrate how both writers deal with the issue of the acculturation of Arab immigrants in the United States. Mohja Kahf tries to make American readers understand the different problems that an Arab immigrant may encounter in his life, which, by consequence, may hinder his response to integrating into American society. However, Laila Halaby explores the same issue differently; she highlights an important question which is even an assimilated immigrant may find difficulties living peacefully in the United States. This is due to American society, which refuses to accept this assimilated immigrant as an American and still considers him an ethnic outsider.

Chapter One: Relevant Literature Review

Arab American literature has always been marginalized in the American literary hemisphere. Meanwhile, the emergence of a considerable number of Arab emigrants in America, and the submerging of new talented literary voices help Arab American literature manifest and take a distinctive place in the ethnic landscape of American literature. This chapter examines the historical existence of both the literary and social existence of Arabs in America and provides a conceptual background to the different milestones in their process of acculturation. The first part of this chapter gives definitions of several concepts that are related to this study, especially concepts related to culture.

The second part deals with the rise of Arab American literature from Al Mahjar literature to the most recent Arab American writers. Arab American literature was established by the first immigrant writers settled in the United States, who are known as Al Mahjar Writers or Al Mahjar Literature**.** The name Al Mahjar was given to them by the literary community in the Arab world; the denotation of the word Mahjar means another place where people can immigrate. It is a new place where people can change something that is hard to change in their place of origin.

The Mahjar literature was known for its features like freedom from traditional restrictions, the Mahjarite writers fought all sorts of conservative restrictions coming from the east; and called for a reinvigoration of literature by prioritizing the spiritual aspect over the aesthetic aspect. They also glorified individualism and spiritual meditation, the Mahjarites poets see in the individual a total richness that may contribute to the whole body of literature "one for all". Besides the individual aspect of their literary works, spiritual meditation is strongly noticed in Mahjar literature. *The Procession* is one of the most significant philosophical poems; it is composed of two hundred and three verses. In this poem, Gibran returns to nature and rejects the dominance of industrial life over the individual. These literary canons were living in the Mahjar, whose name implies exile in Arabic, some of them could not return to their homeland, and for that reason they wrote extensively on nostalgic themes. Homesickness was a prominent theme in their works. They always showed hope of returning home one day and wrote about their difficulties in trying to cope with the new environment.

This chapter also gives an overview of modern Arab American writing, especially after the Civil Rights and Black Power movements, which promoted ethnic groups' freedom of expression. Writers like Sam Hamod, Naomi Chihab Nye,

Suhair Majaj, Diana Abu Jaber, Laila Halaby, Mohja Kahf, and other prominent writers all expose the issue of dual identity for Arab Americans.

Chapter Two: Acculturation Process in Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*

The study of the current chapter is based on Berry's strategies of acculturation to analyze every acculturation process of Khadra Shamy. The focus will be on her different attitudes towards the host culture; the analysis also sheds light on Khadra's reaction towards her culture and religion as she discovers that all she was taught about them is being questioned. Furthermore, the analysis encompasses the different factors that have a direct effect on Khadra's acculturation process.

The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf is a novel that explores the life of a Syrian immigrant family called Shamy, a significant name that Kahf gives to her characters. The family immigrated to the USA in order to find new opportunities and make their lives better. As they consider themselves temporary sojourners, they had to make some important strategies, among them an economical one, which is saving money. In terms of their private lives, they struggle to raise their children in a society of Kuffar full of contradictions. The task was not easy for Wajdy and Ibtehaj to teach Islam values to their children, which is why they were so severe in terms of Islam principles like (Sallat*)* prayer, (Wudu) ablution, hijab for their daughter, and other Islamic principles. Khadra builds up a sharp view of the surrounding events; she always judges things right or wrong. All that is compatible with Islamic values and traditions is considered right, while anything that differs is considered wrong, or simply Haram. This attitude makes Khadra trapped in the separation phase of acculturation, which hampers her acculturation for some time.

In the swirling events in which Khadra was living, she successfully found her way to acculturate and integrate into the host culture. The path to acculturation was not smooth, the radical environment that Khadra lived in made her acculturation very difficult, if not impossible, but her acumen and her willingness to find herself and her identity helped in her transition from the separation phase of acculturation to an integration phase.

Chapter Three: The Status of Acculturation in the 9/11 Aftermath in Laila Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*

Once in a Promised Land, written in 2007, explores the conflicts that a Jordanian couple faces in the aftermath of the terrible 9/11 attacks. Salwa and Jassim have been living in the United States for more than nine years. Jassim is a hydrologist, and Salwa is working in a bank and is considered a successful real estate trainee. The couple lived in Arizona, far away from Ground Zero where the attacks took place, but they suffered the aftermath of the attacks, and their lives turned upside-down.

Both of them are trying to achieve their American Dream by purchasing all that luxurious; for Salwa, the silky pajamas are the ones she adores most in markets, and she never stops buying them. Jassim owns a very expensive Mercedes Benz that even Americans could not obtain. This pursuit of luxuries is depicted in the story by the narratives of a folktale that recites the story of Ghula (monster), who lures her victims through the beautiful things in her house and eats them as soon as they are fully indulged in her brilliance.

After her miscarriage, Salwa enters serious psychological troubles, which led her to befriend an American guy and have a sexual relationship with him, neglecting all her Islamic principles.

For Jassim, the situation was not ideal, after his accident in which he killed a boy, problems began to haunt him, and he became a suspect vis-à-vis the FBA. He also sought refuge in the arms of a white woman.

Both of them try to find themselves in the arms of Americans, who unfortunately reject their attempts at integration.

The novel is a cautionary tale that warns Americans "to transcend binary discourses in order to avoid further crises from escalating either within or beyond American borderline" (Lloyd 3), Halaby blames both sides for the bad consequences following the 9/11 incident. She blames Americans through the story for their binary discourses and the double standards they used in dealing with Arab Americans, like when Jake hit Salwa, the officer insisted on blaming Jake; he said that Jake was "high in drugs". However, when Jassim accidentally hit and killed the boy, the FBI treated him as a suspect, and consequently, Jassim lost his job. Halaby also criticizes Arab Americans, who disclaim their origins and embrace the American Dream blindly, thinking that American culture is perfect and without blemishes. However, the reality is that their culture of origin is by no means compatible with the American one; therefore, many Arab Americans like Jassim and Salwa have lost their identities and find themselves living the American nightmare.

Chapter Four: Comparative Study on the Acculturative Strategy for Khadra Shamy and Salwa Haddad

This analysis is meant to discuss the differences and similarities between integration and assimilation in both novels by adopting a methodology of comparison based on different logics. The current comparative study is adopted from Lesly Barlett and Frances Varvus'(2017) article "Comparative Case Studies: An Innovative Approach".

The first analysis goes through various units dealt with in both novels, like the general settings of both novels: Islam, identity, racism, and so forth. The second logic is "processual logic [that] seeks to trace across individuals" (Bartlett & Vavrus 8), this latter allows us to compare the attitudes and behaviors of the main protagonists and characters in both novels. Themes in Arab American literature have evolved over the years according to the needs of the Arab community in the United States. Back to the Mahjar literature, where homesickness, liberty from old norms, pure love, and admiring nature were the famous and major themes tackled at that time. But nothing stays as it begins, the Arab literature turned its focus on identity, religion, stereotypes, integration, and assimilation issues among Arabs in the United States, and the most crucial themes were racism and the post- 9/11 dilemma.

Both novels, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) and *Once in a Promised Land* (2007), offer effective reflections and experiences of Arab and Muslim communities in the United States. Both novels try to make things clear for the American reader; they write stories that reflect real people. The novels delve into a wide range of human emotions including love, hate, passion, eagerness, identity, language, food, and dress; they also write on integration, and assimilation, separation, and marginalization; and most importantly, they clarify some American

stereotypes of Arabs as savages and backwards: "The works endorse, by and large, American stereotypes of Arab male savagery and Arab female victimization through exaggerated and insensitive portrayal of a 'backward Arabia'" (Al Maleh 41).

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From Separation to Integration: the Journey of Khadra Shamy in "The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf" through Berry's Conception of Acculturation Modes

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Abstract:
The acculturation process among Arab Muslim Americans has been widely disputed by scholars and writers in recent years. Arabs in the United States are among several ethnic minorities who found it difficult to assimilate the American society due to many factors in which language and religion are worth considering. The protagonist Khadra Shamy in The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf (2007) written by the Arab American writer Mohja Kahf is an allegory to the Arab Muslims in America and in particular to the Arab women who were caught between the identity triangle of American, Arab, and Muslim. The current study analyzes the process of acculturative emancipation of Khadra Shamy adopting the Berry's model of acculturation strategies (1997).

Key words:
Acculturation, American, Arab, identity, integration, Islam, Separation.

1. Introduction

Khadra Shamy is the protagonist of the famous novel the Girl in The Tangerine Scarf (2007) written by Mohja Kahf; the prominent feminist writer and poet who immigrated to the United States from Syria in the mid 70's when she was just four. The story spines around an Arab girl who emigrated from Syria with her family for political reasons; Khadra Shamy was raised in a religious atmosphere where Islamic principles are strictly respected. Khadra wears hijab[1] from an early age, which causes her troubles and makes her suffer bigotry and racism from host citizens. Khadra feels

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herself rejected from Americans and tries to find her identity in being Arab and Muslim. The journey of Khadra to prove her Arab identity failed when she visited the holy Land, or "the Land of the Prophet" as she calls it in the novel. Her sorrowful experience with her relative Afaf when she took her in a Limousine with Saudi men who sexually harassed her, has dislocated her from all what she learnt about Arabs and Islam. After her marriage with Jumua, which was broken later on, she went to Syria where she discovered the real motives behind her parents' immigration and their religious severity which Ebtihaj justified as "Our biggest fear was losing you", Ebtihaj said … "Losing our children to America. Have you not keep Islam one hundred percent." (Kahf, 2007, pp.383-384). Ibtihaj sought to keep her children more attached to the Syrian traditions while as Khadra she grew up was convinced that being a good Muslim has no relation with being an Arab, and she chose to be in the hyphen. Eventually, she discovered that the end of the story "I guess what I've been doing is trying to get to a place where I could reconnect the two, and be a whole person" (Kahf, 2007, p. 395). She discovers that she and her folks are perfect Americans, perfect Hoosiers "Khadra realizes suddenly, as she surveys the crowd: they're us, and we're them. Hah! My folks are the perfect Hoosiers[2]!" (Kahf, 2007, p. 438).

The current study shows how Khadra moves from a separation phase of acculturation to a more integrated phase which suits her better although her parents have had another point of view. The study adopts Berry's acculturation strategies or modes as Ward and Duba(1999) have put it in their article "Acculturation and Adaptation Revisited" (p.493). Berry's strategies of acculturation theory dichotomize four distinct levels of acculturation; Assimilation, Integration, Separation, and Marginalization. The current study sheds light on two main issues when two incompatible cultures collide, and which Berry (1997) classified as "cultural maintenance (to what extent cultural identity and characteristics are considered to be important, and their maintenance strived for)" (p. 9). Accordingly, this situation corresponds to the situation that Khadra' infancy, which inevitably led her to a separation phase of acculturation. The second issue is "contact and participation (to what extent should they become involved in other cultural groups, or remain primarily among themselves)" (Berry, 1997,p. 9). These two major issues of cultural identification of non dominant groups make the core study of Khadra's transition path to integration.

2. The Acculturation Process in Khadra's Journey of Cultural Emancipation

Arab Immigrants living in the United States are likely the most affronted with a huge and distinguished culture. Most of Arab Americans are Muslims and try to cohabit with the new culture either by assimilating totally in the immerged culture or by integrating into it but keeping their original culture in their homes or among their communities. However, there are others who prefer to reject the host culture and to maintain their own culture everywhere. These differences in adapting the immerse culture show that the process of acculturation among immigrants is not the same, and it may happen at different levels under different factors, and among

these factors are the type of immigrants includes voluntariness, mobility, and permanence.

Table one: Types of acculturation groups

MOBILITY	VOLUNTARINESS OF CONTACT	
	VOLUNTARY	INVOLUNTARY
SEDENTARY	ETHNOCULTURAL GROUPS	INDIGENOUS PEOPLES
MIGRANT permanent temporary	IMMIGRANTS SOJOURNERS	REFUGEES ASYLUM SEEKERS

Source: Acculturation and Adaptation (Berry et.al., 1997, p. 295)

This classification facilitates the study of the process of acculturation of each immigrant group; our interest is on Khadra Shamy's family who belongs to the voluntary ethnic group of immigrants who have gone to the United States from Arab countries seeking freedom and new opportunities. This study is based on the Berry's four Acculturation Strategies as a whole and on two acculturation dimensions concerning "(1) the value or importance of maintaining one's cultural identity and characteristics and (2) the value or importance of relationships with other ethnic groups (Berry et al. 1986; As cited in Hasiao & Wittig, 2008, p. 3). These two fundamental dimensions figure out the acculturation path of Khadra Shamy to achieve integration with the dominant culture. For Khadra, maintaining her values and resisting the host culture was all what she devoted herself to achieve at the first stage of her life. However things went differently when Khadra started to compare her life and how she practiced her religion freely in America, and that's of her Arab relatives in Saudi Arabia and Syria.

2.1. The Separation Phase

Acculturation is widely defined by anthropologists as the phenomenon of culture change that occurs when people of different backgrounds live together. Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, as cited in Berry, 1997) define acculturation as follows: "Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" (p, 7). According to Gillin and Raimy(1940 as cited in Raymond and Bardin, 1974) acculturation refers to: "Those processes whereby the culture of a society is modified as the result of contact with culture of one or more other societies" (p. 351). These definitions are a sample of many other definitions that analyze acculturation from a vantage point of social groups considering the whole over the individual. However, there are other anthropologists and psychologists that add to the previous concept of acculturation the

importance of the individual in the group as a dynamic member which has to be well considered when dealing with the concept of acculturation. According to Berry (2005), there are double acculturation levels that happen at the same time, an acculturation between groups and a psychological acculturation that happens at the level of individuals:

Acculturation is the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members. At the group level, it involves changes in social structures and institutions and in cultural practices. At the individual level, it involves changes in a person's behavioral repertoire. These cultural and psychological changes come about through a long-term process, sometimes taking years, sometimes generations, and sometimes centuries. (p. 698)

This distinction given by Berry is very important in analyzing Khadra's process of acculturation. Kahf has skillfully created both acculturation levels in the novel, one of the Shamy's family which is allegorical to the whole ethnic group of Arab immigrants that flocked to America from unstable middle-east countries, and the other of Khadra, the girl that represents an individual lost between two incompatible cultures, the origin and the host cultures. Khadra was enjoying the life in America, but as she was too young, she did not recognize so, and she unconsciously tried to deny this truth and followed her family's instructions to show them that she is the best who can preserve Islam and their Syrian traditions. The process of acculturation among groups and individuals is doomed to different factors including the acculturative stress (Berry, 1970; Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987) or culture shock[3] (Oberg, 1960), Berry (1997) views that these terms suggest a negative psychological outcome that immigrants endure in their phase of cultural change; almost every character in the Girl in the Tangerine Scarf has suffered from an acculturative stress while trying to keep his/her culture.

Khadra's journey to acculturation starts at a very early age, when she saw her mother run the laundry twice to wash their clothes because she thought that "Americans didn't care about impurities "(Kahf,2007,p. 4). According to Ibtihaj, her children are not Americans; she often washes her children from impurities and screamed making them know that they are not Americans and they should not be! "Do you think we are Americans? Do you think we have no limits? Do you think we leave our children wandering in the streets? Is that what you think we are?.."We are not Americans!" …"We are not Americans" (Kahf, 2007, p. 66-67), from that point Khadra conceives the concept of otherness, they are not Americans; and should never be alike. The parents try to impose the culture of origin on their children who practically are not acquainted with; hence, Khadra lived in an American culture daily, she goes to school and meets people, and at the same time she was obliged to forget about the host culture while embracing what her parents dictated to her on how they should live as Syrian Muslims in a foreign country.

Khadra enters in a culture shock stage where everything "Is precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all of our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse" (Oberg, 1953, p. 1). This stage of culture shock that for instance, Ibtihaj was living has negatively reflected the life of the small Khadra especially when she observed her mother experience some cultural shock symptoms like excessive wash of their bodies, clothes, and the obsessive hygiene. Khadra suffers from a wide range of stressors which entangle her in a separation phase of acculturation; fearing and doubting everything coming from outside her familial frame. Berry et al. (1970 As cited in Ward & Duba, 1999) have stressed that "the process of acculturation has been largely interpreted within a stress and coping framework" (p. 423). Khadra was put in an awkward situation where she was obliged to live and study with the Kuffar,[4] and she had to prevent herself from living like them; she was even prevented from eating their food though it is a candy corn because it may contain big! (Kahf, 2007). But later, Khadra discovered that her mother has stressed her for nothing because she was not mature enough for sins to be counted, "… puberty makes your Islamic duties fully incumbent on you," Ibtihaj said. "Now you are of age. Now sins count." "They did count before?" Khadra said. "Nobody mention that! So—eating pig candy corn didn't hurt!" (Kahf, 2007, p. 109).

Unfortunately, Khadra discovered that her parents lied to her; Khadra was kept between two adjustment levels where she was obliged to psychologically cope with the culture of origin in a totally dissimilar cultural background. A parallel complementary research to Berry's strategies (cultural maintenance, and contact and participation) conducted by the scholars Ward and Kennedy (1994), also suggests two distinct levels of acculturation adjustment in which acculturation of individuals is best measured. The psychological level and the social level are distinct but they are interrelated (Ward & Duba, 1999). the psychological adjustment is measured in terms of the deeper psyche of the individual, and the extent to which he can hold up a different culture, whether he receives any social support or not, in addition to his ability to cope with life changes(Stone & Feinstein & Ward, 1990; Ward & Kennedy,1992,1993a,1993b;Ward & Searl,1991). At that level, Khadra was psychologically oppressed through the old norms of her culture of origin, and she did not find any social support to face off the overwhelming culture; the only supposed social support that Khadra received is her family, but this later stands as a strong barricade between her and the host culture refusing any sort of courtesy from it.

The other side of sociocultural adaptation was not much better than her psychological adaptation, for some scholars (Searle & Ward 1990; Ward & Kennedy, 1992, 1993a, 1993b as cited in Ward and Duba,1999) suggest that:

Sociocultural adaptation, measured in relation to the amount of difficulty experienced in the performance of daily tasks, is more dependent

on variables such as length of residence in the new culture, language ability, cultural distance, and the quantity of contact with the host nationals. (p. 424)

Outside the house, Khadra suffered a severe discrimination from American teenagers who called her "raghead", (a derogative appellation for a person who wears a turban), shouting at Khadra and her friends to return back to their homes. She was also a subject of racism when she was intimidated from the composition teacher Mrs. Tarkington giving her D's grades because she always writes about how hypocritical America is. She has also been harassed at school by American children who took off her veil to see what hid beneath, one of them commented " Look, raghead's got hair under that piece a shit" (Kahf, 2007, p. 124), and when Khadra shouted and screamed " I hate you", one of them replied back " It's just hair, You psycho!"(p.124). This social malaise and disturbance engendered a set of stressors which made Khadra reluctant to integrate with the host society.

The psychological and sociocultural stressors are a handicap in front of any immigrant willing to integrate with the host culture. In the case of Khadra, she rather prefers to isolate herself from any cultural influence of the American culture, which is dichotomized by Berry in his acculturation strategies as separation; "when individuals place a value on holding on to their original culture, and at the same time wish to avoid interaction with others, then the **Separation** alternative is defined" (Berry, 1997, p. 9).

Many situations in the novel show that Khadra was hostile to everything coming from the American culture, and she grew up measuring and modeling events and situations through her Islamic narrow minded perspective.

2.2. The Integration Phase

As ward and colleagues (1999) indicate in the definition of sociocultural adjustment, some variables such as the length of residence in the host country and language ability are for a great importance for any individual to integrate in the host society. What happened to Khadra later on is that she gained a very good English language and she had various relationships with American citizens, though she did not agree with them in many religious and life principles, but the fact that she lived a considerable time in America and she became an American citizen as well has made her acquainted with that culture and somehow befriended it. In a last attempt to prove her belonging to the Arab culture, she went to the pilgrimage with her family. She was yearning for going to an Arab Land especially the Land of the Prophet "… some place where we really belong. It's the Land of the Prophet. The Land of all Muslims" (Kahf, 2007, p. 159); thinking that Islam which came from those places, should be well preserved there. However, what Khadra had experienced in the land of the prophet blew off the typical image that she has drawn about Islam in Arab countries. What happened in Saudi Arabia had shaken her up and made her revisit the previous knowledge about Islam and Arabs. Khadra was escorted by the police because she went to pray el fajr[3] in the mosque "… Khadra was back, escorted by two matawwa policemen… We found her trying to get to the mosque" (Kahf, 2007, p. 166), Khadra was so frustrated, and she said that

"I---just---wanted--- to pray---fajr" (Ibid 167), Khadra feels herself stranger in the Land of the Prophet and missed America where going to the mosque is not forbidden. Khadra's experience with Affaf, her relative, was bitter than that of the mosque. They together went out to do some shopping as Affaf told Khadra; when they got in the limousine full of Young Saudis, Affaf introduced Khadra as her "American cousin". The word American gives impression to the young men that she is open- minded, and that she will do whatever they ask since America is the country of liberties. What happened is that Khadra was harassed; she did not believe that it happens to her and Arab Muslim people do things like that in the holy land, and she wished leaving that land immediately. On the plane, Khadra was the most glad of all:

I'm glad we're through with that place"… Khadra was glad to be going home. "Home"--- she said, without thinking. She pressed her nose against the airplane window…The sweet relief of her own clean bed awaited her there--- and only there, of all the earth. (Kahf, 2007, p.179). Khadra was frustrated by Arab people who are supposed to protect Islam, are losing their Islamic values, and deepening the stereotypes drawn on them by the western media.

After returning home, Khadra started rethinking her conception about what Islam is; her maturity and her education in American schools and her long sojourn in America[6] allow her to redefine all knowledge acquired from her family:

She began doubting everything and at the same time she began reading on Islam to construct her own view of it, far from any paternal pressure; "It was the beginning of neoclassical phase. She thirsted now to study the traditional Islamic heritage. It seemed to the answer lay in there somewhere---not in the newfangled Islamic revivalism of her parents and the Dawah, with its odd mixtures of the modern and the Prophetic. (Kahf, 2007, p. 194)

She even thought of traveling to Al-Azhar University or changing her major to Islamic Studies for the sake of understanding real Islam. She also started to lighten her clothes wearing white scarves with tiny flowers and discarded her dark navy jilbab back in her closet "… Khadra put on a white scarf with tiny flowers like a village meadow in spring, and a pale blue blouse and soft floral skirt. Her broadcloth navy jilbab and plain black scarves she shoved back of her closet" (Kahf, 2007, p.193).

Khadra's turn to integration occurred steadily and was well thought out. She got rid of all stressors and handicaps that delayed her integration; according to Berry et al. (1987 as cited in Ward & Deuba, 1999) "Marginalization and separation are associated with high levels of acculturative stress, integration is associated with a low level of stress" (p. 424).

After her unsuccessful marriage with Jumua al-Tashkenti, she decided to return back to Syria "Back where she came from: Syria. Land where her fathers died" (Kahf, 2007, p. 266). Her decision was an attempt to clear up her mind from all the stressors that she witnessed in her life and started a

new life. Khadra attempted to do it in Haj[7], she wants to erase all her sins and to start her new life as a new born, but she failed as she was indulged in a flirt affair "… it was hopeless to dream of absolution. So it was all for nothing: she hadn't even finished Haj, and she had already blown it. She would never emerge pure as a new born baby"(Kahf, 2007, p. 179).

In Syria Khadra learnt a lot about her parents' history and how they immigrated to America, she understood the motives behind the immigration of her parents and was proud of them; her knowledge of her parent's history was an important factor to start a new life. By returning to Syria, Khadra was in date with nature and pureness. In the Ghuta,[8] Khadra's soul found relief; Khadra's veil slipped off her head, and she didn't pull it back, and under the cherry tree, Khadra unveiled herself for the first time:

The scarf was slipping off. She shrugged. The Chiffon fell across her shoulders…She closed her eyes and let the sun shine through the thin skin of her eyelid, and she knew deep in the place of yakin that it was all right, a blessing on her shoulders. Alhamdu, alhamdulilah"…Under the Cherry-tree canopy it had felt fine having her scarf slip off. She was safe; she was among friends. (Kahf, 2007, pp. 309-310)

Kahf has created a special scene for the unveiling of Khadra, for Khadra was not used to stay without a cover and the cherry tree was a symbol of protection for her. Khadra was convinced that there are different ways to worship God, and continued her life fluctuating between veiling and unveiling according to the occasions.

This level of self reconciliation was enough for Khadra to return home in America and to start a new life where she melted her American identity with Islam. Khadra returned home fully intending to culturally integrate in the dominant culture; she hence decided not to wear the veil in all occasions. She also decided not to finish her degree because she didn't choose; it was the choice of her family: "Photography, what she wanted from the start, but hadn't even let herself acknowledge she wanted, because it wasn't in the Dawah program, in the Wajdy and Ibtihaj program" (Kahf, p. 315). Khadra refused to return to Indiana where she had grown up; she moved to Philadelphia and started her new job at the morgue. She opened her mind and accepted others as they are, and this was clear by the different friendships that she had made, she was even indulged with a relationship with Shrif, an American guy from Tunisia. Afterwards she returned to Indiana and met her family, they accepted her and respected her choice, they even agreed when she and Hakim, her childhood friend, were in relationship.

3. Conclusion

On the basis of Berry's conception of acculturation (1991 as cited in Berry, 1997,) which states that "Integration can only be "freely" chosen and successfully pursued by non-dominant groups when the dominant society is open and inclusive in its orientation towards cultural diversity" (p. 10), it is concluded that Khadra succeeded in her move to reintegration in the American society. She lived in a country where all religions are welcomed;

the civil rights that Khadra was enjoying in America helped her to unhitch herself from the old traditions.

In his article "Acculturation: Living successfully in two cultures", Berry highlights an important strategy that may undoubtedly enhance the Acculturation process of immigrants. Berry believes that "Acculturation and adaptation are now reasonably well understood; I believe that we are in position to pursue the development of policies and programs to promote successful outcomes for all parties involved in the contact situation" (Berry, 2005, p. 700). According to Berry, it is necessary to develop strategies and policies to help immigrants integrate in the host culture, and as well as for nationals to understand and accommodate cultural differences. Noted that the United States was founded as a nation of immigrants who were part of the national economy. John F. Kennedy (1958) states that "Every American who has ever lived, with the exception of one group, was either an immigrant himself or a descendant of immigrant"(NCSL).

The United States of America advocates the role of immigrants in the development of the whole nation; in fact, they are an integral part of the American population landscape. For any immigrant who wants to succeed in America, s/he has to understand the American culture first and to try to adapt himself/herself gradually in that culture without losing his/her identity; and that what integration is. What happens to a large extent of Arab Muslims living in America is that they want to keep their culture of origin melted with Islamic principles, and this what Khadra denied at the end of the story. She finds out that Islam is a religion dedicated to all humanity, so why relate it to Arabic culture? One can be American and Muslim at the same time, needless to adopt a culture which represents for her a past, and could cause her problems in the American society which she chose to belong to.

Khadra's process of acculturation was marked by different events that have influenced her acculturation process from the phase of separation to the phase of integration. Noting that these events remain the same, nothing changes from her childhood to her adulthood, what really changed is her way of thinking, her willingness to accept differences, her tolerance for religions, and her faith in great merciful God.

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Références

1 *Hijab*: the traditional covering for the hair and neck that is worn by Muslim women https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hijab

2 Hoosiers: a native inhabitant of the state of Indiana, US. https://www.lexico.com/definition/hoosier

3 Culture shock: a sense of confusion and uncertainty sometimes with feelings of anxiety that may affect people exposed to an alien culture or environment without adequate preparation. https://www.merriam-webster.com/

4 *Kuffar:* Disbelief. A significant concept in Islamic thought, the word *kufr* or one of its derivatives appears in the *Quran* 482 times. Also means "ingratitude," the willful refusal to appreciate the benefits that God has bestowed. http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/

5 Elfajr: (dawn) is the first of the five daily prayers performed daily by practicing Muslims.

6 As cited in Ward and Duba (1999), factors like the length of residency in the host culture, language ability and the degree of contact with host nationals are highly considered in the acculturation process of any immigrant.

7 El Haj (islam) the pilgrimage to Mecca that every Muslim is required to make at least once in his life, provided he has enough money and health to do so. https://www.thefreedictionary.com/

8 Is a countryside and suburban area in southwestern Syria.