University of Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed
Faculty of Foreign Langauges
Department of English

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Re-Inscribing Identity: Resistance, Memory, and Diaspora in Non-Native Writings

Presented by:
Mrs. Wafaa FALI

Supervised by:
Prof. Malika BOUHADIBA

Board of Examiners

Dr. Walida DJEBAILI	**University of Oran 2**	**President**
Prof. Malika BOUHADIBA	**University of Oran 1**	**Supervisor**
Dr. Fatima Z BENAGHROUZI	**University of Mostaganem**	**Examiner**
Dr. Zoubida SEBANE	**University of Oran 2**	**Examiner**

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DEDICATION

First, I dedicate this thesis to my parents, to my husband, and to my little daughter. I want to express deep and special thanks to Dr Karima HADJ TAYEB and Ms Hayat BENSALAH for their sincere friendship, significant help, and constant encouragements.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis attempts to trace postcolonial representations of identity, memory, resistance, and diaspora via a postcolonial reading of selected contemporary women's novels. More specifically, this thesis explores the ways in which contemporary female authors of Arab, African, and Asian origins; notably Diana Abu-Jaber, Laila Halaby, Jhumpa Lahiri, Joan Riley, Kiran Desai, and Elizabeth Nunez, try to deploy identity re-inscription in the diaspora. This study implies a pluralistic conception of social, political, and cultural agency in contemporary postcolonial narratives. The selected literary works operate at various levels: “home” re-definition and identity re-fashioning of immigrant communities in the diaspora to probe the boundaries of Said’s notion of Self/Other and the limits of Bhabha’s hybridity where cultures get incorporated. This study also traces representations of women’s subalternity along with the discourses of diasporic consciousness, stereotypes, and Otherness. This thesis is a reflection on the immigrants’ cultural navigation, where the concept of hybridized identities or “the grey zone”, gives a cultural provenance in the selected non-native writings.

Keywords: diaspora, identity negotiation, resistance, postcolonial literature, home, memory, representation.

RESUME

Cette thèse étudie des représentations littéraires et postcoloniales de la négociation identitaire dans la diaspora en abordant une lecture postcoloniale de certains romans féminins contemporains. Cette thèse explore plus précisément la manière dont les auteurs féminins contemporains d'origine arabe, africaine et asiatique, telles que Diana Abu- Jaber, Laila Halaby, Jhumpa Lahiri, Joan Riley, Kiran Desai et Elizabeth Nunez déploient une ré-formation identitaire dans la diaspora qui implique une conception pluraliste de l'agence sociale, politique et culturelle dans les récits postcoloniaux contemporains. Ces œuvres littéraires opèrent à différents niveaux: redéfinition de la patrie et refonte identitaire des communautés immigrées de la diaspora, permettant de sonder les limites de la notion de Said du Soi / Autre et les limites de l'hybridité de Bhabha, où les cultures se rencontrent et s'incorporent. Cette étude retrace aussi les représentations de la subalternité des femmes et problématise les discours sur la conscience diasporique, les stéréotypes et l'altérité. Cette thèse est une réflexion sur la navigation culturelle des immigrés où le concept d'identités hybrids, «la zone grise», donne une origine culturelle à ces écrits postcoloniaux.

Mots Clés : diaspora**,** négociation identitaire, résistance, littérature postcoloniale, patrie, mémoire, représentation.

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INTRODUCTION

"Re-inscribing Identity: Resistance, Memory and Diaspora in Non-Native Writings" attempts to explore the process of identity formation and negotiation through memory and resistance in postcolonial literary works produced in the diaspora. Six novels of six contemporary immigrant women writers will examine the immigrants' experiences in the U.S. and the U.K. Joan Riley's *The Unbelonging* (1992), Elizabeth Nunez's *Beyound the Limbo Silence* (1998), Diana Abu-Jaber *Arabian Jazz* (2003), Laila Halaby's *West of the Jordan* (2003), Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006), and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth (2009)* are studied from different lenses of postcolonial theory within the contexts of resistance, memory, and diaspora. This study examines contemporary socio-political position and identity negotiation of the postcolonial immigrants as well as the challenges of otherness and alienation that immigrants usually face in the diaspora. This thesis also probes the issue of otherness in the life of the second-generation immigrants who carry complex hybridized identities in their homeland, i.e., the West, and their parents' countries of origin.

Postcolonial writers, though descending from diverse cultural, historical and political backgrounds still do share some similarities regarding themes of resistance, cultural identity and memory. From a postcolonial perspective, treating the issues of colonial history and the current effect of colonial past on native culture(s) help bridge the gap between the experiences of these writers and their native land's culture to stand in opposition to one single dominant version. They challenge cultural marginalization by bringing forth other versions presented by the natives themselves of their national historical accounts. "Epistemological othering" ("Can the Subaltern Speak?" 281), a term introduced by Gayatri Spivak, is one of the challenges that face postcolonial writers in

depicting the postcolonial subjects. The political and theoretical debate of the representation of the “Other” stresses three main limits: racial struggle, gender oppression and class hierarchies. These limits have appeared not only in the period that followed the independence of the former colonies but also with the contemporary flow of migration to Europe and the U.S.

Being influenced by theoretical, political, and historical discourses, contemporary literary discourse challenges any attempt to reduce or generalize the experiences of the marginalized “Other”. Instead, contemporary postcolonial literary productions still keep the voice of “assent and resistance” that challenges official fixed discourse (Ashcroft *et al* 15). Therefore, postcolonial literary works bring out a mosaic of different experiences generally taken from postcolonial subjects’ experiences in the diaspora. In this way, contemporary postcolonial literature transcends the traditional style of re/evolution. Instead, Quanson points out that postcolonial works attempt to reflect on “decolonization” to tackle current issues of immigrant subjects (Quason 18).

The three major axes that this thesis examines: resistance, memory, and diaspora have not been taken at random. They actually represent the major tenets of current postcolonial writings. The wide expansion of postcolonial writings during the last decades of the twentieth century, up to now, cannot be examined away from resistance, memory, and diaspora; all of which are seen as conventional forms of the postcolonial subject’s identity formation and negotiation in the diaspora. In *The Empire Writes Back,* Ashcroft *et al* emphasize the fact that "the postcolonial political and literary resistance along with the nature of post-colonial societies' engagement with imperial language, history, allegory that offers radical new perspectives in post-colonial theory" (3). Nevertheless, the representations of the first generation of postcolonial immigrants relate to intercultural global mobility, while the representations of the second- generation immigrants is basically

linked to the evolving negotiation of hybridized identities.

The interchange between the particular/universal, individual/public and local/global represents cultural clashes that are at the core of the relationship between postcolonialism and globalization in socio-economic perspectives. This shift from the local to the global can be seen via immigration and diaspora. Diaspora is actually related to voluntary immigration and forced dislocation. In a counter-tendency to the global, postcolonialism scrutinizes the threat of global tendencies to homogenize the immigrant subjects (Greenblatt 10), a thing that urges postcolonial scholars to bring back events from the past to foster the postcolonial subjects' difference.

A new diasporic generation of intellectuals from the former colonies: Asia, Africa, Caribbean and Latin America are interested in post-war representations and theories. Many intellectuals chose to migrate "from the periphery to the centre" to produce a critique of the legacies of colonialism. Their aim is encapsulated in setting a rhetorical approach to study the past of colonies by "writing back to the empire", to borrow Ashcroft's expression, in an attempt to cast aside prejudices of the White man burden myth. Changing the space enables postcolonial and politically engaged intellectuals to get a clear retrospective view of their native nations' pasts to understand the shifts of cultural identity. However, some contemporary theorists might consider that postcolonialism tackles challenges of postcoloniality which attempts to come to terms with the heritage left by the formerly colonized nations (Bhabha, *Location of Culture,* 5). This is why, postcolonialism encounters the new globalized world by presenting the locality of culture(s) and preserving nations' differences.

Culture; on the other hand, tends to become global since ethnic cultures around the world cease to remain local, isolated and distinct under the banner of globalization.

Eventually, ethnic cultures start to interact with and nourish other cultures. In such a way, some cultures, which reclaim their ethnicity, criticize the new world system, or rather the new strategy of the globalized extension of a brand new concept of a contemporary empire. In fact, postcolonial studies interpret the particularity and differences of the local and ethnic cultures. They rather deal with anti-colonial influences on culture, epistemological othering, and postcolonial subjectivity. In *Beginning Theory,* Peter Barry states that "postcolonialism finds itself amid of a new organism, a new form of global sovereignty that eliminates national boundaries, overcomes sources of difference and local subject, and serves in nurturing the development of a hybrid cultures and identities" (49). Therefore, postcolonial studies aim to deconstruct boundaries/binaries (local/global) or (centre/periphery) and put them into the scrutiny of transnational transformation.

In *The Empire Writes Back,* Ashcroft *et al* raise the point of the transformation of the local into the global yet they suggest that the local remains un-global in essence. This is because the local shifts from microcosmic entity to enrich the macrocosmic one: from a local sphere to a larger sphere to invest other "localities" that can be enclosed or destroyed in a globalized environment (15). The problematic of hybridized identities or the contemporary hybrid subject occupies a central space in postcolonial and globalization theories alike. In the new globalized societies, hybrid subjects co-exist with their ambivalence and doubleness as an outcome of cross-breeding and cross- cultural encounters. Postcolonialism raises a diasporic tendency that opposes the transformation that the global homogenization imposes on the local, who has eventually become a hybrid subject, to shift towards a global subject through assimilation.

In Aschroft et al's analysis of postcolonialism, however, the critics emphasize the value of immigration's scruples in putting the distinction between the native land and the host land. The native land is a space in geography that encompasses specific ethnic

cultures, beliefs, mentalities, lifestyles to which a certain group of people belongs, relates to and/or compares with the new diasporic nation. Here lies the boundary between the local/global in the sense that the nation and identity are intertwined. Both nation and identity represent two antagonistic coponents to hybrid subjects in the diaspora. Hence, national heritage and belonging mark “a sense of localism” and asserts different and peculiar nation-based paradigms that subvert and question the globalized fixity and conformity (Thieme 98).

In its broadest cultural context, postcolonial studies intersect with the literature(s) of former colonies. They interrelate to account for national literature(s) to challenge the fixed traditions that Western intellectual mainstream has set in the process of the literary survey. It also attempts to reflect the specificity of those literature(s) and the shifts in their cultural process in the current borderless globalized environment. In a transnational context, postcolonialism extols the transnationality of cross-cultural literary works (Thieme 85). Literature(s) of different cultures and nations enrich Postcolonial literary texts. Accordingly, the hybridity of postcolonial literature(s) in English sets the ground for a different version of English different from the classical one known in canonical texts and classics.

This hybridity of expression vested in various English(es) is a liberation mechanism that marks a break with the Academic classical English. For example, English, the language of the colonizer and globalization, is being appropriated by Postcolonial writers to be a medium through which postcolonial expressions flow to be read and understood by audience throughout the world. In *American Theory in the Age of Globalization,* Stephen Greenblatt highlights the attempt of postcolonial literature(s) at understanding “the pragmatic, strategic appropriation of the (Western) national model of literary history with its teleological, developmental narrative of progress in order to confer authority on an

emergent group" (54). Besides, he considers those postcolonial literature(s) as an emergent genre not to be studied just on national or historical grounds but as an adjunct to canonical literatures (50). The critic rather sees that postcolonial writers using English as a literary self- expression is nothing but a new strategy that the West uses to perpetuate its intellectual authority (58). For him, postcolonial literary texts explore issues of hierarchies and class struggle, gender politics, ethnicity and immigration. They represent a new emergent set of literature(s) that stem from in-betweenness, doubleness and hybridized identities.

Likewise, the current growing interest in postcolonial studies during the last decade of the twentieth century has enriched contemporary American as well as British ethnic studies. The study of national/cultural identities comes at the heart of the postcolonial and ethnic studies especially in the literatures produced by immigrants in America and Britain. Such a field of study has shifted towards a transnational standard to account for the interrelation between postcolonial agenda and migrant experiences. In the contemporary world, immigration (forced or willing) draws attention to aspects of migratory experiences in the U.S. and the U.K. Hence, postcolonial literature produced by immigrants discusses aspects of immigration in political, sociological, linguistic contexts and steps beyond boundaries to describe more transnational experiences of immigrants.

In the postcolonial literary perspective, immigration is not merely a matter of immigrants moving from their motherlands to settle down in another land for political, economic, or religious reasons. Instead, immigration is an experience of identity negotiation and assimilation that goes in accordance with cultural, religious, and political norms of the host land. In such a case, immigrants find themselves torn between two cultures: their ethnic culture and the culture of the host country; both cultures are usually different and difficult to reconcile. This confusion grows more when the second generation

of those immigrants experience the burden of their parents' native cultures which seems completely alien to their mother culture (the culture of the host land) to which they belong and bear intentional obligations. In such an atmosphere, the experiences of "in-betweenness" emerge (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture,* 1) and displaced identities in the diaspora. Thus, "in-betweenness" problematizes the notions of "home" and belonging.

"Home" re-definition and belonging represent a controversial episode in the migratory experience. "Home" can only be defined, in Ahdaf Soueif's *Mezzaterra: A Common Ground*, as a common ground that combines the real and mystical dimensions of the immigrants' two cultures. Subsequently, "home" represents a common ground where both cultures are combined and enrich each other. From this common ground that consolidates both cultures: ethnic and Western, postcolonial writers narrate the stories and memories of home in the context of intercultural exchange to bridge up the cultural gap between the colonial past and the globalized present.

The discursive strategies of resistance, memory, and diaspora elaborated in the novels of six postcolonial women writers among whom two Caribbean women writers: Elizabeth Nunez and Joan Riley , two Arab women writers: Diana Abu -Jaber and Laila Halaby, and two Indian women writers: Jhumpa Lahiri and Kiran Desai in an attempt to trace postcolonial lines of thought in their novels and understand the way they resist the strategies of othering as a current stereotype in western representations. On the other hand, memory, which is both a psychic trauma and a reconnecting line to the native origins, represents challenges of the immigrant subjects in the process of self-knowledge and self-identification. In the female agency context, it is important to probe oppression and discrimination experiences that female subjects underg sincethey represent the "Other" to racist, imperial, and patriarchal structures amid power discourses. I have chosen

postcolonial women's writings because they have gained fame and recognition in contemporary studies. In fact, they mark an intellectual breakthrough in literary studies and attract the attention of scholars from other disciplines such as politics, sociology, and cultural studies. The interest in postcolonial writings for young teachers of literature opens gates towards scrutinizing and re-exploring the unknown.

This study also seeks to analyse and discuss the issue of resistance in preserving the native culture(s) and memory in the diaspora of six selected postcolonial novels produced by women of African, South Asian and Arab origins: Joan Riley, Elizabeth Nunez, Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Laila Halaby and Diana Abu Jaber who are brought together in this thesis to show the new issues of immigrants in the U.S. and the U.K. In postcolonial literary traditions, resistance is manifested through writing back to the homeland or producing counter-narratives to the official history.

Generally, in formerly colonized countries, there were events erased by the official colonial history. For this reason, postcolonial writers try "to write back" to the former imperialist empires and produce counter-narratives that defy the official accounts. The unofficial accounts usually bring about authentic yet vivid records that were ignored or erased. Hence, memory becomes an act of resistance and a manifestation of the political will through which postcolonial writers attempt to hear silenced voices left unrecognized. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Gayatri Spivak asserts that "Nationalism can only ever be a crucial political agenda against oppression. All longing to the contrary, it cannot provide the absolute guarantee of identity." (274). In order to achieve the reconstruction and appropriation of the subaltern's silence, postcolonial writers attempt to cross cultural borders to transgress silence and to speak out on behalf of those whose lives and voices have been silenced and wiped out in the dominant historical records.

It is noteworthy to point out that not all the writers are immigrants. Jhumpa Lahiri was born in the U.K and Diana Abu-Jaber was born in the U.S. and their mother tongue is English. Accordingly, their culture is notably Western as they themselves represent the second generation of immigrants. Though they do not get usually in contact with Bengal and Jordan, they still write about Bengali and Arab cultures, traditions, ethnic terms, local food, and clothes to prove a postcolonial difference from the Western culture. Lahiri and Abu-Jaber problematize the issue of the second generation's complicated situation in the host society being torn between two distinct cultures: the culture learnt at home clashes with that of the school inspired from British and American societies. For this account, this study attempts to bring these writers together under the scope of analysis since they tackle the three axes of resistance, memory, and diaspora.

"Searching for home", as the desired community and a site of resistance, is a major theme in the novels. It is seen as a way towards cultural identity re-construction in the host country. Resistance to historical oppression, especially the combination of racist exploitation and colonialist subjugation brings together the experiences of resistance of the Black Caribbean, Asian American, and Arab American women. What is deciphered, so far, is the need to recognize the necessity for a multi-faceted approach to resistance (personal, political or cultural) which can be achieved through the recognition of the multi-layered nature of immigrant women's experiences in the diaspora. Such a framework serves in paving the path to the connection between the different sorts of resistance represented by different women regardless of their race or class. The tension of literary form (language, genre, and techniques) is itself a resistant point that subverts traditional rhetorical devices to show some aspects of the writers' nativity. The impulse of analysing multiple points of identity-negotiation makes these writers penetrate the same discursive space; such a shared

space helps account for the writers' ability to face the problems of self-assertion in the diaspora to challenge colonialist, racist Orientalist prejudices, class oppressions, and patriarchal authority. However, no self- knowledge, progress or identity formation can ever be possible without getting in contact with memory. Neither does any future seem possible without coming to terms with the past. Each of the chosen works reflects a specific facet of resistance such as that of the opposition between the public duty (nation, race, or class) and individual duty towards one's self-assertion.

The selection of the novels has been made precisely on the premise of postcolonial issues: stereotypes of former Orientalist representations and the clash between two opposing cultures that co-exist together the in diaspora. Each of the novel affiliates to feminist postcolonial literature(s). It gives diverse versions of the history of each of the writers' native land (for writers of first generation who used to live in the motherland then migrated to the U.S. or the U.K) or those who are categorized as bicultural (born from a mixed race parents or of first generation immigrants in the diaspora). Therefore, they have been selected for their contribution to contemporary English literature since they play a significant role in the development of Non-native literature(s) that re-construct a different reality of the present history of immigrants.

Contemporary novels in English have attracted literary scholars to examine texts which recount a long history of colonial marginalization, burden of assimilation, hybridity, and ambivalence of indigenous people who suffered from colonialism in the past and face exotic representations in the present. The choice of these novels also lies in the fact that contemporary postcolonial women writers address topics of emancipation by celebrating and accepting the idea of being the "Other" (on racist, patriarchal, and social grounds) in this way they go in accordance with the ideas of Frantz Fanon, W.E.B Du Bois, Edward

Said, and Homi Bhabha who trace the importance of showing a sense of consciousness of not only being different but also considered as the “Other”. The female writers try to re-constructing a certain reality of the ‘female self’ to open the way to new ways of understanding their positions as immigrants in the on-going globalized world.

Contemporary readers are often acquainted with the implying reality confined by political, socio-economic, and cultural traits. “The colonial reality” and conventional history tend to alter the borders of certain nations and dictate a specific ideology of citizenship. Besides, “the colonial reality” challenges the indigenous’ local and cultural belonging to a given space on the map, a geographical area in the world called the native land having a set of origins, cultures, lifestyles, languages, and rituals which are usually denied, mocked of, or discarded by official standards of colonial epistemology. This situation calls to mind Jacques Lacan’s psychoanalytical terms of being torn between two realities which sum up the clash between “the Semiotic”, the realm of the mother figure that represents the native land and “the Symbolic” which represents the authority of the father figure. It is this very conflict between the Semiotic and the Symbolic that the postcolonial subjects confront. They are torn between the native cultures to which they are intimately connected; that native land which embodies a spiritual dimension of their *raison d’être* and belonging to the dictated concepts of the colonizer as a supreme authority.

The representation issue in postcolonial writings is not a new theme. It marks the beginning of postcolonial theory with Said’s *Orientalism*. Former colonial conventions and ideologies are persistent and act on current levels of power and discourse. The challenge that postcolonial writers encounter is the implanted and existent colonial conceptual system of conventions in the postcolonial subjects’ daily life in which this intersection needs to be resisted. The new reality of native cultural changes, often affected by the colonial principles, gives a myriad of interpretations and frames of thinking in theory and writing

literature not only during colonization. The problem lies in how a postcolonial writer sees his/her native culture after long years of decolonization and how this culture was seen and handled by the colonizer. This problem of representation is at the core of the ambivalent double consciousness of identity. Another important point is how counter-narratives, which represent the bulk of postcolonial discursive writings, disrupt and re-orient notions of contemporary literary and cultural progress.

In fact, the use of English in postcolonial discursive writings is problematic. Using English, the language of the colonizer, is a self-expression language for postcolonial writers whose mother tongue is not English. This is the case of (Desai, Halaby, Riley, and Nunez) as a primary mode of cultural and intellectual expression is related to the universality of globalization which combines ethnicity and hybridity with the local. Indigenous production of a new literary discourse should cope with contemporary necessities and realities in the way these postcolonial works look forward to transmitting a message: voicing the unvoiced to affect back diverse audience and show cross-roads or cross-cultural intersections of two opposing cultures (Native/Western) (local/universal). In *Postcolonialism: Theory, Practice, or Process?,* Ato Quason declares that postcolonialism is not fixed but is still a subject in process that involves a studied engagement with the expression of colonialism and its past and present effects, both at the local level of former colonial societies as well as the level of more general global developments to be the after-effects of empire (2). Power discourse is another challenge facing contemporary postcolonial writers. The substantial tradition of the colonizer and theorists of former colonial empires promote what Aschcroft *et al* call a "monolithic Western form" that defines knowledge (epistemological level of thinking). The critics describe the engagement with the "Other" through ontology which denies the value of differences and diversity intertwined with imperial modes of behaviour and thought (*The Empire Writes Back* 299).

Here it is important to question whether postcolonial literatures are culturally independent of the canon or not. This is why, postcolonial novels written in English tend to defy the conventional and the expected fixed codes of thought and representation.

Second generation writers such as Jhumpa Lahiri and Diana Abu-Jaber re-write "home" to reveal the clash of cultures since they are hybrid subjects. They do it through writing stories that reflect Arab memories, food, and cultural ceremonies. However, those writers raise the idea of cultural ethnicity and develop cultural hybridity that results in hyphenated identities. Conversely, identity is not examined only in relation to nationality but also to culture. This situation is amid syncretism which literally means a joining of forces. In the literary works produced by both writers mentioned above, the reconnection to home (native land) through imagination, the fusion of historical accounts, cultural, political and literary traditions is revealed to re-map or reconstruct a new image of home, and therefore a new version of their cultural identity. This encounter is an attempt towards interaction and incorporation of native cultures (Western culture and that of the parents') into one language: English, which has become their mother tongue. This interaction makes the postcolonial writers use English, the colonizer's language, as a means of expression without feeling national or cultural betrayal.

In fact, some postcolonial writers born in formerly colonized nations consider using English in their literary works as a threat for their native oral literary traditions. They insist on the importance of written form of the native oral traditions to emphasize cultural translation. It is within the hegemonic discourse of globalization that postcolonial oppressed subjects can express themselves using English. In the surge of women's role to express and "write back" to the native land in English, Spivak argues that "forms of knowledge and epistemological ways of thinking are dominated by Western thinkers" (278). For her, Western epistemological paradigm reforms the native heritage that

postcolonial writers seek to recover in their writings. The formerly colonized native literary traditions stay shuttered images of imagined lands or folklore of perished primitive distant cultures. Spivak considers that the subaltern can never express his/her own ideas or forms of knowledge and logic in depicting his nativity by native tools (278). Spivak also focuses on who the subaltern is: is it the postcolonial subject or the postcolonial woman in particular? The term "subaltern" is widely used and discussed in postcolonial theory, philosophy, and cultural studies. Having an equivocating nature, the term subaltern is used differently according to the context of different disciplines. Robert Young uses it to refer to marginalized people of lower classes; a person rendered without agency by his/her social status (Young 3). The subaltern, therefore, may be any marginalized category which is existent but vanished from historical account. In my opinion, the subaltern can also stand for the women in Third World countries whose experiences and sufferings remained unknown. Third World women's issues have not been allowed to get subscribed to feminist studies as though those women feature other experiences that do not affiliate to the paradigms of feminist lines of thought. A thing that made postcolonial women writers struggle to get a position in the large mainstream traditions to assert their contribution and voice the unvoiced subjects.

The aim of this study is to shed light on contemporary postcolonial non-native writings in English produced by female immigrants. It aims to explore the mechanisms through which postcolonialism as a theory engenders a certain renovation in literary theory in the English-speaking world. It gives an alter-reading beyond the Orientalist representations of the previous canonical works. It gives a new vision of the U.S. through immigrant lenses and introduces a new critical discourse that harks back to the immigrants' origins and native culture(s).

Albeit written in English, postcolonial literary writings do not purely express North American or British insights, names, and styles. What is embedded in the chosen works of this thesis is a re-thinking of the question of identity formation via literary texts. This reflection seeks to create a plurality of perspectives in tackling the issue of identity negotiation in the diaspora to produce variations of the history(ies) of the native nations. Instead of sticking to traditional counter-narratives, since this generation of writers has not experienced the tropes of colonialism, they study the effects of the colonial system on the current cultures. At this point, the objective of this thesis does not necessarily fall in the arena of comparative literature though the novels do share stylistic, thematic, technical, and generic points. The selected novels will be studied separately to trace the three axes that define this thesis: resistance, memory and, diaspora as far as identity negotiation requirements and the sense of otherness in the diaspora are concerned. Furthermore, the study probes what relates the representation of postcolonial women to current tropes of otherness. This thesis also aims to study the selected novels in relation to feminist postcolonial theories which give much attention to gender struggle and patriarchal oppression.

Using postcolonial criticism helps understand the voices of ethnic writers while feminist criticism is useful to understand the female ordeals and search to achieve self-expression. On the other hand, the cultural studies are used to analyse the significance of the interconnections between the texts and their cultural background. Concerning current cultural challenges in diasporic societies, each society recognizes particular cultural codes maintained by a dominant cultural group which determines the limits and hegemony of cultural ideologies. Immigrant writers coming from different backgrounds and cultures do not conform to global homogenization projects and seek to reflect the dynamicity and fluidity of postcolonial hybrid identities distinctively. In revealing their differences,

postcolonial writers attempt to situate their voices among the cacophony of dominant and overpowering cultural voices. Their literary productions present openly their apprehension of reality, race, social and cultural challenges along with their personal self-worth.

In this thesis, there is aspecial attention to the characters' postcolonial situation vested in their relation to their native land in the process of identity transformation in the diaspora. This study also calls into question the limits of national identity and how it is transformed into the paradigms of the host society in the U.S or the U.K. These texts focus on the instability and fluidity of immigrant experiences and identities. The different colonial histories of formerly colonized nations re- inscribe again a new identity. The novels explain the current position of immigrants in diaspora. Next, the study will focus on juxtaposing the literary texts with the main concepts of the thesis: resistance, memory, and diaspora. Reading multi-ethnic texts helps understand native codes related to history and culture. Different cultural kinds of literature need a postmodern redefinition of individual and communal identity as contingent and multiple to challenge the fixed concept of a unique constant identity.

The chapters focus on discussing the immigrants' status of hybridity in the diaspora and probe the female subalternity and politics of otherness regarding representation and identity re- formation. Each chapter encapsulates the analysis of two writers of Caribbean-American, Arab- American or Indian-American identities. In each chapter, multiplicity and different diasporic experiences are scrutinized to show myriad realities of individual and communal experiences of immigrants belonging to the same culture or community.

Chapter one "**Identity and Female Agency in the Postcolonial Discourse"** examines the concepts and the theories used in the study. It reveals the main theories and key concepts. The issues of identity re-inscription, memory, resistance and diaspora will be defined and analysed in the light of Bill Ashcroft's *The Empire Writes Back*, Edward Said's *Orientalism* and other essays along with Homi Bhabha's *The Location of Culture,* Stuart Hall's cultural identities, Gayatri Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak ?".Notions such as Self/Other, hybridity, cultural identity, postcolonialism, and postcolonial criticism will be examined in this chapter to trace their relation to their contribution to contemporary postcolonial, feminist, and cultural studies.

Chapter two **"Migrant Identity and Racial Order"** engages with the first axe of the thesis' argument: resistance. Examining diasporic African Caribbean female experiences, Joan Riley's *The Unbelonging* and Elizabeth Nunez's and *Beyond the Limbo Silence* depict identity negotiation, marginalization, and distorted racist-based representations under colonial gaze. In this chapter, my aim is to examine how Elizabeth Nunez and Joan Riley engage in textual rebellion via writing back home. This chapter will reveal how both authors present problems of integration in Western societies that affects female's identity transitions and construction within the fluid space of Caribbean culture. It is also important to focus on both writers' textual and contextual dimensions in giving a hybrid view of notions of national and cultural identity.

Both Nunez and Riley reveal a resistant tone in dealing with the politics of location, race, and gender discrimination. They show the difficulty of integration within Western societies charged with racial prejudices. This chapter will shed light on the novels' female protagonists' sense of displacement which often accompanies migration along with oppression. Physical and spiritual belonging to Trinidad and Jamaica are often ambivalent, this is why the protagonists are caught in a struggle to re-connect with homeland or re-

create their roots elsewhere on an alien soil.

Chapter three is entitled **"Arab-American Women Rewriting Home"** and focuses on the emergence of a new multicultural generation of Arab-American women writers and examines concepts of representation and responsibility in narratives of postcolonial memory trauma traced in Leila Halaby's *West of the Jordan* and Diana Abu-Jaber's *Arabian Jazz.* This chapter attempts to introduce the dialectic reality of racial categorization and fragmenting memories of home in a hybrid cultural perspective. It also throws light on the recent growing field of Arab studies in American academic projects. The intellectual significance and development of contemporary novels of Arab-American women are also examined to understand cultural hybridity into a convoluted version of diasporic experiences of Arab immigrants. Further, the chapter deepens inside the engagement of Arab-American novels in recording multifarious and divergent identity issues as well as giving an insight to the vogue that Arab writings attains in American cultural and socio-political context after September 11th events.

Chapter four is entitled "**The Politics of Location in Indian Diaspora's Writing".**It explores the significance of the diaspora in commenting on Indian history which, often, tainted with violence and gender discrimination as dramatized in Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth.* The aim of the chapter is to bring forth the extent to which Desai and Lahiri locate and follow the development of national into transnational identity through self-actualization in an attempt to overcome cultural issues. This chapter also attempts to demonstrate the cross-cultural complexity in the Indian diaspora, and the memory of the past as a trauma and unhomeliness. It shows their influence on the identity formation of the Indian immigrants in America. It also reveals the identity crisis through the ambivalent ways of handling the

notion of "home" as a primary revelation of identity. This chapter also probes the significance of diasporic writings within the Indian intellectual boundaries and relates it to global multiculturalism. The struggle towards re - fashioning identity and the struggle to erase representation of otherness will be examineded in the light of culture and hybridity as presented in Edward Said and Homi Bhabha's studies.

CHAPTER ONE:

IDENTITY AND FEMALE AGENCY IN POSTCOLONIAL DISCOURSE

Diaspora is one of the key concepts in this thesis. The literary writings of diaspora address problems that emerge from the transnational space created by a fluid community which is in a state of being in between home and the host country. Diaspora literary studies refers to the immigrants' experiences of nostalgia, cultural, psychological vacuum, loss, and the pain of duty to the native traditions seen as a social obligation to settle and adjust the new life to lay the foundation to a new identity. The identity which once belonged to the initial origin has to be re-configured in proportion to the new space. This process of adapting the self to the host lands brings along a new identity which is composed of dual or even multiple facets. Hall asserts that the past and present are important in the process of subject formation in the host country as it is inevitably intertwined with the present state and therefore it modifies the concept of 'old' identity of the homeland.

Female Agency in Postcolonialism

In this thesis, the Indian women writers: Kiran Desai and Jhumpa Lahiri show the image of modern Indian-American immigrants in the diaspora. Both novelists' works *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Unaccustomed Earth* are analysed from a prevailing postcolonial and feminist standpoints. They focus on the situation of Indian women immigrants and problems of accepting or rejecting certain norms of the Western culture (especially for the first generation immigrants). As portrayed in both novels the experiences of women characters in the diaspora reflect the historical ramifications of cross-cultural circumstances

and the turmoil of patriarchal authority.

Born in 1971 from well-acclaimed family in Chandigarh, India, Kiran lived and studied in India, England, and the U.S. At the University of Bennington, Kiran Desai got her Ph.D. degree in creative writing and has become a lecturer in many American universities before turning towards literary productions. Kiran, just like her mother, the well-known writer Anita Desai, tends to echo the voices of the past in her personal accounts.

Shifting from the local to the immigrant, Desai finally turns out into an American citizen. As a writer, she usually addresses issues of exploring roots through her metafictional techniques to undergo a journey to the past and explore the British colonial system in India. In her novel *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard* published in 1998, Desai tackles the problem of the Indian traditional hostility in the Western culture especially in the United States to which there is no historical or political links. The author follows her female protagonist's journey back home, to India, after spending long years in the U.S. In the end; however, she is left with a feeling of disappointment since the India she left behind, the one imagined and yearned to, has changed. Here lies the problem of the postcolonial subjects who remain torn apart between their homeland and the host country.

Desai explains the difficulty of being in-between two distinct cultures, a situation that necessitates a reflection of one's identity and the need to be identified with a certain identity. Identity recognition serves in answering the question of who the protagonist actually is and to which nation she belongs. Besides, the author addresses the problems of cultural misunderstanding and assimilation in her second novel *the Inheritance of Loss.* Published in 2006, this novel presents Indian characters suffering from marginalization and strictly denied in the new American society though the plot was set in New York broadly

known as a cosmopolitan city that embraces all immigrants of different origins. Desai depicts the efforts of the Indian immigrants usually launch to coordinate their traditions and culture with their life in America. The author traces the hardships of such a journey to an alien world and depicts the difficulty of transition from one culture to another which results in painful experiences leading to their downfall.

In 2006, Desai has become widely acclaimed as one of the top ranked American writers after being awarded Man booker Prize and the National Book Critic Circle Award for Fiction for her novel *The Inheritance of Loss*. This work seems to set the foundation to the major lines of thought of impending novels' themes and to set the patterns of her literary techniques. Set in multi-layered perspectives, *The Inheritance of Loss* focuses on the concept of immigrant position in the large heterogeneous ever-changing American and British societies. Desai depicts characters who act mostly like mediators between the East and the West and between India and the new American society questioning the major premises of melting pot of the U.S. culture.

The Inheritance of Loss's themes and techniques mark Desai's intension to regenerate her view towards the reality of Indian immigrants in the diaspora and highlight her celebration of immigrants' quest for emancipation. Her view shifts from marginalization and suffering as depicted in *Hullabalo in the Guava Orchard* beforehand towards a more open optimistic view of the diaspora as an advantage and achievement rather than the conventional clichés revolving around immigration's suffering and loss. As a non-native novelist, Desai is still considered as an outsider, a Third World female writer on the "cusp created by the intersection of two cultures, which one identifies as the space of exile" (Radhakrishnan 120). Desai transcends the ideas of forced assimilation and politics of women's dislocation to bring out a new image of a modern immigrant characters

characterized by emancipation, self-empowerment, and determination.

Most of Desai's productions after the award address the issue of Third World women as related to their feminist and national identity in the diaspora. Most often, the author criticizes the unchangeable domination of patriarchal practices in traditional societies back home.

Desai's characters are mainly immigrant rebels and survivors whose fluid identity is constantly in process of change in quest for freedom and space on the U.S. soil. They undergo a journey away from home in search of their 'self'; it is a journey of young Indians who expose multiple identities that defy the fixity of imperialism, language, and historical narratives. In this way, they contribute to the reality of binarism of gender and ethnicity and to the relations between the East and the West which are no longer an exclusive but an inclusive entity in the globalized world.

The second writer in the Indian pair is Jhumpa Lahiri who belongs to the second generation immigrants. Being an English-born daughter of Bengali immigrants in 1967 under the name Nilanjane Sudeshna, Jhumpa Lahiri was raised and lived in Rhode Island, America. Lahiri is considered by many critics as an English speaking writer and multi-cultural diasporic postcolonial woman writer (Dubey 23). The author writes in American English but still, the Bengali touch is still explicit in her literary works. Lahiri writes back to a land, the native land which remains a space of parental memories, traditions, and culture exposed at home. As a second-generation expatriate, Lahiri's career started with receiving M.A in English literature, Creative Writing and Comparative studies in Literature and Arts and PhD in the area of Renaissance Studies from Boston University. Her first literary production took place in 1999 with the collection of short stories called *The Interpreter of Maladies* and gained her Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2000 in addition to the

Pen-Hemingway Award. She was shortlisted bestselling lists;*The Interpreter of Maladies*has been translated into 29 languages.

Being a cross-cultural production, Lahiri belongs to England by birth, India by parental culture and America by education. This identity variation is clearly reflected in the themes presented in her literary works such as immigrants' experience in the diaspora, the gap between cultures, and the burden of native heritage and twisted connections between generations. In an interview with Vibhuti Patel, Lahiri declares the hostility of the immigrants where the question of home and belonging come to the fore. This sense of hostility is also felt towards India where Lahiri also feels a stranger and an outsider. She openly says: "I did not grow up there (India)…We were clutching at a world that was never fully with us" (qtd.in Nityanandam 12). In the interview, she clarifies the difference between Indian popular lifestyle in juxtaposition to the American one saying that "growing up in America is different, I have my own room, I can shut the door. When I go to my parental home in Calcutta; however, I become a part of other families, living according to their cultural limits" (qtd.in Nityanandan 14). What is retained from this interview justifies Lahiri's literary productions at the crossroads of cultures. Her fiction still encompasses many elements of Bengali's culture due to her frequent visits to India where she seeks for identification with a part of her divided identity.

A cultural mixture between belonging and loss is what characterizes most of Lahiri's stories; each of her characters feels torn apart between two worlds having a persisting feeling of belonging nowhere; a case that features fragmented diasporic selves. Being a young Indian writer of the second generation, Lahiri's works give a new creative vision and understanding to diasporic discourses. Keeping this in mind, Lahiri's works and themes seem to meet the long continuing conventions of diasporic discourses that make her join the former Indian voices of Rohinton Mistry, Anita Desai, Amitav Gosh, and V.S

Naipaul. She lives in and writes from a multi-cultural perspective to depict the identity crisis of the Indo-American immigrant in the diaspora and seeks to trace the (con) textual and thematic patterns that relate her themes to the realm of diasporic literature.

In her first collection of short stories *The Interpreter of Maladies* usually examined under the lens of diasporic discourse; Lahiri sketches events through which she tries to understand immigrants' circumstances in diaspora. By following the journey of the characters, immigrants generally descending from Indian origins, she seeks for self-definition across cultural boundaries. Though belonging to both cultures, Indian and American, these characters still feel outsiders to both cultures questioning two levels of identity: the individual and the cultural.

As far as her subscription to feminist approach is concerned, Lahiri shows a deep interest in displaced realities of identity and belonging. She rather focuses on complex cultural encounters of the contemporary immigrant women especially those of the second generation who suffer from the cultural and intellectual gap with their parents. The first generation immigrants occupy an important space in her novels especially in issues of acculturation vis-a-vis native culture preservation. From the understanding of second-generation view of the notion of home, Lahiri's stories as Bhikhu Pakesh presumes: "zoom in on small happenings and circumstances, settings, maintaining a special focus on the home and a formal and thematic focus on the slight inconspicuous and fleeting events and effects in daily life (597). However, in the context of globalized socio-cultural hegemony, Lahiri seeks to bring the newness of globalization patterns to the contemporary diasporic literature especially in dealing with women's identity trapped between acculturation and dislocation.

In *Unaccustomed Earth* published in 2008, Lahiri demonstrates the gap between

generations further and focuses on the way globalization influences immigrants of both generations. She also analyses the conflict between personal duty towards the native culture and social expectation in the American society. The author also examines both generations' attitudes towards native culture. The novel received significant critical attention and was considered as the best book of the year in 2008. It portrays the Indo-American displacement and challenges of their native culture in relation to the requirement of the new globalized society. Between nostalgia and rejection lies the notion of preservation and appropriation in the sense that the first generation immigrants seek to preserve their culture and transfer it to the coming generation in order not to die out. Whereas the second generation feels the burden of bearing such a heritage that does not fit into their social realities so they turn towards appropriating it to the adopted culture.

From a feminist point of view, Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* gives an image of the first generation Indian women who belong to the diaspora communities and confront challenges of acculturation. Furthermore, the author depicts the Indian women as aware of the duty of preserving cultural identity under certain norms imposed by patriarchal authority. Lahiri's female characters resemble in a way those of Desai's in the sense that both struggle for liberation and emancipation. Both writers present a feminist insight of women's divided psyche torn between individuality and traditions preservation by questioning the position of the contemporary Indian women in the diaspora. Both female characters' search for cultural identity inside and outside home and both assert the necessity of a feminine individual identity that refuses to sacrifice its role in the pursuit of ramification of old patriarchal practices. Both Desai's and Lahiri's characters step beyond traditional limitations into modern self-assertion.

In analysing women immigrants's alienation in terms of race, the pair of contemporary Caribbean women writers: Elizabeth Nunez and Joan Riley. Elizabeth Nunez

(1944-) is an immigrant Trinidadian American novelist. In her novels and Academic writings, Nunez discusses the boundaries, confrontations, and inspirations that usually revolve around the triple dynamics of race, gender and class that the Caribbean immigrants, especially women, face in the diaspora. *Anna-in-Between*, *When the Rocks Dance, Bruised Hibiscus, Discretion* and other novels, Academic essays and monographs of literary criticism, in addition to co-editing an anthology encompasse major Caribbean Women writings in the Caribbean and in diaspora all of which embody the long career of Nunez. Her awards vary from A Pen Oakland to Josephine Miles Black Literature and Criticism for eight out of nine of her literary works.

Having chronicled stories of racism, stereotypes and patriarchal oppression in the postcolonial Caribbean, many critics interested in contemporary Black women writings usually relate Nunez's works to those of Alice Walker and Toni Morrison. Their themes intersect and discuss the position of Black women in the American society. In the process of her contribution to African diaspora literature, Nunez directs the National Black writers Conference where many Black writers are interpolated like Derek Walcott, Alice Walker and Maya Angelou (Nunez 57). From a literary standpoint, Rosemary states that Caribbean writers among whom Nunez seek to weave literature with pop culture (Caribbean popular culture) in the large scope of their literary works (87). In her literary works, Nunez often focuses on the clash between and the link of ethnic cultures especially of the Caribbean, the American culture alongside the African culture(s). In *Beyond the Limbo Silence,* the author expresses openly the racial relationship between the Caribbean and American subjects who descend from African origins. She also questions the link between them and Africa especially concerning the issues of the Civil Rights Movement, racism and socio-cultural conflicts in the diaspora.

Beyond the Limbo Silence (1999) gained Nunez IPPY Award-Independent

Publishers for Multicultural Fiction and *Bruised Hibiscus* gained her the American Book Award. In these works, Nunez questions the relationship between the public/private, local/global in relation to identity re-formation in the diaspora. Chamberlain states that in most of Nunez's novels, she draws a line backwards to Trinidad to portray images of heterogeneous Trinidadian culture(s) which sway between exoticism and spirituality (179). In this respect, blatantly expressed in *Beyond the Limbo Silence* and *Bruised Hibiscus*, Nunez stresses the idea that black individuals, among whom the Caribbean immigrants can overcome the boundaries of alienation and racial prejudices through coming to terms with the African origins, social beliefs and practices. Through multi-layered and convoluted events, Nunez quilts the lines of *Beyond the Limbo Silence* through which she highlights the issues of contemporary Caribbean immigrants' concerns with socio-economic reality and the socio-cultural issue of identity crisis fused with themes of power discourse, African traditions, rituals, and mysticism. Broadly seen as auto-biographical, Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence* is as Carole Davis and Elaine Fido argue that: "a coming-of-age story about a young girl who eventually leaves the West Indies, via scholarship, to attend college in Wisconsin. Sara, the protagonist is thrust into a new environment and is introduced to new ways of viewing herself in the confined boundaries of race" (14). As a young immigrant woman, Sara finds herself in a new space that dictates certain social, cultural and political order and hierarchy in treating people. In order to understand who they are and to which nation they belong, Nunez's characters sway between clinging to their heritage as Caribbeans from African origins or rejecting them as this heritage is usually afflicted by "Othering" stereotypes ; of being the excluded Other, the outcast deemed as primitive and invalid vis a vis the new logic of the globalized world order.

From a Feminist point of view, many critics consider *Beyond the Limbo Silence* as a feminist novel that carries out the major preoccupations of immigrant Caribbean women

in the United States. Stepping beyond portraying women's resistance to colonial oppression in her previous novels, Nunez turns her attention to resist clichés of oppressed silenced Caribbean women. She also hints at the importance of old beliefs and Caribbean cultural heritage in defining the contemporary woman by bridging the gap between culture and spirituality of the native Caribbean culture. When reading Nunez's novels, we can decipher that she is interested in reflecting the sociological and cultural perspectives of womanhood as related to African origins, racial prejudices, and gender conflicts. In the light of Nunez's feminist struggle, we find that Susheila Nasta is also interested in reflecting the challenges of postcolonial women writers making themselves heard to change the male-centred ideologies and language (50). Nasta thinks that women who take the challenge to write tend to subvert the stereotypes of Black weak women along with the paradigms of patriarchy. She makes it clear that women's writings might "subvert and demythologize indigenous male writings and traditions which seek to label her" (52). Caribbean women's writings treat the binaries: native/foreign, oppressor/victim, man/woman through which they send a voice of dissent against and resistance to fixed stereotypes.

Being interested in issues of racism, social pressures and patriarchy‘s effects on black immigrant women in the diaspora, the second writer of Afro-Caribbean pair, Joan Riley, consolidates this premise in her novel *The Unbelonging*. Joan Riley (1958-) is a Caribbean immigrant novelist from Jamaica. Having attended British school in her homeland, Riley moved to England in 1976 to pursue her undergraduate and graduate studies at Sussex University and London University. Her first novel, *The Unbelonging* was published in 1985 and received the attention of critics interested in ethnic studies, Black British writings of exile, and diasporic writings of Afro-Caribbean immigrants. Riley examines the reality of Caribbean presence in the English society and probes the interaction

between colonizer/colonized cultures. In her novels, she gives examples of immigrants' status of in-between both for the first generation, educated via British norms at schools and those of the second generation who were born and raised in England. Those ideas are examined further through the lenses of political identities based on race (Black) and gender (Woman) in the novels that were yet to follow *The Unbelonging: Waiting in the Twilight* (1987), *Romance* (1988) and *A Kindness to Children* (1992).

In *The Unbelonging*, Riley tries to give a realistic image of immigrant women's hardships, alienation and difficulties of integration in the Western societies especially in the former colonizing country, Britain. She depicts the binary life of Black immigrants, living between two distinct worlds i.e. two antagonizing cultures that the immigrant leads giving some autobiographical accounts of her own experiences as she is herself a Caribbean immigrant. Women of formerly colonized nations are often regarded as Rosemary puts it "doubly colonized", she adds that:" so in their experience as expatriates can they be described as doubly other, doubly alienated" (15). *The Unbelonging* conveys this idea of women's doubly colonized, exotic Other, alienated. Subjugated immigrant women are marginalized by racial bias outside, in the Western society and oppressed inside at home by traditional patriarchal practices.

Bearing the double level of oppression, women search for a way out, a space of freedom for self- expression, this is what Riley intended to translate those hardships and transmit voices of dissent which were gone unheard. Riley wants to focus on Caribbean immigrant women's preoccupation with the denial of their presence usually surrounded by racial prejudices and cultural misunderstandings. This situation adds to the tension of the migratory experience and serves in heightening the degree of women's suffering from alienation and serves in fragmenting the view they form upon their identity as an immigrant

and as a female subject. All those ideas are translated in the protagonist's journey towards the former colonizing country. Hyacinth Williams, a young black Jamaican woman experiences different forms of violence, physical and emotional, in the diaspora. First abused by her father at home and later rejected by strict racist practices at school, Hyacinth feels displacement fitting nowhere. Being rejected in England, overwhelmed with nostalgia to the mother land, Hyacinth started to find solace in her memories of the motherland. She keeps dreaming of Jamaica and shapes idealistic images of her homeland and native culture in search for self-identification as a space to which she belongs. Caribbean immigrant women, as portrayed in *The Unbelonging*, are often inflicted with a sense of un-belonging being defined as an outsider, a double level of otherness. This category suffers binarism that puts them in the status of the subaltern, a silent subject hardly mentioned or regarded as a part of society or history. This state of subalternity that Caribbean immigrant women represent also shows their failure to be represented or integrated into the Western societies due to the legacies of slavery and the colonial image that remained as a blueprint that affects their future as postcolonial subjects. Immigrant women are caught in the limbo of locations and cultures; in this respect, James Clifford deems that "diasporic women are caught between patriarchies, ambiguous pasts and futures" (18). They are still dangling between binaries, as Clifford adds, "they connect and disconnect, forget and remember in complex strategic ways involved in a painful difficulty of mediating discrepant worlds" (45). Clifford maintains that Caribbean immigrant women are still shackled in a series of power discourse concerning intellectual representations and power dynamics based on the triple tropes of racial, patriarchal, and social hierarchy accounts.

Caribbean women's status represents otherness still featured by binarism and injustice that gave way to transformation of oppression from a broad one, that of the colonizer, to a domestic one, that of patriarchal authority within the diasporic environment.

Louise O'Brien explains:

> Women as doubly colonized, firstly by White colonialism and secondly by black masculinity are placed at the bottom of a hierarchy of value through the gendered response by the black man to is own oppression. Those two oppressions are thus irrevocably intertwined; the more he is made inferior and the more he needs to assert his masculinity by which I mean his superiority over the Black woman. (100)

The critic explains the process of oppression transformation from the strongest into the weakest. It accounts for the long process of colonial history of oppression determined by oppressive power hierarchies that operate culturally, socially, and intellectually. Caribbean immigrant women are left with shattered selves and double consciousness of identity, conditioned by their sense of otherness and difference, a situation that ostracises them to boundaries of the periphery.

In her essay "Writing Reality in a Hostile Environment", Riley declares that she faced a difficulty in portraying the postcolonial Caribbean women because they are usually defined by inferior colonial position and patriarchal authorities as fitting in no domain, hence regarded as "losers". This exclusion adds hostility of both sides: her black community and the White Western society. Riley continues to argue that the pressure imposed by her black community restricts her creative process of writing of reaching female's self-discovery (214-215). This idea of doubly Other meets that of Said's of being inherently the Other, so Afro-Caribbean immigrants are determined, inherently bonded to the status of "Other". This complicated situation, being inherently the Other, perplexes the manner in which Caribbean immigrant women come to identify their blackness and gender identity to develop a social identity based on celebrating their differences as immigrants in a Western society.

Caribbean coming-to-age novels like those of Nunez and Riley tend to show the

same issues of migration, cultural dislocation, and social implications. They emphasise the situation of in-betweenness in different spaces: Britain, the U.S. Trinidad, and Jamaica to trace experiences of racism, oppression, and the hostility of Western societies towards Caribbean immigrant women. Through generic features of Contemporary Caribbean postcolonial novels exemplified in *Beyond the Limbo Silence* and *The Unbelonging*; Nunez and Riley try to develop a postcolonial counter-narrative, a counter-discourse as a way to be (re)connected again with their histories to chronicle stories of the subaltern. The black Caribbean woman in diaspora establishes thereby a common ground to recount Caribbean experience of various dislocations of the so-called doubly-Othered (Riley 87), doubly oppressed subjects to find a voice in contemporary postcolonial fiction. Rewriting home and criticizing the restrictive cultural and social patterns that pervade the host countries opens gates for describing the immigrant's ordeals in the diaspora.

The third pair of postcolonial women immigrant writers is Arab-American writers : Diana Abu-Jaber and Laila Halaby. Both share some points in depicting the contemporary Arab American woman in diaspora between Orientalist representations and political prejudices that accompanied the events of 9/11. In fact, their preoccupation revolves around mechanisms of re-writing "home" using historical accounts and memory to understand their actual position in the Western American society in addition to their position there back home often labelled immigrants in both spaces.

Diana Abu-Jaber (1960-) in Syracuse, New York of a mixed raced couple of an Irish-German mother and Jordaneo-Palestinian father. Abu-Jaber is herself a cross-cultural and mixed-raced figure who often tackles the question of ethnicity confusions. In cross-cultural context, Diana Abu-Jaber lived between Jordan and the U.S. a thing that urges her

to write about the issue of belonging and politics of home in the process of identity formation. Concerning writing and self-expression, Abu-Jaber's first language is English; however, traces of ethnicity are often obvious in describing Arab precisely the Levant's food, clothes, and expressions.

Stylistically speaking, Abu-Jaber writes in English with some passages of code switching to Arab proverbs, expressions, and interjections taken from the Orient dialect. In her academic career, Abu-Jaber is graduated with a Ph.D in Creative Writing from Binghamton in 1986. The author started writing after graduation.Her first novel is *Arabian Jazz*was published in 1993 and gained her Oregon Book Award. In the novel, Abu-Jaber tries to give a glimpse on the problems between generations among Arab-American families. Like most of the characters in her following novels, *Arabian Jazz*'s characters are usually featured by a persistent feeling of displacement, spiritual un-belonging and problems of socializing patterns and adjustment with the Western society. Abu-Jaber also points at the schizophrenic state of the immigrant caught in two antagonistic worlds, torn between the local/public and the individual/social. Thus, second generation Arab-American immigrants, who are soon Americanized individuals, live away from the native traditions.

From a feminist perspective, writing is a manifestation of self-expression. However, writing, for Abu-Jaber, is a means through which she searches for her inner self as a female hybrid subject caught between two distinct nations, cultures, and origins. She declares that she began writing "in order to constitute my-self as the child of Arab immigrant and as whole person comprising both cultures". She adds that "writing is wonderfully healing" (Abdulhadi 15). Abu-Jaber's preoccupation with hybrid identities and female self-identification is a part of migratory experiences in the U.S. She adds that the outcomes of her travels back and forth to Jordan reinforce her sense of ethnicity. After getting contact with the extended families of her mother in the U.S. and that of her father in Jordan, Abu-

Jaber realizes that identity formation is based on encompassing the way the subject sees himself and what others think he is. As she puts it: “both what we understand and tell ourselves it is and what others tell us we are” (Abdulhadi 16). This statement would support the argument of this thesis especially in the way second-generation immigrants’ imagination can build a new image of themselves, an image that needs all components to help shape the controversial concept of “home”.

In a ceaseless search for roots, the concept of “home” often relates to the notion of memory. In this respect, Abu-Jaber seeks to delve in the way memories intervene in discourses of identity politics. She rather probes female selfhood to get on the track of postcolonial writing of counter-discourse. Orientalist stereotypes represent them as silenced, oppressed, and unable to represent themselves. In this way, Abu-Jaber tends to establish a bridge of understanding between the West and the East towards re-writing “home” again. She re-draws boundaries of “home” in order to examine the politicized network between the native land, history, and collective memory.

In the quest for a way out of marginalization and alienation in the diaspora, finding a space for re-locating “home” in the imagination of immigrants and later their offsprings of second-generation hybrid subjects represents a central topic in *Arabian Jazz* and the novels that followed such as *Crescent* (2003) and *The Language of Baklawa* (2005). In those novels, Majaj states that Abu- Jaber stresses the fact of being in a status of in-between (268) in what concerns hybridized identities’ instability culturally, socially and politically. The critic finds that Abu-Jaber focuses on the way hybrid individuals show an American identity mingled with touches of Arab identity (268) though they were not born nor were they raised there but they want to assert their difference. This idea is specifically criticized by Michelle Hartman where she sees that Abu-Jaber is in an indecisive status being herself an in-between figure. She also hints at the writing strategies the author uses to

assert her difference from mainstream American style especially in depicting diasporic subjectivities and ethnic heritage in imagining and internalizing the concept of “home” (151).

In *Memories of the Birth* and *Crescent*, Abu-Jaber shows elements of hostility and political prejudices about Arab identity especially after 9/11 events. These novels unfold the feeling of phobia, hatred, and fear of confronting the other. They show the shame of being an Arab or descending of Arab origins. They also explore themes of exile and painful experiences of displacement, rejection, and non-belonging of Arab immigrants in the U.S. On the other hand, beyond the bleak image that these novels show, they also convey rooms for challenging persisting binary opposition of West/ East determined by politics of superiority as well as the global project of absorbing difference for the sake of homogenization. From a feminist point of view, Abdulhadi finds that Abu-Jaber shows a deep interest in women’s liberation issues especially Arab women’s problem with the Western gaze and Orientalist clichés (18). Eventually, Abu-Jaber recalls the current Arab image as tainted by political prejudices. She reiterates Arabs’ old-new image remains related to primitivism and terrorism. In *Arabian Jazz*, Abu-Jaber writes: “the TV says we are oil sheikhs or fundamentalists or terrorists or all three at once. It is all stereotypes” (Abu -Jaber 128). She adds that the sense of otherness or being inferior persisting: “We, Arabs, have no charm or texture. When we do, we get to have homes and parties and jokes and children?” (128).

The second female writer in the Arab American pair, Laila Halaby, is also a cross-cultural, mixed-raced figure. Halaby (1960-) was born in Lebanon to an American mother and a Jordaneo-Palestinian father. She got a master in Arabic literature in Tucson and had a Fulbright scholarship to study folklore in Jordan. Being in the crossroad of cultures and

nations, Halaby like Abu-Jaber experiences the status of in-betweenness, is caught between two different cultures. In fact, being aware of the Arab immigrants' dislocated, indecisive and ambivalent status is usually articulated in the themes of different views of immigration.

Memories of the native land and challenges of acculturation in the diaspora are the central topics of her novels *West of the Jordan* (2007) that gained the Pen/Beyond Margins Award and *Once in a Promised Land* (2003). Halaby also highlights the Western gaze of suspicion upon the Arab/Muslim cultures; a thing that led to conflicting political and ideological clash between the East and the West well before 9/11. The author also deems that such a terrorist fact was nothing but a reaction to the American system that sought to minimize the image and contributions of the "Other" especially the Arab subjects (Hartman 155). Halaby's female characters often suffer from cross cultural influences and political stigma that lies behind Arab identity or Muslim cultures in the aftermath of 9/11. These events raised questions of the future of Arab-American and served in widening the gap and growing complexity of religious toleration and accepting the other. Halaby also probes through both novels the concept of "home" as a physical space and emotional belonging which embodies a contextual and conflicting area where issues of ethnicity, exile, social exclusion, race, gender, and identity crises amongst generations still taint the reality of the immigrant subjects especially women. Subsequently, "home" combines both bitter and sweet experiences of Arab immigrants that encompass memories of origins, exile, achievements, loss, and displacement.

Halaby's *West of the Jordan* proffers a prismatic image of four young Arab immigrant women: Hala, Mawal, Soraya and Khedija coming from Palestine and Jordan and second-generation immigrants of Arab origins. Though these four young ladies descend from the same origins, belong to the same family, they see the issues of

acculturation, assimilation, diaspora and Americanization from different perspectives in proportion to their diverse circumstances. Through a polyphonic style and a multi-layered narrative, Abdulhadi thinks that Halaby tries to articulate the multiple views of the diaspora, memory, and cross-cultural interaction (22). By situating the different characters against multiple diasporic experiences and backgrounds, Halaby questions the issues of identity formation, the way these young women understand their identities and how others conceive them and sheds light on the heterogeneity of Arab-American and immigrant Arab women in the diaspora.

By touching upon generational conflicts between conservative traditional first generation immigrants and their children, Halaby depicts second-generation characters' sway between rejecting and adopting the Arab native cultures and mentalities which seem to some extent to be imposed. Majaj underscores the importance of considering the multi-layered experiences of Arab-American women in diaspora since "they come from different countries, cultures and historical backgrounds and undergo diverse experiences", she states that: "the culture clash often experienced by those born to immigrant parents; the burden of bearing the native culture on one's shoulders. (….) while some Arab women live closely sheltered, restricted lives, others have a degree of freedom and independence." (267). Arab American diasporic experiences on the basis of gender differences is another issue that Halaby wants to analyse through the father figure who represents the Arab power of patriarch and masculinity.

In fact, Halaby also seeks to stress the Palestinian double diaspora: first in Jordan and in the U.S. and shows that exile, un-belonging, and hostility are inescapable components of the current view of the Palestinian ever-displaced identity. These female characters especially those who migrated from Palestine via Jordan to finally reach America hold a contradictory outlook over the concept of "home" that swings between

rejection and adoption between the need of connection to a need to a certain space called home and the liberating sense of diasporic displacement. Leaving behind a legacy of exile and dislocation, Rabab Abdulhadi states that: “these female characters seem to defy confined patriarchal Arab culture and traditions that reduces them to the cult of domesticity” (19). They incline towards assimilation as a sort of breaking away from the strict outdated traditions albeit they found themselves on the margin haunted by the prevailing Western Orientalist gaze that sees them as ethnic subjects.

Being aware of the double diaspora that the Palestinian community ungerwent, Halaby examined the ways in which Arab women are not the same, an Arab from the Middle East is different from an Arab from North Africa. Through depicting the heterogeneity of the immigrant women’s experiences, Halaby seeks to deconstruct fixed Orientalist representations that affect and sometimes humiliate the modern Arab woman’s self-image. In this context, as the author recounts in *West of the Jordan*, most of the female characters are torn between the local/public in handling and adopting their parents’ conservative traditions or pursuing their aim of integration into the American society where they still confront gender and Orientalist prejudices. Seeking for ethnic memories marks a direct correlation between Abu-Jaber’s *Arabian Jazz* and Halaby’s *West of the Jordan* in an attempt to explore their home, their location in the native land and the American society. Majaj states that gendered memories develop both authors’ feminist concerns with diasporic cultural and socio-historical dimensions of the immigrant experiences (296). Such experiences serve in highlighting the characters’ strife to reach a certain level of balance, a common ground, between the East and the West cultures, between deconstructing prejudices and re-constructing a new identity that encapsulates both cultures.

In the ever-changing transnational current world, issues of new subjectivities are brought to the debate of globalization, multiculturalism, transculturality, and identity formation in the context of national and cultural boundaries. Within the rationale of globalization, the call for the universality of identities stems from "the transitory model of the ethnic towards a hybrid transnational identity in multicultural Western societies" (Greenblatt 85). While the immigrants mediate between the realms of the Western society and ethnicity, a status of in-betweenness has achieved suction in contemporary rhetorical debates of transnationality and borders that inform my reading of the six selected novels. In the course of analysing concepts of transnationality, cultural identity, immigrants' dislocation, and diasporic discourse in a Western context, theories applied to explain these contemporary issues regardless of its discipline: philosophy, sociology, political science, or critical approaches such as Marxism, poststructuralism, feminism and postcolonialism, convey the dynamicity of the above concepts bound to debate and correspond to the ever-changing reality that covers the current world order and ideologies.

Being a diasporic subject necessitates transformation from the local to the global as in such global spaces people come to be aware of their cultural differences. The feeling of being different or being the "Other" in a global atmosphere has elicited different views in postcolonial discussions of ethnicity politics, race and gender because they act across and beyond nations. This idea may also be analysed in reference to the migrants' affiliation to the new land norms and the manner in which their experiences can be in a challenge of being eit her accepted or leads to their exclusion. Following this process, James Clifford declares that "while there is a range of acceptance and alienation associated with ethnic and class variations, the masses of these new arrivals are kept in subordinate positions by established structures of racial exclusion" (43). The critic argues that the diasporic subject always interacts with the idea of power or empowerment, "in the turn to and away from

power" (44). In this case, Clifford assets the fact that diasporic subjects are, "turning back upon those markers of self-homeland, memory, loss-even as they turn on or away from them" (45). Hence, Clifford still views diaspora as a positive movement that positions the homeland and host land as complementary due to the fact that the subject takes part in a transnational network in which the homeland is not a left behind entity but an integral part in the process of identity re-fashioning.

The first and second generations generally called old and new diaspora in the host country who develop divergent conceptions of the sense of belonging. While the first generation feels nostalgia towards the motherland as they lived there, the second generation looks upon this land as an imaginary land, a part of their parents' tales to which they feel no obligation to adopt any of its culture or traditions as being forcedly acculturated into the new society. As regards to the first generation, one can notice that their sense of displacement is not only physical but basically psychological and spiritual. The Indian diaspora in the West regards geographical distance as less important than the psychological and spiritual circumstances since the homeland is still persistent in a form of haunting images. The writer assumes that India is not just a geographical space in the world map but it occupies a significant space in the world history and culture. Indian people have been engaged in the movement of migration across nations and time. The Indian literary traditions reflect the sense of diaspora and exile as prominent themes in the ancient Indian epics as excellent examples of the trope of exile and glorification of the concept of mobility.

In terms of the global movement, Indian diaspora is roughly smaller as compared to the Jewish, Chinese, or African one. However, Aparna Rayaprol deems that "the internal diversity of India, its regional, linguistic, caste, and religious perspectives have made it unique among other Diasporas" (5). The diversity of India as a nation has influenced the

systems of Indian settlement throughout the world. Regional, religious, and linguistic. Class perspectives influence their destinations and the pattern of their migratory experience in the host country. In spite of this variety, the Indian diaspora shares the same loyalty to their homeland. India gained its independence in 1947, which has enhanced the sense of belonging not just for Indians living in India but also to immigrants overseas. This shows that unchangeable links are still maintained between the diaspora and the mother land. In "The Diaspora in Indian Culture", Amitav Gosh contends that the relationship holding between Indians and India is special in the sense that Indian diaspora can never declare an open detachment or separation (246). Likewise, William Safran states that although diasporic people may get separated from India, yet the consciousness being part of the macrocosmic India is never completely removed or altered (11). These views confirm that Indian diasporic people are imaginatively linked to their homeland.

Assumptions to diaspora and immigration witnessed changes in India. In the past, Indians used to quit their homeland primarily for economic reasons. Eventually, diasporic people view themselves as displaced according to the traditional view that migration is an act of betrayal and coming back to the homeland will result in polluting its purity after being immersed in the host land. Probably still influenced by this traditional view, even in modern time, Indian immigrants are not really excited to go back home. However, these views have changed since the economic reason ceases to be the only reason of migration. In fact, many Indians migrate to the United States for a career expansion or for seeking for a better education. Yet, there are other motives that encouraged Indian people to quit India apart, from economy and education, such as political conflicts as well as getting fed up with the fixed restraining traditions. Brah suggests that economic inequalities within and between regions expands the mobility of the capital, in which case, people would seek to follow better opportunities that might improve their life chances, political strife (117).

Wars and famine are, therefore, some factors that urge Indian people to move overseas.

For diasporans, the relation to homeland is very complex; some still keep this umbilical cord intact by living with the native lifestyle maintaining the same traditions of their ancestors while others try to cut any relation with the mother land in an attempt to be incorporated into the new host society. According to the complexity of this relation, Rogers Brubaker suggests three significant stages of diaspora. The first is "Dispersion" which literally means the scattering of a certain group of people across state borders while the second is "homeland orientation", which Brubaker defines as “the orientation to a real or imagined ‘homeland’ as an authoritative source of value, identity, and loyalty” (5). In fact, the first generation immigrants hold on the notion of homeland because they retain many of the values of the old world. Hall supports here that the defining characteristics of diaspora are first a cultural and collective identity that preserve elements of the homeland’s language, religious, social, and cultural practices. However, this is not always the case with the generations yet to follow. Hall finds that the descendants of the first generation of emigrants cease to be the “segment of the homeland’s population in any meaningful sense” (“Ethnicity: Identity and Difference” 649). Unlike first generation immigrants, second or third generations belong to the host land where they have spent a significant period of time which is enough to regard the host land as their home.

The third stage suggested by Brubaker is "boundary maintenance" which seems to intersect with the second stage in the sense that the diasporic people position themselves towards the homeland (6). It refers to the uncertainty of identity crisis of where do I belong? Being on the limbo whether to maintain their origins, immigrants are lost in negotiating, assimilating the host culture or resisting it.

Identity in Diaspora Realit(ies)

The identity formation is the identity's relation to culture(s) in multiple ethnic backgrounds. It is important to examine Stuart Hall's conception of cultural identity in the diasporic environments. In "Ethnicity, Identity and Difference", Hall states that the contemporary image of the American society and culture cannot exclude the presence of immigrants coming from Third World countries. He stresses their contribution in enriching culture getting beyond Western cultural ethos (15). Hall also finds that these immigrants "inhabit a liminal or marginal landscape in challenging both the cultural common heritage of the native land as opposed to fixed boundaries of marginalizing Third World cultures" (18). In this respect, the critic announces a status of in-between that echoes again Bhabha's the Third Space. Hall maintains that "the immigrant ethnic communities float contrapuntally across cultures like nomads who reject frontiers and embrace an intermediate space between cultures" (20).

What we discern from Stuart Hall's description of the in-betweenness of immigrants' cultures in the diaspora helps create a new understanding of the frontiers and identity and leads to break free from the obligations of assimilation or the Western expectations. When identity and culture intersect, immigrants accept a particular model of cultural identity and turn towards other expectations that mirror the traits of discourses of borders and transnationality of cultural identity. The immigrants' instability relates to the essentialist views which look for a common ground where individuals share common experiences. Hall stresses the positive contribution of such a common ground in creating organized anti-racist movements that prefer solidarity on the ground of common cultural affiliations rather than struggling over differences.

In the process of exploring the common issues of cultural identity, in his essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora", Hall throws light on multiple ethnic experiences in literature that reflect immigrants' daily experiences and practices to position themselves between two cultures. The critic emphasizes "the on-going process of identity as dynamic and ever-changing and denies fixity and stability" (69). The critic also stresses the idea of being aware of such similarities and traces their development through time to understand the changes occurred to culture after colonialism and the diaspora. Hall argues that the cultural changes that immigrants undergo are not constant in the colonial past but "they develop through time to constitute what we really are or rather, since history has intervened, what we have become" (56). Because immigrant identities in the diaspora are doomed to change, they are fluid and stray away from being fixed or unique to the tiding notions of connectivity and rupture which constitute the contemporary image and the definition of the current multi-layered cultural identities.

In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Hall describes the problems that may confront cultural identity process where the question of self-identification overlaps with cultural ambiguity. This takes us back to the notion of otherness as a cultural reality. In such a situation, the existence of the Self inevitably necessitates the existence of the Other which also enhances the understanding of the Self's traits. Hence, postcolonial writers cannot write about the uniqueness of their cultural identity without considering the multiplicity of all the community's experiences of the same culture. For example, writing about the Caribbean or Arab immigrant experiences, one cannot generalize the notion of Arabness on all Arab immigrants in America. The different concepts of cultural identity that Hall introduces are useful in understanding how the characters experience cultural identity formation in diaspora especially in Arab-American novels *West of the Jordan* and *Arabian Jazz*. The use of cultural diaspora is marked not merely by what the characters originally

are but rather how they have become. Hall states that, "all these different positions are grounded in the past" (*Questions of Cultural Identity* 36). That means the construction of the cultural identity starts with roots and is influenced by the ways that each individual identifies with and relates to the past common experiences.

Postcolinial literary criticism play a central position in introducing the new transnational facet of contemporary literary works and open gates to cultural debates concerning the effect of globalization on native cultures. From a transnational standpoint, literature(s) of diaspora evoke the issue of immigrant marginalization, acculturation, and assimilation. On this account, they reveal the challenges that face the immigratants in their strife to form a new migrant identity as related to politics of ethnicity, racism, social and cultural differences characterized by dislocation. These literary works display a vivid image of displacement which reflects ambivalence and a double vision of immigrants who are in the limbo still dangling between looking backwards to the past to retain certain forms of belonging and nostalgia and the current needs looking forward to their position in the host society. Literatures of diaspora handle issues of a *métisse* of hybridized identities in a multicultural space to reflect the co-existence of two antagonistic cultures in the postcolonial subject.

In *The Location of Culture,* Homi Bhabha writes about the problem of cultural dislocation. He asserts that one's own space reflects his cultural belonging and maintains that diasporic works of literature roughly produced by immigrants tends to "oppose the pedagogy of the imperialist noun to the inflectional appropriation of the native voice" (223); the critic suggests "to go beyond such binaries of power is to recognize our sense of the process of identification in the negotiation of cultural politics" (233).

English over the native polyvalent tongues transcends the transformation of the political and geographical component which forms a newly independent nation. When talking about the rise of diasporic literature, it is noteworthy to point "the counter-narrative" it conveys. It breaks away from the traditions of earlier commonwealth literature(s) strictly determined by colonial power discourse and liberal humanist values. Commonwealth writings were largely criticised by the new schools of criticism like Black feminism, postmodernism, and deconstruction. They were, for some critics, unfit to question the position of the subaltern and uncapable of expressing the revolutionary voice on the cultural and intellectual proportion. Oscillating between inclusion and rejection of the universal official canon literature, Commonwealth literature stayed sub-classified put on the margin of mainstream literary recognition (Ashcroft *et al* 155); its contribution was often ignored or value-minimized as it is intertextually linked to the western mainstream. It addresses the peripheral side of the decolonized societies that stay dependent on the colonizer's traditions in writing especially the use of English as a persisting power that determines the system of thought in expressing local issues.

George Lamming from Barbados, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe, and the Indian R.K Narayan start the bottom line to the literary body of commonwealth literature. Their works mark a mutation in literature produced by the newly independent nations produced in English. From a literary standpoint, Mc Leod has argued that commonwealth literature was a subset o f canonical English literature evaluated in terms derived from the conventional study of English that stressed the values of timelessness and universality (94). Eventually, Mc Leod suggests that commonwealth literature is not a self-determined literature but a sort of mimicry still under domination and supremacy of English literature.

Between imitation and re-writing the canon, postcolonial writings emerge to create a counter- discourse to give a critique of not merely conventional canonical writings of the

West but also to the very ideologies that conduct the colonialist texts and rhetorical connotations. It is crucial to emphasize that the intertextual relationships between the imperialist conventional writings claiming supremacy and reference and the coming to age postcolonial writings tend to get antagonistic. They come in opposition in terms of treating issues of representation and conventional codes of the Western epistemological distortion of the image of the colonized "Other". John Thieme comments on imitation as being unconscious. He thinks that postcolonial counter-discourse opposes "the very codes that it is contesting because it allows itself to be defined in terms of them (the West: the Self), albeit through negation" (31). In the process of colonial representation, Western conventional codes represent the "Other" to imply a reality or rather a historical context that denies or at least underestimates the role of the colonized in taking part in the writing of his own history.

In the engagement with the critical survey, this dialectic relationship between the old worldly acclaimed texts and postcolonial new creative and challenging texts made room to an embryonic style in writing embodied in postcolonial diasporic literature. This literature moves between the old and the new in a double-way process to create dynamicity between the past and the present, between the local and the global, and serves in enlarging and enriching the experiences and themes of the old canonical texts (Thieme 87). The re-reading of canonical texts adds to the experiences of the postcolonial subject in diaspora especially for the second generation immigrants who get no political or historical agenda with the West as they are a part of the Western society and national citizens born and brought up there; however, they stay bicultural. Ashcroft et al point out that the postcolonial counter-discourse in representing the "Other" tends to subvert the canon which is not simply a matter of replacing one set of texts with another. This subversion of the canon suggested by Ashcroft et al entails that the canon is not solely composed of

radically concepts of minimizing the "Other" but it is a set of reading practices that leads to question the validity of the mainstream, the parameters that control the quality, and the validity of any literary text.

It is broadly acknowledged that postcolonial literature declares difference from colonial ideologies to revive and protect native cultures. In the realm of counter-discourse as related to diasporic writings, Ashcroft et al analyse a passage in Franz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* which gives a suggestion to a kind of compromise in handling sources, the colonial and the indigenous, to bring out a prismatic view of the reality of colonized history and culture. According to Fanon, the oppositional relationship between the postcolonial subject and his torn out situation between the indigenous and the colonizer falls into three major stages that give allusion to Hegelian argumentation: the thesis; anti-thesis, and a synthesis (112). Ashcroft et al suggest that the first stage of the compromise is embodied in the first radical contact to the colonizer, a direct rejection as an act of decolonization (75).

Frantz Fanon worked on the native cultures: the indigenous longing to native cultures while the second perspective marks a rejection of the indigenous culture in favour of more sophisticated Eurocentric or Western models in examining the native culture. The third stage encapsulates the production of an authentic new work which integrates both indigenous culture(s) and the lessons learned from actual nationalist struggles (Aschroft *et al* 366). Focusing on existential paradigms, postcolonial writings seek to mingle both components which come out of the realistic experiences of colonial rejection and the sensibility of indigenous cultures often exposed to contingency. Postcolonial studies face challenges when it comes to the matter of identity formation and belonging since the aim behind questioning identity results in fostering the consciousness of not a unique but an ambivalent situation. Thus, the double-level of the postcolonial representation is defined by

language, culture, and history of oppression.

Postcolonial attitudes fluctuate between rejecting or subverting and technically deconstructing the strategies of the supremacy of the colonizer's cultures over the native ones. Edward Said's premise of inherent superiority of European thought, ideologies and cultural values to keep its imperialist authority intact over the former colonized areas comes in the essence of (*Culture and Imperialism* 67). The indoctrination of the colonized peoples and convincing them that they are innately a second-ranked class, unable to govern their own issues and always dependent on the colonizer's help is, as Said argues, a part of the strategies over which imperialism lays foundation (*Culture and Imperialism* 68). Said also emphasizes that literature is one of the major means that help in the reinforcement of the Western cultural control via painting an image of the "exotic Other" (*Orientalism* 16) to represent the colonized. The "exotic Other" has gradually been normalized and maintained as a reality fact in the canon of English literature.

Hyphenated Identities: Between Home and Diaspora

The question of identity crisis and identity re-formation in diasporic environments is related to cultural, political, social and gender factors and embodies the nucleus of the present study. If literature, among other arts, reflects cross-cultural experiences and explores identity in its social, political and cultural perspectives, the selected Indian, Arab and Caribbean novels, classified as postcolonial writings, proffer a literary understanding rather than an interpretation of the dynamicity of hybrid identities.

Within postcolonial studies and by pursuing the current spirit of dynamicity and development, identity is a process of "on-going modifications of social, cultural and political factors" (Pakesh 182). This long operation of identity's incessant change stems

from the Western society's aim towards advancement and re-actualization. Identity negotiation and self-redefinition are necessary to follow the quick pace of globalization. The process of identity assertion of an individual, a group of people or a whole nation necessitates the establishment of values that lead to recognition and acceptance. In *Wrath of Angels,* James Connolly points at the contentious issue of identity crisis described in postcolonial writings and finds out that identity is established in relation to a series of differences and shifts (60). He adds that "identity affirmation or rejection would consequently have far-reaching effects on the sense of self at both the personal and social levels. The critic finds out that the immigrant's identity converts differences to the Other to assert its existence as a component to the Self to secure its own self-certainty" (64). Subsequently, Connoly's ideas go in accordance with the above premises of dynamicity of identity and continual changing through negotiation to get adjusted within boundaries of acceptance and recognition. This would then imply that identity reveals a kind of relativity since it dangles between inclusion and exclusion between binary opposition of the Self/Other gives it a mutable fluidity and mobility. In "Questions of Cultural Identity", Stuart Hall confirms that identity emerges as an unsettled space or an unresolved question in the space between a myriad of intersecting discourses (11).

In order to give a critical reading of the novels and link them to the current theoretical frameworks, it is important to highlight the major lines of thought on which this thesis is based. Understanding postcolonialism and key notions of otherness, hybridity (in-between situation), subalternity (here examined in the light of women's representation) diasporic subjectivities, and cultural identities comes at the core of this study. This theoretical framework gives an interpretation of each notion and how it is going to be implemented in the thesis. This study is not going to be in isolation of intellectual figures whose concepts enriched the field of postcolonial studies such as those of Edward Said,

Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak.

Before explaining the theories, it has been previously mentioned that these novels are categorized as postcolonial literature recognized and taken part in shaping the image of the contemporary Western literature. However, many questions surround the apprehension of postcolonialism. Because of the tricky confusing nature of the term postcolonialism, it is necessary to understand what postcolonialism is and what postcolonial literary theory and criticism are and trace their interdisciplinary attributes such as sociology and cultural studies. For Edward Said, the postcolonial work is interdisciplinary; it might intersect with sociology, political sciences, and anthropology that address problems of self-recognition for postcolonial intellectuals who examine the colonial period and analyse colonial discourse (*Orientalism* 65). In a world witnessing antagonistic pulls of forces, the postcolonial subjects claim difference and seek to assert their presence in the mainstream intellectual approaches and schools of thought. It is also interesting to understand what characterizes postcolonial writings from other works.

In diverse intellectual positions, it is important to inquire who is the postcolonial writer; is he/she the one who writes about postcolonial subjects? In addition to where the postcolonial was/is located in the conventional world history, we should draw a line between past European colonialism and present globalization sovereignty which exerts another way of control. Interested in postcolonialism, I need to know what kind of literary work falls into the category of postcolonial literature: the mutation of cultures through times and spaces or the imbalance of power that features the relationships between the Western colonizing forces in many colonies in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Or, the effects of colonial thoughts that shaped what the colonized should think about themselves and their national and cultural environment during and after colonialism.

Thematically and technically speaking, alienation, cultural identity, hybridity, problems of migration and diaspora in addition to introducing terms from their ancestors' register and code switching is what gives these works room to be considered as postcolonial. When falling upon this term, postcolonialism, in literary theory or criticism, we usually feel lost especially if neo-colonialism and postcoloniality are simultaneously mentioned. Merely for this account, I propose to explore the central concerns and questions that postcolonialism covers to disclose the boundaries between these entities: of postcolonial link to the history of colonial oppression in the past, and defying stereotypes to understand what lies behind binarism Self/Other in the contemporary postcolonial writings. Postcolonial theorists study the colonial legacy and question national/cultural identity to understand the identification of native pre-colonial history and culture that has been transformed or sometimes distorted by colonization. According to Peter Barry, Postcolonialism is a school of thought which "made its entry to international relations by the end of the twentieth century where official history usually written by the winners is theorized, categorized and written about through the eyes of indigenous people"(58). The critic assumes that history represents a discourse of power and has been institutionalized to become an academic discourse and a totalizing concept (59). According to Peter Barry, alternative narratives produced by indigenous writers seek to refute the institutionalized, the indisputable version (68). In this way, those new versions risk rejection as not academically recognized nor are they valid in the Western view. Hence, they remain strangled, stagnated within the boundaries of the colonial conventional versions of history. Postcolonialism seeks, Barry proceeds, "to subvert or technically deconstruct the standards of knowledge and representation that the colonizer established" to understand the motives behind colonialism and disengage with the idea of conventional narratives and versions of history that goes in accordance with colonizer's purposes (79).

Through getting in contact with history, postcolonialism's aim is to voice the silenced, the indigenous people who suffered oppression, control, displacement, diaspora. It aims to bringing back other local narratives which articulate authentic traditions and cultures to reclaim belonging to a specific nation and assert cultural integrity. In the process of subverting colonial representations, postcolonialism aims to resist stereotypes which colonial systems of thought have diffused in education, politics, and sociological texts. Standing in opposition to the generalization of historical facts, postcolonialism's concern is vested in "re-reading history and provide other versions and views from the indigenous perspective in order to reveal the richness and efficiency of the native cultures" (Barry 27). For postcolonial scholars, the ordeals of the natives have been long discredited and sometimes distorted under the control of colonialism. John McLeod supports this idea and clarifies the role of the postcolonial theory and writings in the process of identity and cultural studies and maintains that through adopting postcolonial theory, "the formerly colonized intellectuals are able to write back into a new history more authentic than any other version written in the official history" (78). For this reason, the postcolonial task is regaining and recovering indigenous cultural and national merits to record a new version of history that has been denied and/or erased from the conventional official history.

From a literary perspective, postcolonial theory and criticism focus on literature produced by writers of newly independent nations and later immigrants' (willing/forced), in addition to exiled and refugees' productions. It inquires about the way indigenous people come to recognize their identity and be involved in a conflicting process of accepting and resisting former colonial values that have been implanted in his education, language, and system of thought. It is also interested in examining European responses to colonialism by looking at canonical texts such as *Passage to India* by E.M. Forester and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* and juxtapose them to the native writings such as Chinua Achebe's

Things Fall Apart to understand tropes of Self/Other representations.

Within a postcolonial paradigm, postcolonial criticism seeks to examine ethnic texts or counter- narratives to the former colonialism, Britain or France and especially those produced by immigrants in the diaspora, in the United States. These texts focus on the attitudes and representation of the Other. John Thieme argues that: "postcolonial literatures represent a counter-discourse that faces the pre-colonial past that cannot be regained and contemporary identity that cannot be free of the past. The real task of postcolonial criticism is to investigate the means by which Europe imposed and maintained colonial domination." (52). Thieme explains that postcolonial literature reveals the clash of cultures (native and Western- imposed culture) and traces the colonial mechanisms in imposing certain thoughts and practices on the colonized assumed as the Other, inferior and submissive. The subject matter of postcolonial literature is ambivalence, cultural displacement, identity crisis and belonging.

Being affiliated to both cultures and haunted by a sense of "unhomeliness" in Bhabha's terms, postcolonial writings are determined by a double vision and view the world from contrasting prospects of both the native and the colonizer. This situation creates a schizophrenic status as W.E.B Du Bois names it "Double Consciousness". In order to express their nativism and nationalism, indigenous writers try to comprehend the hybrid identities and cultures by writing back to the past to account for the colonizing "epistemic Othering" to borrow Spivak term, and the humiliation of "mimicry", in Bhabha's terms. Comprehending one's culture and roots can be done through stepping back to the past and discovering the pre-colonial culture. Again, this idea echoes Helen Tiffin's view of postcolonial literature as "non-native texts in English which look forward to the future, reaching for a definition of the new hybrid identities, personal and communal, and reveal the complexity of cultural identity in the colonized world." (11)

The issue of identity negotiation is one of the central concerns in postcolonial studies. In literature, postcolonial writers attempt to draw portraits of the displaced nature of former colonized as well as immigrants' hybridized identities. In fact, identity is related to the subject's consciousness of being a part of a macrocosmic identity shaped by social, political, and cultural attitudes that assert his peculiarity and his difference from other groups, especially in the diaspora. Identity crisis that postcolonial subjects usually experience stems from lack of agency and forms of representations fostered by the power discourses of the West (Thieme 56). The issues of the development of national/cultural identity lead to engaging in a dialogue between the Self and the Other to re-define the conceptualization of identity negotiation. By internalizing power relations between the West and the East, a massive process of hierarchies is introduced especially after globalization and division of the world into the first, second, and third world. The sovereignty of logic and power that characterizes the Western image defines the moral and political implication of such a hierarchy.

Roughly described as lacking agency, the new category of the Third World falls into a duality of self-conception, "a double consciousness" in W.E.B Du Bois' terms, between the individual and public position, between what the Other thinks he is and where the globalized world has located him. Therefore, power discourses define and constitute the position of the formerly colonized subjects. The agonizing reality of immigration is intertwined with politics of otherness as an outcome to the clash between representations and cultures looked upon as fixed represented as the Other and doomed to be unrecognized and marginalized. Difficulties of cultural transitions, being under the Western gaze and problems of assimilations, carry out the central concerns of the first generation immigrants of former colonies or formerly colonized nations. The second generation, though regarded as part of the Western society, still carries on and upholds the burden of the colonial

legacy.

In order to get deeper into the postcolonial theory, it is important to draw upon the main concepts discussed in this thesis such as otherness explained further by Edward Said. In fact, to understand the notion of otherness, it is necessary to mention *Orientalism*. In questioning the representation of the Third World subjects in the West, Said's critical argument lies in how "the western discursive powers are re-enforced and imposed" (188). Besides, he analyses Western representations of the Orient which re-asserted the West's colonial domination of former colonies in his book *Orientalism.*

Edward Said reflects on the way the Western representations of the Orient contributes in the efficiency of colonial practices. He also examines academic knowledge, education, and media that play an important role in supporting colonial power, occupied territorially in the past and intellectually culturally in the present (*Orientalism* 185). Beside the role of disclosing the Orient, Said also probes the system of representations grounded on "acts of power" (185) by which the images of the colonized, the way they see themselves does not come from their own self-awareness but are created, defined and imposed by the colonial epistemic systems taken as a reference.

Resuming *Orientalism* as an "academic discipline" and a "style of thought" (Said *Orientalism* 14); Said hints at the way the West creates images of weakness and submission on the Orient. The West, Said contends, justifies his invasion by conviction that "the colonized people and societies are inherently Other and deserve to be ruled and dominated" (12) this also justifies colonialism and bears the White Man's burden and role in civilizing the exotic Other. Bearing responsibility in transmitting civilization and education to the East or formerly colonized nations is the nucleus of the West's inherent superiority being the source of logic, enlightenment, power, and prosperity that has till the

present-day remained intact as an indisputable and irrefutable reality. It is by the conviction that the Third world people and societies should accept and believe in their inherent inferiority that the Western people, cultures and values' maintain superiority. The Self and the Other can be understood in terms of the light and darkness, each defines the absence of the other; each reflects the superiority or inferiority of the other. Western values and socio-cultural, political, and cultural ideologies are risen out of and stand against deficiency and legacy of the Other's culture and nativity. This is what makes the current generations of developing nations have a minimizing view of their nations and societies seen and internalized as inherently unable to reach success away from the source of success, the West. This urges these generations to glorify the West and therefore quit their homelands in their quest for success, agency, and appreciation. Again, this echoes Said's premise that the Orient is "the deepest source of crucial images of the Other; it is given all the attributes that the West or the Self denies or dislikes" (15). Westerners have depicted the Easterners in many ways yet all of which meet on common points of exoticism, strangeness, and difference. Examples of stigmatizing the image of the Other is still persisting nowadays in the sense that any terrorist practices are attributed to an Arab, Third World, formerly colonized subject, still maintain the politics of otherness.

What is interesting about political and cultural discourses expressed in Said's analysis of the Other representation is "its rhetorical recurrence" (*Orientalism* 160). The critic suggests in his *Culture and Imperialism* that "the mysterious East as well as the stereotypes about African, Indian, Chinese or Caribbean mind are related to violence and rebellion because they mainly understood force or violence; they were not like us and for that they deserved to be ruled" (164). Terrorist deeds are attributed to the Other as inherently chaotic. There is no way to think or even imagine that an individual from the West still representing the spirit and doctrines of the Self could have ever done it. Based on

this assumption, Western superiority marks its ever-presence in opposition to the inferiority of the colonized whose otherness remains a blueprint putting the Other on the margin of cultural, political, and social realities.

Subsequently, Said is not only interested in tracing the mechanisms of colonialism but also to follow its effects which embody a legacy of the colonial ruling and the knowledge systems. The concept of otherness in postcolonial theory marks a special attention from critics and researchers. Within the boundaries of studying postcolonial texts, in *Orientalism,* Said emphasizes the important role that literature plays to question and analyse Western cultural supremacy over other cultures, the effects of colonialism and the challenges of neo - colonialism in constructing the current image of the Other (185). Said also declares that the epistemic violence of colonialism put colonized people in the category of the Other (185). In order to understand the notion of otherness further, Said explains: "to be colonized was a fate with lasting, indeed grotesquely unfair results especially after national independence had been achieved (…) various pathologies of power and corruption notable achievement of war, literacy, economic diminution" (203). This mixture of characteristics designed the colonized people who had freed themselves on one level but remained victims of their pasts on another (207). This is why, to broaden the scope of this analysis, one prevailing role of postcolonial theorists is scrutinizing the position of the Other in the light of culture transitions, identity crises, self-identification, language, racial prejudices, feminist constraints, and consciousness of oppression.

National independence means nothing but separation of the colonizer from the colonized's territory. However, the dependence on the former colonizer and influences of ex-colonial systems of thought on education, language and culture are still perpetual. According to Said the situation of the colonized is "fixed in zones of dependency and marginality ruled by a superior colonizer who was theoretically posited as a categorical

antithetical overlord (207). As Said makes it clear, the colonized besides being inherently the Other, he is also doomed to depend on the reference, the source vested in Western superiority (209). The formerly colonized later on immigrant in the West stays victimized by his otherness, this otherness that fixes him to the boundaries of periphery and alienation.

As regards to the epistemic violence, Robert Young recognizes binary oppositions that assert the superiority of the West Self and the inferiority of the Other to examine the fixity of otherness. In his book *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, William Young deems that "all intellectuals from the West claim the universality of the Western thought and its efficiency through time as a source of systematic structures of knowledge and economic centre. In this way the Other finds himself fit nowhere, belonging to a past conditioned by universal European values of legitimate colonialism" (124). This imbalance of power between two poles: the West and the East. Eventually, the world has become divided into hierarchies where the Other is categorized in proportion to stereotypes and standards of knowledge which are a production of power discourse. This is supported by Said's idea of power that produces knowledge, a power that gives ground to misinterpreting the Other (*Orientalism* 219). It seems in a way imminent to Foucault's Knowledge/power, this knowledge is regarded universal that glorifies the Western systems of knowledge, political strategies, and economic material that are now controlling the globe.

After explaining *Orientalism*, the inaugural fundamental meaning of otherness, it is vital to clarify the role of Said's theory in the analysis of the novels selected and the way otherness is used to understand characters' alienation on the gender basis, racial discrimination, and cultural rejection. The characters suggested in the novel are portrayed as non-western immigrants or second generation American subjects descending from origins and cultures which are already regarded as Other. In the course of the study, the

selected novels are going to be employed to extract examples of globalization ideology and world division into categories based on ethnicity, race, and gender. Using Said's ideas of *Orientalism* and otherness will help me trace the oppositional relations between the Self and the Other to examine the distorted representation of the East fixed in the universal Western ideologies. These representations articulated in the ways in which the Self asserts its superiority through culture, politics, and social discourses. In addition, it is also important to highlight the inevitability and persistent clash between the East and the West which stretches to the present-day even after long years of independence from colonial control.

Discussing the themes that do not conform to Western universal values is the inadequacy of diasporic and hybrid identities in the Caribbean texts. The spirit of inadequacy reaches Black identity tainted with marginalization and exclusion. Within the boundaries of colonial forces and discourses of power, black subjects are also surrounded by stereotypes of Othering and exoticism. According to the Western humanist version of identity and social hierarchies, black subjects mean the counterpart of white, totally the opposite of the standard. Broadly known for his support of the Algerian struggle against the French colonialism, Frantz Fanon has a distinctive contribution in conveying his anti-colonial project by probing mechanisms of colonial powers and proposing ways to resist and fight them. Fanon also found out that colonialism has both material (socio-economic forces) as well as "epistemological" mechanisms to perpetuate its control over colonized nations (Aschroft *et al* 151). In fact, Fanon advocated national liberation organizations and declared that "to fight for national culture means in the first place to fight for the liberation of a nation that material keystone that makes the building of a culture possible" (*The Wretched of the Earth* 55). He thought that being free to get in terms with one's indigenous culture is an attempt to understand one's identity. To belong to a certain geographical

space called a nation or native country is not possible without being psychologically independent of colonialism.

Diasporic Memories in the Postcolonial Context

For Frantz Fanon, colonialism generally imposes specific attitudes, cultures, and values that deny and exclude the presence of the cultures and values of the colonized nations (*The Wreached of the Earth* 100). Therefore, a colonialism result in the colonized's alienation from the conventional standards of reality and makes them question their own culture and seek to assimilate that of the colonizer in order to be accepted. The colonized is left with two antagonistic realities leading to two levels of identity and self-definition. In another context, Fanon is aware of this "schizophrenic situation" and declares that the crisis of identity stems from the self-consciousness of one's existence in a given society. So, he thinks that colonialism and the project of re-construction of a new identity is a "matter of consciousness" that needs to be re-defined in people's minds (85).

From a postcolonial view, in the course of resisting colonial systems or any form of oppression moving from material to epistemic level, Fanon rather proposes a psychological resistance through recognizing and accepting one's identity and the othering label that is attributed to his image. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, he proposes the use of "psychoanalysis as a resistance mechanism in the anti-colonial struggle goes in twofold: first, it investigates the inner effects of colonialism on the colonized self-image. Second, it provides the tools of resistance turning the sense of inferiority into self-empowerment" (28). From weak distorted representation to emancipation and self-empowerment, the colonized should get in contact with his native culture to achieve self-assertion via history revision, memory, and preservation of native culture. In terms of "psyche effective equilibrium", Fanon states that the fact of resisting the colonizer serves in a great change

that pertains to both the colonizer and colonized (189). Decolonizing the mind, for Fanon, is the first step before material or epistemic resistance as it serves in casting aside those colonial representations that weakened the colonized's identity. For Fanon, decolonization is not enough and does not show usefulness to give a representation of the colonized subject and his environment that subverts those of the colonizer's. In *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*, Robert Young supports Fanon's proposition in asserting the importance psychological level of colonized self-consciousness in the pursuit of resistance and claims that the colonized's change of attitude from a submissive subject to revolutionary serves in causing changes in the way they conceive each other (111).

Consequences of such a psychological shift are clearly shown in the cultural revolutionary movements and literary works which refuse to remain under the fixity of the colonial system of thought. Or Young, achieving self-consciousness leads to preserving a specific self-image that belongs to a recognized nation (112) which is not a part of the colonial entity, culture, and language. In this context, James Clifford suggests that consciousness of one's identity asserts the human "desire" to belong to a certain group, category or a nation. It necessitates belonging to culture as well (18). Clifford proposes "the survival of culture"; this term refers to the colonized self-consciousness of not only being the Other but also being different. The critic adds that preserving culture is a way towards re-creating a new version of the self reinforced by psychological liberation of the mind enables him to resist both material and epistemic colonial systems (37). Self-consciousness is in a way a cultural and individual renaissance. It shows a will to preserve and study native cultures not being ashamed of the long history of oppression, humiliation, and ignorance of self-worth. This new resisting form of identity negotiation stands in opposition to the previous forms of inferiority that colonialism used to impose and exercise.

Beyond the active material resistance for liberation, Fanon's psychological dimension of resistance seeks to first liberate the mind of the colonized through the process of self-consciousness (*The Wretched of the Earth* 48). The utility of Fanon's views to the study of the novels goes in following the stages of the colonized identification and in a way assimilation of the colonizer's cultures. Assimilation is a mutation towards freedom through an ambivalent, double-consciousness of two cultures, two versions of the past of two counterparts the Self/Other to articulate native culture as related to nationalism and elements of nativism. In the process of identity construction, nationalism and nativism juxtapose with the native past controlled by the colonizer. In this respect, it is clear that the presence of colonialism in history and identities of the colonized subjects during and after decolonization is still persistent and stayed an inescapable and undeniable part of the colonized past.

Between assimilation and going back to roots, postcolonial writers try to understand the sense of ambivalence, incertitude, and the inevitable presence of facets of western motifs in their works. This confusion of double-consciousness of two realities leads to questioning their position on the national scale and within the Western space. This ambivalence leads to questioning the postcolonial subjects' hybridity, the credibility of a hybrid subject and the need to reach a balance in both societies especially for the immigrants belonging to native and the West societies. Hybridity takes the colonized away from his native culture and identity; it results in an in-between status as a result of cultural encounters. Moving from otherness to hybridity, the postcolonial subject especially of the first generation immigrant, who represents a preliminary minority, shows a need to assimilate or imitate the Self. This situation echoes Homi Bhabha's term "mimicry" as related to the requirements of being a part of a multicultural space.

Eventually, Homi Bhabha takes out the controversy of cultural encounters to explain the development of hybridity through time in Europe and the U.S. where mimicry of the Western cultures is encouraged in the pursuit of globalization's purpose: homogenization. The discourse of "mimicry" shows ambivalence where Bhabha views in *The Location of Culture* that "mimicry produces new native projects whose difference distorts and subverts the identity of the colonized by rearticulating colonial presence in its production of Otherness that which disavows" (91). However, Bhabha assumes that this mimicry on the part of the colonized is "at once resemblance and threat" (123) as the postcolonial subject can never be totally Western. In order to implant this homogenization in Western societies, cultures, and views of identity to overcome the otherness intimidation, Robert Young suggests that "fixity of identity is only sought in situations of instability and disruption, of conflict and change in the confrontation between the Self and the Other in Western context" (4). When reading deeply Bhabha's works, which deal with the position of postcolonial cultures in the contemporary globalized world, one may decipher that he advocates heterogeneity of cultural exchange and diversity of postcolonial histories that lead to hybridity.

In fact, Bhabha draws a line between otherness and hybridity saying that what is actually designated by the concept of otherness is a "hybrid subjectivity" (85). Hybridity reflects in a way the Other's cultural and spatial displacement being torn between two cultures. This ambivalence does not bring forth a new unique version of identity; it rather shows a displaced culture, a mixture of spaces and principles which lead to, as William Young states "a fragmented and hybrid controversial theoretical status which reflects the conflict of cultural encounters (69).

The mixture of two different cultures results in hybrid socio-political identities that, as Ashcroft et al state, involve dialectal relations of Western cultural systems and

native ontology which creates new displaced fragmented identities (195). Seemingly, the construction of new identities in the diaspora is grounded upon this antagonistic cultural encounter, friction and conflict between the colonial hegemonic system, and the colonized marginalized circumference. Young states that colonial discourses have developed in accordance with the construction of universal knowledge in addition to ambivalent strategies of internalizing the boundaries between the centre and the periphery in postcolonial context (152). Through revealing ambivalence of two levels of representations coexisted and fused together, Young adds that Bhabha has "in effect performed a political reversal at a conceptual level in which the periphery has become the equivocal, indefinite, indeterminate ambivalence that characterizes the centre"(161).

Bhabha emphasizes that postcolonial cultures reveal more than a mixture of two different cultures resulting in hybridized identities. Hybridity instead is a way through which identities and cultures co-exist and get negotiated. The critic clearly expresses culture as a strategy of survival and continuity based on transnationality. Bhabha sees that hybridity results from the histories of cultural displacement while culture is also based on translational grounds in articulating the transformation of native histories (119). Hybridity characterizes displacement into new transcultural realities within the limitations of the Western paradigms. Bhabha's advocation of fusing both cultures falls into the arena of in-betweenness or in-between ambivalent cultures that he conceptualizes as the "Third Space".

The Third Space or "the grey zone" is a common ground where cultures are mingled and identities are negotiated in an effort to fashion a new version of identities that go hand in hand with the requirements of the modern globalized society. In "Culture's in-Between", Bhabha defines his term the Third Space as an in-between space which allows for the emergence of newness; he also states that this common space is a location in which

cultural difference is best articulated and negotiated (2). Seemingly, Bhabha seeks to create a new vision in dealing with the West and East relationships. Bhabha's concept of hybridity deconstructs the fixity and antagonism between the Self and the Other. He rather sees this conflicting relationship as a dialogue that may reach a general and logical consensus.

By proposing the "Third Space", Bhabha attempts, in my opinion, to step beyond essentialist conventional views of culture and identity away from the former colonial discourses. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha declares the inevitable duality of the colonized issues especially immigrants' experiences in the diaspora which are doomed to be exposed to negotiation (185). Bhabha's idea of toleration strays away from Said's idea of difference, singularity and particularity of the colonized experiences of class hierarchies, gender differences, and racial discrimination. Concerning the importance of negotiation, Bhabha thinks that "negotiation is what politics is all about, we are always negotiating in any situation of political opposition or antagonism (…) negotiation is not just some kind of compromise" ("Culture's in-Between" 216). In what concerns immigrants' in-between situation, one may observe that they represent a fragmentary limited version of each separate culture. Always in the same essay "Culture's in-Between", Bhabha declares that immigrants are incapable of representing the entire native culture as influenced by that of the host land and asserts that immigrants take with them only a part of the total culture which is the very culture exposed to negotiation witnessing its development on an alien new soil" (30) whose image completes when both cultures are fused together through cultural exchanges. This also brings forth Bhabha's idea that all forms of culture are continually in process of negotiation characterized by hybridity (*The Location of Culture* 211) in which he declares that "the importance of hybridity to me is the Third Space which enables other positions to emerge (211). He continues proposing that cultural negotiation

leads to create something different and new in dealing with the modern level of representation (211).

Bhabha's the Third Space shows his intention to discard former colonial hierarchies and project forward towards the future where colonial epistemic binary opposition and neo-colonial material imperialism are part of the past. This vision towards the future somehow turns a blind eye to the persistence of the antagonism between the Self and the Other even in the present time. Commenting on and representing hybridized identities in postcolonial literature, Bhabha emphasizes the need to transcend national issues toward more open transnational accounts of displaced people, immigrants, and refugees in the diaspora. He believes that global literature, instead of national literature, raises out of the interstices in inter-subjective and collective experiences of *nationness* where national and cultural values are re-examined and negotiated once again ("Culture's in-Between" 2).

The significance of making use of Bhabha's concepts of the Third Space and hybrid identities and cultures in this thesis lies in analysing and apprehending the identity construction of immigrants especially the second generation, who reveal, as it has been mentioned previously, a partial experience of cultures. It is also important to shed light on immigrants' displacement and in-between situation when they get aware of both cultures, their parents' and their American culture, and seek for a room where those cultures meet and get negotiated on a pacific and tolerating common ground. Characters in the six selected novels, either belonging to the first or the second generations, reveal the clash of cultures differences and fall into Bhabha's in- between situation.

By analysing the problems of integration and identity negotiation, literary analysis of each novel helps internalize how the process of the Third Space works outside the national frontiers and beyond native cultures of first-generation immigrant characters. When going

through the Third Space process, the selected characters show a new vision of their in-between position. It is also a way to trace the legacy of otherness in the pursuit of creating new subjectivities beyond the boundaries of the centre and periphery. Turning to and away from power discourses, Bhabha's concept "Gathering" expresses in a way his Third Space in which both cultures are gathered and accept each other in the course of identity formulation. Bhabha juxtaposes the past to the present in the idea of Gathering; joining both of them is important in order to come out with a new perspective. He also indicates that diaspora is not simply a journey or a movement out of the frontiers of the native land to another nation; however, diaspora is more about settling down and putting roots somewhere (*Location of Culture* 15). The idea of going back to the homeland physically is not really significant as the operation of putting roots elsewhere (21) in a diasporic experience needs a certain period of time because diaspora usually stipulates alienation and exile; however, diaspora is not a negative but a positive constructive journey forward, or back home to understand one's self.

Because postcolonial studies intersect with other schools of thoughts and modern critical approaches such as post-structuralism, deconstruction, and postmodernism, the selected novels for this study are examined from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Postcolonial feminism combines revolutionary feminist spirit against patriarchal oppression to assert feminist modernity aspect with an anti-colonial struggle to subvert Orientalist representations that distort the postcolonial female image. However, in the realm of feminist criticism, it is important to inquire about the position in and the link with the Western feminist project. Postcolonial women descending from ethnic origins and belong to formerly oppressed nations are often categorized as Third World women. Here, one may ask to which category of feminism these postcolonial female writings belong and whether postcolonial female voices are heard, appreciated and finally categorized as belonging to

the feminist agenda.

Postcolonial women face a double level of oppression and experience marginalization on the intellectual level labelled as Third World women. Nevertheless, feminism, which is supposed to voice the ordeals and women's aim to achieve integrity, seems to exclude female voices just because Westernized feminism is in essence associated with modernizing forces of colonial powers and has never been anti-imperialist (Spivak 275). Therefore, allying feminism seems to stand as antithetical to certain strains of anti-colonial organizations. In this case, postcolonial women can identify themselves nowhere in the feminist criticism. Going back to identity negotiation and Third Space, the politics of hybridity is pertinent to the possibility of challenging ambivalent divisions: colonial and anti-colonial issues especially when it comes to Western and Eastern cultures.

Writing about current hybridized identities, postcolonial female writers attempt at connecting feminist ideology to postcolonial key issues in an effort to reach a common ground. In *Women, Nation of Other*, Trinh T. Minha treats the idea of Third World women's role in voicing current female preoccupations within postcolonial context and sums up the postcolonial women's aim in revealing agency and ability to express political issues (10). What we understand from Minh-ha is that Third World women writers consciously serve a political purpose in producing counter-narratives that attack faces of imperialism and patriarchal authority. In addition, Minh-ha declares that those women writers write in the context of "a community whose population does not have the possibility to read or write" (11). In this respect, women writers serve in voicing the ordeals and experiences of, in Spivak's terms "the subaltern" who cannot speak or represent himself/herself by providing critiques of patriarchy, racism, neo-colonialism which are still present in postcolonial societies. To extend postcolonial feminism further,

Chandra Mohanty writes in "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" that Third World women still suffer from the Western gaze. She claims that "the First World is set up in opposition to the Third World logic which still pertains to the superiority and progression of the Western over the East inferiority and underdevelopment" (280). Eventually, this superiority reinforces Western cultural imperialism and denies the role of the Third World efforts to develop a new image that transcends the distorted image of their native culture drawn by the previous colonial systems. Referring to the extensive meaning of the Third world subject, Mohanty writes about the former Western gaze of former colonized nations:

> Third World women as a group or category are automatically and necessarily defined as: religious (read not progressive), family-oriented (read traditional), legal minors (means they are still not conscious of their rights), illiterates (read ignorant), domestic (read backward), and sometimes revolutionary (means their country is in a state of war they should fight). This is how Third World difference is produced. (52)

In Indian-American, Caribbean-American and Arab-American selected novels; women writers' central concern is defying the representations of the above quotation by giving a new image of the contemporary postcolonial subject. The selected writers for this study emphasize the ever- present prejudices around race, gender, and class.

When discussing the doubly othering level in the representation of postcolonial women, the notion of subalternity arises. Gayatri Spivak introduces this notion in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" First, it is important to understand what Spivak means by the subaltern in power discourse boundaries. For Spivak, the subaltern embodies the outcast category which stays unrecognized, denied and/or roughly erased from the official history (285). Spivak also considers the least powerful and lower academic and social position as also subaltern since they are relegated to the periphery of power paradigm (288). Likewise, the reader should differentiate between the subaltern and the oppressed in the largest sense.

In her essay, Spivak highlights the fact that subalternity is one of the most misunderstood concepts and stresses on the understanding of the connotative meaning behind the term and be sure of the analysis of "rhetorical rigor" in order not to fall in the problem of equivocation (282).

The subaltern is the lowest class in society, not considered as existent. The subaltern may be equivalent to "the untouchable" in the Indian caste. This category is situated at the bottom of the pyramid of oppression (a severe form of oppression). The term oppressed and subaltern never be used interchangeably in the sense that the oppressed may have access to hegemonic power in order to express himself and can get contact with the revision of national political narratives. The oppressed's contribution is recognized by the process of interchange with the structure of hegemony status quo of historical, political, ideological rules of power in case his efforts are properly structured (Spivak 275). The subaltern, on the other hand, has no access to means of expression nor are his efforts to reach the hegemonic power discourse appreciated.

At this stage, one may deduce that not all oppressed are subaltern but all subaltern are oppressed. Spivak concludes her essay by saying that "looking at the massive oppression that the subaltern undergoes; he can never speak just in case he is represented by representatives to justify his existence" (279). I think this comes at the centre of my argument that contemporary postcolonial women writers take the role of re-inscribing what was unknown, discarded, and silenced. These writers step back to the past to record what was difficult to express by the subaltern ancestors, those who were denied and left unrecognized in the timeline of history. Or, maybe they wrote something about themselves and because it was recorded in their native language it stayed unexplored and unrecognized by the official historical narratives. The subaltern needs someone to

represent him and record his stories just like the example of Qaids in rural villages who participated in dispersed local Algerian revolutions in the first decade of the French occupations.

In stressing the role of contemporary postcolonial writers in disclosing past secret s of the subaltern, Spivak and Hooks investigate the relationship between academic scholar and the subaltern. The academic expert needs material and wants to know about the subaltern experiences without inserting the subaltern's interpretation of their experiences. Hooks depicts this relationship as if when writing about the subaltern is just another facet of oppression:

> No need to hear your voice when I talk about you better that you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain. I want to know about your story, then I will tell it back to you in a new way. Tell it back to you in such a way that it has become mine, my own. Re-writing you I write myself anew. I am still author, authority. I am still colonizer the speaking subject and you are now at the centre of my talk. (Hooks 242)

It is evident from the quotation that the subaltern has no way out; even when representatives write about him, he stays silent and can never express himself that meets the argument of Spivak.

The selected novels give insight on this category, specifically on silent suffocated subjects in the barriers of othering. Spivak represents a turn in postcolonial discourse as focusing on the "epistemic violence" (Spivak 285) that emerged out of the colonial distorted images of the colonized and stayed a label of humility and weakness up to now. She emphasizes on the violent facet of the colonial system not on the basis of military violence but in the way colonialism or the West uses knowledge to assert its power. She declares that "the clearest available example of such epistemological violence was the remotely orchestered far-flung and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as the Other" (286). Spivak joins Said's idea of representation of the Other in fixing and

supporting the colonial superiority and power. Both critics agree upon the premise that the West produces and constitute the Oriental subject in order to define it as the West's Other.

In fact, Spivak asks openly whether the subaltern is capable of speaking. The term *speak* does not mean literal speech but the first attitude towards representation. The critic inquires whether the subaltern is capable of expressing himself or he is aware of his position and capacities to enter into a dialogue with the West. The second meaning of the term *speak* is the feedback, the result of speaking is transmitting a message or voicing experiences. In short, the result of speaking is being heard and understood. Therefore, being heard and appreciated crystallize the second challenge facing the subaltern. Spivak attacks not only colonial epistemic structures which literally exclude the subaltern but also the Indian neo-colonial local nationalists and historians for re-excluding them though they belong to the same nation. She criticizes double othering level of the subaltern in India before the West.

In "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak summarizes the Indian hierarchy through history and puts at the top of the pyramid: the former colonial and international powers as dominant foreign groups (275). The second class is the dominant indigenous groups vested in national politicians and governors of India who represent the interior governors. This category is followed by another interior category Spivak calls the dominant indigenous groups representing regional and local governors whereas the bottom of the pyramid represents the majority of proletariat, the population or more precisely the subaltern (58). Here, we can understand that the subaltern is not only a poor illiterate silent peasant in India but represents a whole category erased from Indian historiography. Spivak wonders whether Indian intellectuals and postcolonial writers interested in revising history and resurrecting silent voices of the ancestors are able to hear those voices in the current Indian official history (290). More precisely, Spivak inquires about the ethical and methodological

patterns to explore the silence of the subaltern in history.

The following chapter **"Migrant Identity and Racial Order"** will focus on the racial prejudices and discrimination from which Black immigrant communities suffer. It reveals the way Elizabeth Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence* and Joan Riley's *The Unbelonging* reveal images of Black people notablt women's ordeals in the process of integration and assimilation in both American and British societies. The chapter also examines the way the intersecting strategies of colonial legacies are re-defined and re-analysed again via contemporary discourses in order to understand the past of the Caribbean female subject to understand her present position.

CHAPTER TWO:

MIGRANT IDENTITY AND RACIAL ORDER

Whenever the word 'Caribbean' is mentioned, one may immediately think about a vast region in the American continent roughly populated by a diverse polyglot of peoples from African, Asian Indian, Indonesian Javanese, Chinese, and Hispanic origins speaking different languages. This geographical space is usually associated with notions of space, sea, and several islands whose borders remain a site of multiple intersecting cultures, languages, and ethnically heterogeneous people. George Lamming declares that the Caribbean is unique as a historical phenomenon, more than any other nation in the world. He asserts that the peoples of the Caribbean relate to a long history of colonialism and slavery (9-10).

In this chapter, my aim is to examine how Nunez's and Riley's textual rebellion is presented as a site of female self-identity construction within the fluid space of Caribbean cultures. It is important to focus on Nunez's and Riley's female protagonists as non-white marginalized colonized women. The writers map out textual and cultural spaces under racial orders in order to reveal the notion of resistance and examine what meanings they give in their novels to the notions of space, race, and gender identity. This chapter will also focus on the depiction of the female protagonists' feelings of uprootedness and displacement which usually follow migration as well as their struggle to re-connect or re-create roots and re-define home in the context of racism in Britain and North America. It is important to scrutinize themes of pain, emancipation, psychological trauma and healing through traditional rituals in the process of reclaiming roots. They offer readers a discourse

of divergence, no longer from the condition of exile or "writing back" to European legacy, but from that of liaison, of interweaving narratives in which they try to transcend fixity and Western essentialist forms.

This chapter is also devoted to examine the intersecting structures of inherited colonial legacies, among which racism, for a Caribbean female subject to feel hostility and otherness. I set out to examine, within the context of the Anglophone Caribbean novel the following hypotheses :The first hypothesis focuses on how, through the power of imagination, a Caribbean literary work produced by diasporic women describes a silenced colonial past to recover the Caribbean voice as a way to re-inscribe the Caribbean identity away from Western dominance. The second hypothesis is how, through the interweaving of narratives and discourses beyond the boundaries of an Anglophone novel, a Caribbean writer looks upon racism and challenges fixity and othernessthat former colonizer perpetuates. The Caribbean search for identity falls in an epistemological double bind vested in historical narratives of violence, oppression, and slavery. It is interesting to understand the contact between the Self and the Other/ the Caribbean and the West from a transcultural dimension. What we need to understand is whether the colonial trauma is responsible for the splitting of the Caribbean self and eventually a deep crisis of identity of the colonised torn between two worlds in the diaspora.

A silenced past, long history of oppression, and harsh separation from old native traditions left unknown and unrecognized are what characterize the Caribbean history written by colonizing authorities that deny Caribbean history before the colonial occupation. However, contemporary postcolonial studies focus on analysing issues of Caribbean cultural displacement, ordeals of racism, slavery, and ethnicity in the context of western historiography and the ever -changing globalized world yet determined by cultural, social, ethnic and cultural divisions.

The Caribbean is universally known of a large historical mixture of races, a thing that brings along a mixture of religions and beliefs. Caribbean people may be Christians, Jews, Hindus, Rastafarians, Winti, or Vudun (Lamming 11) speaking consequently a multitude of languages due to the fact that this region was colonised by different countries. Besides French, English, Dutch, and Spanish, Caribbean people speak different versions of Creoles such as Papiamentu, Sranan Tongo, saramacan, and ndjuka.

The Caribbean: The Crossroad of Ethnic Identities

In a retrospective view, West Indies have discharged a long massive history of annihilation which holds the atrocities of slavery, the trauma of migrating from ancestral land, traditions as well as the imposition of alien languages and cultures. Since the violent encounter with the European colonizer, the story of the Caribbean and its inhabitants has become one of mutability, mobility, and plurality of discourses. In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, Paul Gilory uses the metaphor "The Black Atlantic" to emphasize the history of complicated colonial enlargements set in the Caribbean evolved as a result of accumulated diasporic movements, acculturation, cultural syncreticisms, and trade routes (58). Caribbean postcolonial researchers tend to develop discourses of resistance against colonial power discourses. To do so, they reject the traditional version of recording Caribbean history in relation to Columbus arrival. Caribbeans consider the colonial history an outdated version regarded as just an incident in a long history of a mutative cultural heritage as fluid as its shores. In *Writing in Limbo*, Simon Gikandi analyses the ambivalence and loss that the Columbus's arrival marks in Caribbean postcolonial writings. The critic resists the European representations and historical records which are as he points out "inaugurated by Columbus and the modern movement of colonialism" (2). Caribbean postcolonial writers try to recover the Caribbean past, ancestors' voices, and a transcultural sense of self in order to re-invent a new version of

Caribbean identity away from colonial fixity and essentialist cultural and national paradigms.

At the core of this diversification, the concept of the existence of Caribbean people as well as the construction of the Caribbean identity, distinguished from others, is usually challenging. An identity conveys some sense of security and bequeaths belonging. The sense of belonging necessitates being affiliated into a certain community and to be, in return, different from other communities. Identity formation is basically relational in an oppositional relationship of inclusion and exclusion with other communities. Identity is constructed in the context of ethnic history, nationalism and culture as Wilson Harris supports here, Caribbean identity is constructed away from "the monolithic callouses and complacencies of the Western articulation (44). In such a case, identity has a dialectically constitutive perspective of continuity and survival which are in part constructed via the re-fashioning of the persistent image of the "Other".

Over time and space, the "Other" is a prevailing part of Caribbean identity as they stay on the periphery of representation, live under the Western gaze, and suffer a severe sense of fragmentation and alienation. Said's *Orientalism* deals with the politics of Othering construction where the critic maintains that colonized subjects, who fail to assimilate or imitate the colonizer, are made to see themselves as the shadow of the Self (225). Fanon also treats this idea that co-relates with Said's Other and asserts that: "the colonial subject is dissected, fixed by White eyes, the only real eyes which cut away slices of (their) reality (116). This point sums up the Caribbean's assortment of ethnic tensions which seek for a more diverse identity engaged into social and human behaviour. Such a diverse identity is not easily susceptible to erasure or radical modification.

It is also important to inquire about who is the Caribbean? Is the Caribbean identity based on geographical space, race, and certain cultures that distinguish Caribbean subjects

from the others? Caribbean history of fragmentation is actually intertwined with the colonial powers which had long maintained dominance to the point that, Williams suggests, “the whole history of the Caribbean thus far can be viewed as a conspiracy to block the emergence of a Caribbean identity (15). Caribbean historical fragmentation serves in today’s variant cultures each of which reflects a certain legacy of a violent mixture of local people such as Asian coolies, African slaves, and European colonizers (Williams 57). Therefore, below the layer of Caribbean variety different identities lurk around the paradigms of race, culture, religion, and the very fact of racial diversity. Colonial racial order predisposes Caribbean people to patterns of the ethnic formation to reach self-consciousness. The Caribbean multiple cultures inscribed in postcolonial literary texts imply themselves beyond national boundaries set by colonialism and serve in transmitting voices of slavery, resistance to colonial dependency and racial prejudices to foster the diasporic dimension of the Caribbean communities indoors (in the homeland).

The inability of the Caribbean subject to define himself in relation to nation, culture, language and ethnicity is imminent to Spivak’s question of whether the subaltern can speak. In this case, the whole Caribbean communities are put in a situation of subalternity. This also leads us to Spivak’s view of “epistemic violence” where the Caribbean’s fragmented identities are due to the colonizer’s project of reducing the colonized to the status of the “Other”. The Other is unable to represent himself and still bears the agonizing legacy of primitive unacceptable cultures. Caribbean subjects find themselves in the void beyond the threshold of conventional history. They might never appear in the official history, severed from the historical events on their native soil and relegated to a status of non-one fitting nowhere. The Caribbean represents a status of a subaltern who does not belong to the pre-colonial period which does not exist in the official history. Therefore, they stay on the margin of historical and cultural presentation as non-existent communities.

Ethnic identity develops from collective consciousness that displays a sense of belonging or a membership to a certain group or nation that develops solidarity within the communities. Seen from the belonging perspective, identity can be acquired through membership bound by different social attributes like race, language, religion, culture, and space to which this relation to these attributes preserves a special sense of personal value.

Beyond the fact that the Caribbean communities share some similar characteristics especially their history of slavery, indenture, coerced labour, and colonialism over more than 500 years, it is not safe to call it a society but instead a vast, variant place culturally, racially and ethnically diverse. Walcott suggests that the multiplicity of the Caribbean cultures is the basis of the Antillean experiences of identity fragmentation, shards of a huge tribal vocabulary, and partially remembered customs.

The Caribbean's history of colonial violence, subjugation and, extermination marked the development of a Caribbean identity. The Caribbean' memory trauma is fundamentally carried out through its diaspora in the United States and Great Britain. The colonial powers regarded the Caribbean as wild creatures, the Other, who were inherently wicked and should be exploited. Even in the aftermath of decolonization, the Caribbean countries are not totally free under the American imperialism which treats them as stagnant mass and therefore inconsequential labourers. The neo-colonial preservation of colonial traditions of oppression and exploitation serve in putting the Caribbean communities away from revising their histories

and defining themselves as independent communities with distinguished nationalities and cultures.

Additionally, Gayatri Spivak traces the tropes of violence from the colonial system till neo- colonial "structures of violence" in which she questions the Caribbean ability to

define a "space of communal identity, self-representation and historical agency in opposition to the disempowering discretion of the (neo) colonizing gaze" (291). Therefore, the critic finds out that the Caribbean communities are still caught in shackles of subalternity; even after their presumed independence they stay indebted to the colonial arrival to their shores in order to be aware of their existence in which case they stay uprooted determined by dependency to their erased exploitative history.

Immigrant Caribbean peoples, who never had the chance to go back home again, live in a nostalgic dreamland of their ancestral homeland that supports that constant claim for a unique identity. Their homeland encompasses the notions of existence and continuity, a land rich with historical religions and sacred sites nurtured with folklore and lore commemorating origins that represent their roots. Historically speaking, Williams declares that Caribbean peoples are not the original settlers but new arrivals who occupied the place and regard themselves as part of it (53). In this respect, they would pass through the process of identity re-identification since the homeland itself is being re-invented to map out a moral architecture of belonging and memory. Into those lost spaces, narratives, rituals, and myths, a new identity is to be infused with memories of past pains.

What we understand from the quotation is that the Caribbean world suffers from fragmentation due to "the ignominies of the the history of invasions, The Middle Passage, slavery and later the domination of the Western cultural power" (Lamming 105). The quest for identity, as already mentioned above, has always been to occupy the forefront of the preoccupations of the Caribbean intelligentsia; so it remains one of the central topics of Caribbean literary productions.

Within the context of the American and British literature, the Anglophone Caribbean literary texts may proffer a liberating and mutative criterion of identity. These literary texts inscribe themselves within a debate about "the anxiety of representation" of Black

Caribbean writers in present-day British and American literature. While issues of Caribbean dislocation and multicultural identity have received much attention in the field of postcolonial studies, an operation of discourse, a re-imagining of silenced Caribbean past, and the local voice of resistance are prevailing. This is why I will use the term "Caribbean" instead of "West India" throughout this chapter as re-invented by native scholars, intellectuals, and political resistant, such as Edouard Glissant, Eric Williams, and Kwames Dawes.

Because of their violent past and resistant present, the Caribbeans grow aware that their identities are a result of Caribbean identity collecting pieces of communal memories and hidden local histories. Here, postcolonial writers try to dig underneath the official history surface going back in the past to search for the pre-colonial chapter that defines their existence. They try to produce counter-narratives to deconstruct the unquestionable official discourse of colonial records. They rather attempt to come out with a past image to be juxtaposed with the present fragmented hybrid culture including Creole, European and African matrices. They step beyond the boundaries of being the weak element in history or the Other in order to re-frame again the postcolonial Caribbean identities. Barbara Harlow stresses the importance of narratives of resistance to arise spirit of self-consciousness and states that “the narratives of resistance must not only undo recorded hegemonic history but they must also invent new forms to encode resistance by inventing spaces of resistance” (189). Counter-narratives or narratives of resistance serve in promoting a postcolonial recognition of ethnicity and accepts multiple discourses which aim to inclusiveness (in opposition of exclusiveness of univocal colonial discourses) of the silencing voices and lost memories of the indigenous people whose existence marks a significant blank in the official histories. These studies of history also reflect the richness and the Caribbean multiplicity of origins, voices, languages, rituals, mythologies, and oral traditions which

are insignificant and excluded from the Caribbean cultural existence.

Caribbean migrant writings started to gain fame and was published during the 1930s. Jean Rhys' *Voyage to the Dark* (1936) was one of the pioneering novels which explored issues of the Caribbean diaspora in Europe. In his study of Caribbean literature, *Writing in Limbo*, Gikandi maintains that Caribbeans are forced to re-define themselves in relation to their sense of belonging (5). The Caribbean subject grows aware of fragmented chasms of consciousness of the self, many critics agree upon the in-betweenness of the Creole subject whose identity is determined by political, historical and cultural attributes. This echoes Bhabha's the Third Space or in-between status in which the Caribbean subject questions his position in history, culture and space developing a fluid hybrid identity that as Bhabha suggests: "develops hybrid strategy of discourse which opens up a space of negotiation" (*The Location of Culture* 34).

The Third Space enables the Caribbeans to describe and re-define their identities away from the confinements of the hegemonic colonizing discourses. However, Caribbean writings of resistance or counter-narratives, though written in English, might sometimes be misunderstood, not acknowledged and deprecated as they do not conform to the dominant ideological boundaries and are again reduced to the status of loss and hostility. The sense of re-exclusion that Caribbean writers confront is explained as a deviation from the universal hegemonic discourse. The Caribbean literary works, though written in English, are still under the gaze of the White colonizer and need more freedom to articulate their postcolonial identity.

Postcolonial Caribbean writers affirm the importance of the oral versions of history and oral literary traditions which represent the backbone of their postcolonial identity. Through their literary works, they show a special concern with native oral patterns and

rhythms. Going back to the past and translating oral traditions into literary writings is what gives the current Caribbean literature its originality and peculiarity. Caribbean writers like any newly independent colonized subjects try to articulate their political and cultural concerns via a language that describes the epistemic level of the creolized experiences. They try to shift from using Standard English to Creole speech and terms mingled into appropriated English. Francoise Lionnet comments on using creolized English that voices Caribbean interests. The critic considers this move from Standard English to Creole speech a means to underscore the existence of class and race differences among the characters (322). Creolized English also manifests the double consciousness of the postcolonial, bilingual, and bicultural writer who lives and writes across the margins of different traditions and cultural universes (324).

Accordingly, postcolonial writers from formerly colonized countries tend to produce a new body of literature to establish their national and cultural identity out of the former colonial experiences. Many postcolonial immigrant writers undergo identity crisis especially when it comes to language as a means of self-expression. Many postcolonial writers think that English is a symbolic process and another facet of epistemic control of the colonial enterprise. Postcolonial writers reject English thinking that perpetuates colonial control over systems of thought and represents a kind of superiority over the indigenous local languages. Using a Standard English just like that used by Dickens or Tennyson gives nothing new to their literature but reinforces the clash between the Self and the Other. Besides, postcolonial writers regard the conformity to Western literary norms as a threat of the ever-existent colonial universal values of oppressive systems of thought. They rather seek to Break away from Western humanist values and reject cultural practices of the former colonizer.

Some writers utterly reject the language of colonialism and seek to write in the local

language whereas others try to achieve a linguistic disruption of colonial language by defamiliarizing, enstranging and appropriating English to go in accordance with themes of their past traumas and fragmented identities. Between rejection and subversion of the former stereotypes, canonical works and Western humanist values, Derek Walcott represents an example of schizophrenic attitude towards using English as a medium of self-expression. Through his mingling of English with Creole speech patterns, Walcott tries to set a common ground in which both languages and cultures co-exist together to reflect the hybrid identity that the Caribbean subject tries to re-fashion. In doing so, Walcott attempts to reach the principle of hybridity and cultural appropriation in his works giving ways to a new discourse that enables him to re-create a new tradition of self-acceptence, of accepting the image of the "Other" to re- write to the motherland and re-explore once again the native oral traditions and cultures which were previously denied.

During the 1960s, a strong emergence of female migrant writers of Caribbean origins started thinking of the multi-faceted cultural identities in their literary works. In order to define their notion of Caribbeanness, a new generation of contemporary female writers try to decode issues like 'origins', 'ethnic background', and 'roots' in an attempt to define themselves in terms of their Caribbean origins. Immigrants in Britain and the United States try to reflect on the notion of multifaceted, Creolized belonging trying in this context to recover the sense of 'home' and identity within the host culture. Similarly, concepts of hybridity, in-betweeness, and imaginary homelands emerge as important attributes of the general curricula of postcolonial studies. Literature is a forum to reflect on and display cultural self-definitions for many writers of Caribbean origins; that is why, Davis points out that the Caribbean is not only a geographical space but also a site of dissemination of a variety of socio-cultural processes as well as a space of continuous change and the on-going questioning of self, origin, and direction (13).

Elizabeth Nunez and Joan Riley engage with the issue of individual and collective trauma and diasporic Caribbean experiences so as to produce a narrative whereby they can reclaim silent voices of subjugated women. The individual trauma in Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence* and Riley's *The Unbelonging* mirrors the trauma of the African diaspora in its Caribbean variation. However, the two female protagonists, Sara and Hyacinth's responses to issues of exile, racism, nostalgia for home and trauma suggest strategies of identity negotiation and a site of diasporic journeys. Both authors seek to re-write the colonial representations of Caribbean cultural identities to recognize "a complete female self" as a resistant individual. They emphasize the role of re-tracing one's own past, personal memories, ancestors, rituals, language, and rebellion against the colonial clichés and racism.

Writing about the Caribbean identity in English is considered as a means to overthrow the cycles of non-entity, obscurity and disappearance which still haunt the Indo-Caribbean psyche. Caribbean writers seek to incorporate their "Blackness" in the English literary scene, as Binder suggests, delving into the fragmented archives of cultural memory, revising the myths, tearing up the pages of Prospero's magic book and re-pasting it in his own order, by his own method, and for his own purpose (164). Through inserting and accepting their "Blackness", Caribbean writers try to understand the complex ties to African origins. On the other hand, by using English, they attempt to create an international, transcultural Blackness which transcends the boundaries of racism that occupied a considerable part of Pan-Atlantic existence. In his essay, "Ethnicity, Identity and Diaspora", Hall argues that "Black" was first used in Britain and the United States to express a common experience, across ethnic and cultural difference, of marginalization and racism (225). As such, it provided a singular and unifying framework with which to demand rights to representation and to challenge the negative images of the dominant

Eurocentric ideology with the ‘counter -position’ of a ‘positive’ Black imagery (266).

In this races’ struggle in which the concept of ethnicity is no longer fixed but a subject to re- definition and re-articulation, it is important to cast aside old White and Black essentialist discourses of race and reconsider components like history, language, and culture. In which case, ethnicity would not conform to the tenets of fixity or exclusion practices leaving the space for recognition instead of the exclusion of the presence of what it considered as the “Other”. In the dialectic relation between the Other in the Self and the Self in Other, the Caribbean literary texts seek to challenge the boundaries of margin and centre which reflect a certain fixed homogenous traditions that open up the space for trans-cultural discourses. It is exactly what Hall considers as “coming-to-terms with our ‘routes’ rather than a ‘return to roots’” (57) seen as an important step towards the re-construction of Caribbean-American and Caribbean-British identities within the context of belonging in variety not in fixity.

Beyond the Limbo Silence and *The Unbelonging* are chosen because they offer juxtaposition to the West: Caribbean-American as well as Caribbean-Britishperspectives of identity from the variation of cultures and gender struggle. Central to their fiction is the exploration of issues of belonging, identity, and memory in the diaspora. The sense of dislocation and ambivalence sticks to the Caribbean self while Nunez and Riley maintain that Africa, Britain, The United States, and the Caribbean are “the ambiguous hand” that each of these places is at once a site of inclusion and exclusion. In her essay, Nunez confirms: “I recognise the place, I feel at home here, but I do not belong. I am of, and not of this place” (4). The female writers’ experiences of immigration and resettlement in the U. S and Britain reconstruct their feelings towards the space they occupy. In fact, they develop a sense of connection and sometimes disconnection with their environment. Therefore, the texture of memory, home, and belonging undergoes constant changes.

Nunez and Riley evoke the importance of space and immigration in the course of their search for identity.

The Caribbean cultural space is more than a geographical location or a mere space. In the Riley's *The Unbelonging* and Nunez's *Beyond the Lombo Silence*, space can also set a journey towards resistance, memory, and identity. It is important to examine how the politics of location changes one's vision about the emotional significance and social meaning of a certain nation. This may call to mind Adrienne Rich's view on the politics of space when she declares that the politics of where the person is, geographically define his attitudes to race, gender, sexuality, and class (336). First, it is important to understand the multicultural and transnational perspectives of identity and hybridity as shifting axes between "the Self" and "the Other". In this chapter, I will rely on Hall's concepts of cultural identity within the layers of race, self, gender, and ethnicity. Second, it is important to draw upon Williams' suggestion that the Caribbean cultural reality of "home" is always in a process of progression and a site of multiple simultaneous dialogues and changes between native and host cultures.

In addition to the cultural identity processes, it is important to explore the clash between colonial modernity and Caribbean postcolonial fiction which challenges the Western modes of representation of diasporic Caribbean women of African origins who have usually occupied one of the most silenced positions. In this sense, it is relevant to put the spotlight on the relationship between Caribbean and African struggle to gain emancipation. This chapter also analysesFranz Fanon and Edward Said's views about "the Self" and "the Other", the colonizer and the colonized relate to the Black immigrant women relegated to the position of the "Other" and how the hereditary "otherness" wrecks the lives of the Caribbean woman. Racial bias is entrenched and deep-rooted; it is also pertinent to examine how "Whiteness" and "Blackness" are no longer issues of race but

that of origins and ethnicities to be in the Caribbean reality.

The Caribbean Politics of Colonial Representation

Colonialism is one of the major themes treated by Caribbean writers. It has brought about a fragmented Caribbean society that found itself trapped, as Glissant states: "in between White ruling and Black African imagination of land" (69). This status creates deep anxieties and raises difficult problems of language and values. In this sense, it is quite clear that the colonizing system focuses on language as a leading operation of discourse. Language pervades all aspects of human lives. Reality, as constructed by language, can no longer be understood as an austere, immutable entity but is always a subject to contextual constant interpretation.Subsequently, language is not onlya means to mirror reality but also a system of thoughts order. Thoughts system is then responsible for reframing and expressing ideas of Man's conceptions of his identity reality. Hence, creating language, as humanists usually suggest, constructs Man and entering the world of language is the point at which humans are conscious of their position in society.

The colonial power discourse of order and imposing the language of the colonizer marks an alienating experience for Caribbean authors writing in English. This point is important because their works are usually considered as the "Other". For the colonised Caribbean, this is a process of a double othering because this alienation and denial from the mainstream suggests marginalization and lack of recognition both in their mother land along with their native cultures. Writers of the Caribbean diaspora use the power of imagination in the form of the novel as a way through which they explore and "grapple with that colonial structure of awareness which has determined West Indian values" (Lamming 36). The colonial strict ruling and epistemic control in the Caribbean raise questions of production of knowledge and power through discourse which, in its

Foucauldian concept, is a set of statements within a social context which "defines and produces the objects of our knowledge" (Williams 44). As discourse 'rules in' as well as 'out', this also suggests that inclusion and exclusion practices are always there within language (Lamming 14). This is typically related to the Caribbean diaspora where, with the imposition of the English language, the colonised confront problems of a double alienation as they find themselves at once "colonised by language" and "excluded by language" (Lamming 15).

Discourses of power demand that processes of social regulation in the form of institutions be set up to regulate, control humans, conduct, and define conditions that must be fulfilled in order to produce compliant subjects capable of reproducing that order (Foucault 80). Eminent to Foucault's concept of knowledge language/power, language becomes a site of power struggle "in which marginality and subordination are to be understood as a constitutive effect of representation realized or resisted" (Barker 19). It also reveals that dispossession of a culture, of a community of thought and action, construction and alienation in the language of the "Other", and the will to resist the strict definitions of selfhood are the major themes of Caribbean writings.

In fact, Colonialism has indoctrinated the colonized, silenced him, and disturbed his national consciousness, and left him shattered between a past which stays between colonial hands where his existence is either erased or disfigured. The colonized stays unknown both for his community, history, and himself. The discovery of hybrid reality is, Bhabha argues, a defining moment of "originality and authority" (*Location of Culture* 146). The colonized is a production of a long process of indoctrination and colonial oppression. His subalternity is used, as we shall see in the novels of this study, as a tool of displacement, of domination and of conquest in addition toa tool of self-definition. Through the colonial power of representation, the subaltern endures fixity in handling the boundaries between the Self and

the Other. This colonial representation constructs the "civilized" European and, "apparently outside the field of the symbolic, the representable", its "abject" "native" Other (Butler 22). It is noteworthy that the authority of the written word induces further dislocation for the Caribbean now confronted to an alien reality, to a world "where the signs were without meaning or without the meaning intended by their makers" (Naipaul 120).

The Caribbean communities are not only different and "Other" under the colonizer's gaze but are also made to see themselves as Others, alienated, and excluded from intellectual participations. Formerly colonized Caribbeans lived as they were ordered to do on the margin of world human achievements and history. The colonial fixity, self-fragmentation, and splitting of consciousness are also viewed within the context of Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks.* In the Caribbean context, the Caribbean communities sought to reconstruct themselves out of apast, which has been annihilated, a voice which has been silenced, an identity which has been shattered and ignored, and a language which has entrapped them in an alien system of representation. Fanon suggested that "the Caribbean writers produce discursively constructed texts, an ordering of events created by the conquerors to subjugate the conquered to their own singular narratives" (89).

Postcolonial Caribbean writers try to scrutinize the representations that the colonized subjects have recognized and internalized; representations that do not reflect their authentic self, for everything has been moulded according to the projects of colonial systems. What we understand here is that Caribbean intellectualsare excluded from the official history recorded by the colonizer. This official colonial history has already alienated them from their native narratives, oral traditions and collective heritage. Radhakrishnan states that postcolonial subjectivity chooses between its contemporary hybridity as "sedimented by the violent history of colonialism and an indigenous genealogy

as it existed prior to the colonialist chapter" (121). However, the official conventional history has permanently denied, ignored, and deformed the pre-colonial chapter.

The long history of imperial exploitation, indentured slavery, and colonial oppression serves in covering colonial deeds and revealing it as the superior Self for the inferior Other. Communities' survival has strictly displaced the elements of cultural heritage and oral traditions. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon argues that the White colonizer wants the world for himself alone, for he has elevated himself as the master of the universe within the superiority that English language attained over the other languages (27). In the Caribbean context, Fanon declares that everything that an Antillian does is considered as the "Other". Not because the "Other" is the ultimate objective of his action but in the sense that the "Other" is the one who corroborates himself in his search for self-validation (212-213). It is through imposing a single reigning language, English, that the colonizers come to regard themselves as superior ; the Self which is the same power that made the colonized individuals consider themselves as the Other is enslaved under a new system of values validated by the Whites.

The colonized communities started to witness the erosion of their cultures, languages, and patrimony which guaranteed their existence. The tragedy conducted by colonialism, as Hall suggests, led to the debasement and the silencing of the colonized (47), an idea that made the White man sealed in his whiteness and the Black in his blackness. It is the very order that differentiates between the good and the evil, darkness and light, civilization and savagery. Their fixed image attributes to primitive behaviour and savagery, of the inherent inferiority of their descendence from African origins. Africa, the land of cannibals, stays away from the layers of knowledge, riddled with wild rituals, superstitions, savagery, as Fanon describes, "doomed to be cursed by God and reduced to base instincts" (14). Hence, the stereotype of the African life encompasses exiled people of African

origins to the verge of exploitation reduced to instruments of production and labour. Walter Mignolo explains African's disintegration of the self as a sign of the colonized's "depersonilization" so that the colonized ca n never be addressed as an individual but drown in an anonymous collectivity (45).

In the context of the development of a sense of Caribbean consciousness, Fanon maintains in *Black Skins, White Masks* that the Black man is deliberately made aware of his blackness and at that very moment, he is also brought face to face the "Other" with all the negative imagery and connotations (85). This idea calls to mind Jung who states that at the heart of European consciousness is the belief that, within each individual, slumbers, an uncivilised savage, a 'negro', the seat of base and immoral instincts (175). Caribbean communities especially descending from African origins are set in the "twilight zone", the grey zone in between the ancestral and the colonial sources, which will be the space of enunciation and inspiration for the Caribbean writers. Fanon continues to suggest that, together with the desire to recover a voice which has been so brutally silenced by the imperial authority, there needs the recognition that this in-between world was "the womb from which he himself had sprung, and the richest collective of reservoir of experience on which the creative imagination could draw" (199).

The Complexity of the Caribbean Migrant Identity

Caribbean subjects do not embpdy a homogeneous entity representing unity, wholeness and above all belonging. They represent heterogeneous cultures, belonging, origins, and histories as Hall puts it clear "Caribbean communities have to be viewed within the context of a 'dialogic relationship' between a vector of similarity and continuity and that of difference and rupture" ("Cultural Identity and Diaspora" 226-7). Hall explains that "Identity, apart from reasserting an immutable view of the past, now needs to be

acknowledged as a shifting concept, subject to the play in history, culture and power, to be found not outside but within representations" (227). Caribbean literary studies may not be exhaustive and significant without referring to the influence that writers of the Harlem Renaissance and the Négritude movements have on Caribbean intellectuals. Caribbean artists join Harlem Renaissance intellectuals' premise of asserting a distinctive Caribbean identity of African origins without paying attention to colonial codes of identity presentation. Caribbean intellectuals are also inspired by the belief in African mystic rituals and spiritual bond to the mother land. They celebrate their difference and recognize their African rich heritage and history along with cultural values and collective memories voiced in African oral traditions and myths. Likewise, it is important to cite that Harlem Renaissance intellectuals were instrumental in stirring in the African diaspora a desire to throw away the chains of colonialism as they set out to challenge the racial order of white authority.

Caribbean intellectuals refute the charge of White essentialism by which they have been labelled. Hall argues that Harlem Renaissance writers made their voices heard, not from the position of a marginal experience confined and immured in the past, nor outside or excluded from the discourse of modernity but from within the heart of modernism itself (*Minimal Selves* 11). In fact, the early anti-imperialist stance taken by the writers of the Harlem Renaissance movement performed, as Elleke Boehmer argues, a "double process of cleaving" (qtd in Glissant 105-6). On the one hand, "a cleaving from", whereby it is now possible for the oppressed colonised to imagine themselves moving away from the narrow definitions, the debilitating images of the colonialist discourse. On the other hand, a "cleaving to" which allowed them, through texts, to make use of the power inherent in their mastery of the European language, English, to take control of their destiny and to release the self from the yoke of colonialist narrow definitions (106). Language heralds another

kind of modernity, a “vernacular modernity”, that of a hybrid culture, and the only way in which “Africa can be relived and rediscovered”, as Hall claims (*Minimal Selves* 11). It is a view of modernity in which all its participants tend to subvert models of colonial fixity that follows Caribbean history from Middle passage to colonialism and neo-colonialism.

Blackness is intertwined with the ever-present tropes of darkness in which case salvation can only be achieved through the carnage of barbarism through spreading rules of white civilization. Fanon explains the White’s mission to civilise the Other, but he finds out that civilization does not change the fact that the black is not civilized but colonized and above all enslaved and stay guilty of his blackness (58). White colonialism sets an image of enslavement that later leads the Black colonized to enslave himself through shame, self-contempt, and oppression acceptance. In *Black Skins White Masks*, the seat of much psychological trauma is also the strong desire felt by the black self for “lactification” (Fanon 47), to “renounce his jungle” in the hope of regaining status as a human being, for the Black man has got just one destiny, and it is white (12-18).

What makes the situation tense is when the black subject meets the white man’s eyes, he finds himself standing face to face with his imprisonment in his blackness that he seeks to escape. In such a situation, the Caribbean asserts once again his image of a slave of all the stereotypes and the myths that the White man has netted around him. He finds himself, as Fanon describes, “responsible for (his) body, (his) race, (his) ancestors, battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects” (*The Wretched of the Earth* 112). The Black also suffers a double consciousness of his identity as well as the label “nigger” or “Negro” which symbolizes the marginalization of a whole race. Lamming supports Du Bois and argues that “the bond between colonizer and colonized is seen as both destructive and creative as it is used to deconstruct the two partners in the colonization process into two distinct categories colonizer and colonized whilst the

colonial discourse" (115). Whereas Fanon declares that it "mutilates the colonizer, awakening him to the brutal instincts of violence and oppression; it also dehumanizes the colonised with the same oppression and violence" (90). It is from a deep feeling of diasporic alienation out of their choice that many colonized Caribbean seek solace and refuge in their homeland. In order to escape displacement, colonized Caribbean need to go back home, at the same time; they feel displaced in their homeland because they got educated and immersed in the White heritage, language, culture and history. The cherished sense of belonging through going back to the mother land paves the path to another episode in their fracturing journey back and forth toward the colonizer's country and backward home. Again, the Caribbean colonized subjects are still overwhelmed by the inferiority of their assumed adjuvant condition.

Some scholars suggest that the Caribbean subjects face difficulty in discerning the African component of their experiences and cultural inheritance. Dabybeen argues that there exists "a kind of apartheid" which seems to contradict the claim of a rich tapestry of peoples and cultures which the Caribbean purports to be. On the other hand, Gikandi argues that, far from disabling the Caribbean writers, the anxiety engendered by the colonial situation opens up discursive possibilities in which a 'narrative of liberation' can be envisaged. Gikandi remarks:

> This is why the Caribbean text, to transcend its own cloister, must avail itself of these models in search of roots that might lead, at least symbolically, to an extratextual point of social nonviolence and psychic contruction of the Self. The routes, iridescent and transitory as a rainbow, cross at all points the network of binary dynamics extended by the West. The result is a text whose central binary rhythm is decentered when the performer (writer/reader) and the text try to escape in a certain kind of way. (28)

The danger of cultural rejection leads to silencing the native the one considered as the local voice of resistance. It is out of this schizophrenic condition that the Caribbean writers must now forge a new discourse, which re-fashions the "master language". It is out of this twilight zone, "which half-remembers, half-forgets" (Harris 64) that they must set out to

explore and make sense of the complexities and dislocations of the colonial experience and restore Caribbean lives to the proper order of attention and attempt to reconstruct their fractured selves. Naipul argues that, in spite of the enforced break with the African culture, some Caribbean communities do not appreciate their racial and cultural links to the Africa found in oral traditions and in the rhythms, the rituals and all those forms of expressive culture which allowed men and women to survive the trauma of slavery (*Minimal Selves* 7). Hall suggests that the power of reconnection once again to Africa, the "missing term", to the "great Apohria" at the heart of Caribbean self, lies in its ability to impose "an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation" (224).

It is also important to probe the position of Caribbean writings in the context of British and American literary traditions; in this sense one can find the burden of representation prevailing. In *Negotiating the Ship on the Head: Black British Fiction,* Kwame Dawes argues that the Caribbean deep-rooted hybridity put them away from political engagement along with social and political commitment to the African-American community and African exiles in Britain. In the same context, Dawes questions contemporary Black British literature and castigates some young, black British writers for having turned their back on a history which, he feels, has "served to shape what they are doing now" (280). Dawes also attacks dismissive novelists who, he thinks, have become fixated on the "homeness of Britain and the U.S" (282) straying away from any demonstration of sense of belonging to Caribbean communities or African origins and cultures. He argues that "there is only literature with its usual variants of class, gender, race, time and place" and that creativity cannot be contained for long in any fashion or vice-hold which the process of naming and compartmentalising seeks to promote (109). Dawes focuses on "Black" and the meaning that "Blackness" connotes and wonders whether both concepts need a redefinition or even omission in the boundaries of a series of

cultural perspectives and traditions (110). In fact, Bhabha thinks that "the postcolonial subjects are caught in-between a nativist, even nationalist, atavism and a postcolonial metropolitan assimilation" (26), thus the subject of cultural differences makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process. It is the very process, Bhabha asserts, that allows for the elaboration of a 'Third Space' in which even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, re-historicized, then read anew (208).

Elizabeth Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence* and Jean Riley's *The Unbelonging* represent a body of Caribbean literature that deals with similar issues of gender, identity, migration, and the postcolonial experience. Both novels portray the manner in which the complexities inherent in West Indian identity are translated in the United States and Britain. In fact, they write about Caribbean historical, cultural, and socio-political realities, particularly the experiences of British colonialism, postcolonialism, and American neo-colonialism. Most fascinating about these novels is how they mould these realities into the narrative of their immigrant female protagonists and the diasporic identity they come to realize for themselves as they come to terms with what their skin colour, class, and gender mean. As Hyacinth and Sara learn about and become increasingly invested in the civil rights movement in the United States and Britain; they become able to decode the complicated histories they left behind in Trinidad and Jamaica. Thus, they both find themselves unexpectedly connected to African Americans in their shared histories of violence, slavery, oppression, and struggles for independence and equality.

When examining women's migrant experiences, resettlement in the West and sometimes various journeys forth to Britain and U.S and back to their mother lands, their feelings about home mediate between connection and disconnection which gives a changing meaning of belonging. Nunez and Riley evoke the importance of both space and diaspora. They portray women's feelings of uprooted identity and dislocation after

undergoing separation from the motherland. In their journey towards self-identification, Sara and Hyacinth struggle to re- connect or rather to set down roots and re-define "home", in the context of racism inherent in the host societies of Britain and U.S. They show variant feelings about places of origin and immigration to a limiting environment they sometimes experience in an entirely new place.

The emotional significance, social and political meanings of space lead to the notion of home which is therefore a space that not merely permits but encourages us to be our own selves where we are not merely familiar with, but comfortable too (Nehusi 78). When mentioning migration as opposed to the notion of home, one may wonder about the way politics of location changes when one's physical location changes. Besides, it is also important to inquire about the connections between a migrant woman‘sinteractions with the particular location she has moved to, her changed relationship with theplace she has left, and her sense of self, and above all, her political positioning. Many works on immigration in contemporary criticism and postcolonial theoryemphasise not place but migration and hybridity where relationships with particular places. It is broadly known that migration changes people‘s relationships with place; therefore, the native country becomes both the place of origin and the place of settlement. In spite of the movement between different spaces; each place becomes inflected with experiences a deeply changing sense of self.

Beyond the Limbo Silence and *The Unbelonging* show various aspects of experiences of displacement and un-belonging in the U.S and U.K along with the sense of newness, unfamiliarity, and isolation after arrival. Then they turn to explicit experiences of being doomedto un-belong, to racism and forms of violence, including violent or disempowering relationships with male relatives. For many new migrant women, feelings of un-belonging initially stems, at the most obvious level, from the new environment‘s sheer difference from the place left behind and failure to live up to expectations created by

colonial and neo -colonial institutions in migrants‘ places of origin.

Racial Order in Elizabeth Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence*

Elizabeth Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence* is a novel that examines the diasporic consciousness, exile, and racial prejudices that accompany Black immigration to the centre or the West (U.S. or U.K) to understand the situation of transcultural Black identities in the diaspora. It also probes the relationship between Caribbean and African American communities in relation to their African origins. It hints at the complex relationship between race and nation in examining the sense of sympathy and/or rejection of both Afro-Caribbean and African- American subjects in the West.

Nunez's *Beyond the Limbo Silence* recounts the story of Sara Edgehill's journey to a foreign land and her experiences in U.S. as a young Caribbean Black lady. She decided to leave Trinidad to attend a Catholic university in Wisconsin on a scholarship. Staying there roughly a year of her life, a very eventful year, characterizes drastic changes in Sara's self-definition and the civil rights movement in the United States. Sara's narrative always takes readers back to her childhood in the formerly colonized Trinidad. Accordingly, readers may notice that if it was mapped out visually, it would look like a series of intertwined experiences, allowing Sara to confront memories that help her make sense of her experiences in the U.S.

Interestingly enough, memories of the homeland serve in the development of Sara, the young, Black, Caribbean immigrant woman. Sara's search for self-definition embarks with her journey to the U.S. where she realizes that her identity is based on three inescapable components: gender, race, and ethnicity. Sara's intention to leave Trinidad reflects her enthusiasm to reach the centre, to be a part of a recognizable nation away from the under-developed poor and patriarchal society. Stylistically speaking, what attracts

attention to *Beyound the Limbo Silence* is its title.It is composed of three key words that summarize the novel's major ideas. Beyond signifies outside and calls to mind Bhabha's use of "beyond" in the very beginning of his book *The Location of Culture* to describe the current environment pervaded by globalization and the possibility to re-fashion identity (immigrant identity) beyond geographical and cultural constraints. Being Beyond, Bhabha suggests is to face the unknown and step beyond "binary structures and definitive language, beyond what other societies might view as contradictory ideas and/or practices" (2).

Nunez's use of Beyond describes her intention to make her main character, Sara, experience the shift of her identity and psychological awareness of her race, gender and culture not inside her national borders, Trinidad, but beyond the borders, in America. The limbo is also a keyword that connotes a status of ambivalence and uncertainty; a situation that features diasporic experiences. Being on the limbo is being uncertain of one's situation as Harris describes "a void between two worlds" (18). In Sara's case, being in the midst of a predicament between affiliation and desertion, between preserving her native culture which is inferior to that of the U.S. or adopting literally the American identity and suffer psychic problems of guilt and cultural betrayal. The third keyword is Silence. It is another description of the colonized subject, being culturally dislocated, literally silenced and unable to voice hisideas.

Technically speaking, unlike the conventional linear narratives of the English classics, Nunez subverts this traditional style by adopting a non-chronological narrative structure (Dawes 81) in addition to leaving the end open by making Sara's a project of identity unaccomplished. In this way, *Beyond the Limbo Silence* offers a compelling example of an ethnic American and immigrant identity informed by intertwining histories in the global diaspora. Recent scholarship on "Third World" histories contributes to the

understanding of how these stylistic and thematic subversions go hand in hand. Nunez seeks to defy the conventional to subvert stereotypes. In the literary technical context, she aims to subvert the fixed rules of Western literary traditions by using flashback and metafiction techniques instead of the linear organized narrative. Linguistically speaking, Nunez tends to use code switching and insert some Creole expression. In this way, she responds to earlier postcolonial writers who face the predicament of language and self-expression and come to the conclusion that English may be creolized and get appropriated to convey an authentic Caribbean image with some Creole registers.

By using flashbacks to disturb the conventional span of narration, Glissant supports Nunez by arguing that the imposition of this notion of time, Europeans were also able to insist on a single linear history. He writes that one of the most disturbing consequences of colonization could well be this notion of a single History, and a single way of literary linear narrative imposed on the Other by the West" (93). While Mignolo argues that once the savage, the Other, is no longer located beyond the geographic space, European imperialist imperialist discourse locate them in a chronological space that was characterized as "behind" the boundaries of history in order not to be able to present themselves (31). The critic finds out that"toward the nineteenth century the question was no longer whether primitives or Orientals were human but, rather, how far removed from the chronologicaland civilized humanity" (35). This subversion requires a revision of the literary techniques imposed on subjects of imperialism that reflect the imperialist view of time and history. Besides, the critic suggests that the struggle against a single official History for the cross-fertilizations of histories means repossessing both a true sense of one's time and identity: proposing in an unprecedented way a revaluation of power (93).

This subversion of conventional linear style of narration tends to show Nunez's intention to follow a counter-style to the Western usual plot structure.On the contrary, the

way the flashback narrative repeatedly gets back to Sara's childhood in Trinidad is important for the readers to understand how her past makes sense of her present condition. Likewise, this structure reflects the significant role that various histories of Afro-Caribbean, Amerindian, Indo-Caribbean, African-American, and Trinidadian play in the development the potential identity Sara sought to re-construct.

In her article "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism", Spivak states that the "empire of the literary discipline" not only allows for the "emergence of the 'Third World' as a signifier but also reproduces, in texts, imperialist worldviews (246). Women's insanity which describes women's will to change conventional ideas or rebellion against conventional and fixed ideas. Insanity is an act of resistance in postcolonial women's writings. Reaching for the impossible or the prohibited by patriarchal rules makes those resistant women relegated to the status of mad women instead of revolutionist or rebels.

Women's self-assertion and emancipation were considered as a breach of patriarchal rules. Women's liberation was also seen as an act of perversness or madness. Therefore, Sara's admission in an American school is an act of liberation that is considered as a break with her roots. When Sara quitted Trinidad, she struggled to discard identifications that limit her engagement with her own Blackness, such as her white ancestors and comfortable middle-class family. Sara marks a physical and psychological departure in adopting her Blackness as part of her identity. Instead, she escapes racial and cultural definition of identity towards gender and spatial ones as she recognizes herself an immigrant woman. This psychological shift marks a diasporic discourse while Sara shows her contempt with communality of African Americans to Black Caribbean communities though she knows well that they share the same African origins. She simply does not want to affiliate neither politically, socially or culturally nor ethnically to Black communities in an attempt to be accepted in the mainstream American society. Bhabha describes this shift between spaces

and cultures as a shift “between past and present, black migrants move inside and outside, inclusion and exclusion and challenge staid antiquated ideas about race and nation and the relationship between these two concepts (1). However, Sara faces “othering” by African-American people who consider her as an outsider.This is why Sara rejects Black Americans. Sara connects to Trinidad via the discourse of spirituality. However, this marks a contradiction, a schizophrenic situation whereby she rejects any affiliation to any Black subject or community of African origins; nevertheless, she believes in the ancient African rituals and the ancestral cultural heritage.

Colonizing institutions perpetuate the colonial mind-set and function to divide the colonized population, using race in addition to class, thereby reinforcing colonial power. In this sense, these institutions make the Caribbean upper and middle classes believe that they are favoured by the colonial state; in order to preserve that privilege, they reinforce and reproduce that power. Before leaving Trinidad, Sara thinks:

> I would miss the people I looked down my nose at, the ones who had seemed insignificant to me because I thought, from the books I read, that the world of the big countries was filled with people more civilized, more sophisticated, kinder;” then she reflects, “Once, in the sweltering heat of the August hurricane season, I tried to trick myself into believing the stories in the English books I had read: winter was nicer than the sultry heat of the tropics. (Nunez 43- 49)

Nunez is suggesting that while at best these novels fail to prepare Sara for the realities of life outside the Caribbean, at worst they alter her perception of herself and her people.

At the time that she read the books, Sara did not recognize that in the eyes of those who created these stereotypes, she was “*always already”* one of those people at whom she looks down her nose (Nunez 172). That is, she had adopted a perception of herself in relation to the people she leaves behind in Trinidad that allowed her to feel superior to them without recognizing herself as one of them. Interesting enough, the text indicates that by the time Sara narrates these moments, she somehow knows better: she understands that

her perceptions are the result of the books she had read. In the novel, Americans' view ofSara is nothing but a "raw talent in the primitive world" that a Black American priest searches for to present her to the world of light of civilization; an idea that brings back Kipling's the white man's burden in civilizing the primitive. Sara is thus a raw, primitive example of the Caribbean that America imagines.

The gap between Black Americans and Black Caribbeans reaches a high tension when Sara meets Mrs. Clancy who assumes that Caribbeans are nothing but "monkey chasers" (Nunez 82). Sara internalizes another othering gaze but now by a Black subject, not on the basis of race but of class: "Mrs. Clancy widened the gap between us- between her people, black and white, and me-to such a distance that I experience an isolation for which even my self- imposed exile into a world of books had not prepared me " (Nunez 42). What is also striking and ironical here is that Mrs. Clancy is not only a Black American but she also descends from Caribbean origins. She tries hard to hide, if not erase her ethnic belonging to a whole nation, culture, and race. Mrs. Clancy transcends Sara's racial and national denial and erases ethnic and cultural components and kept just the American identity seen as a sign of superiority.

These experiences with literature, combined with her middle class Catholic school upbringing, contribute to a self-perception that therefore comes to be broken down when Sara migrates to the U.S. This description comes in opposition to her self-perception. Sara sees herself different from any other Black subject. She is educated, belongs to the middle-class and is a good Catholic girl. When Mrs. Clancy mentions that Caribbeans are nothing but monkeys, Sara breaks down into tears. She understands for the first time that despite her own self-image, she is, after all, living the result of an American priest's search for "raw talent in the primitive world" (Nunez 28). Despite teaching Sara this harsh lesson, Mrs. Clancy ultimately shows herself to be a friend, telling Sara the true story behind her

uncle's murder in Georgia.

Sara's great-grandmother associates the big nations: the U.S and the U.K with death after her both sons' death: Thomas and George. While George got killed in a battlefield with the British Army during WWII, Thomas, like Sara, came to the U.S. with a self-perception that does not complywith how he was perceived in America. Mrs. Clancy tells Sara, "He always thought he could go anywhere. I told him, a drop of black blood makes you black, Thomas" (Nunez 45). Thomas believed that the light skin he inherited from his white grandmother, Bertha, was enough to distinguish him from African Americans and put him in "the grey zone" the hybrid, the in-between that enable him to step away from being fully Black and therefore fully denied and marginalized. Likewise, being a property-owning dentist with a Cadillac in New York, Thomas thought he was protected from violent injustices facing Black men in America at the time. He did not understand that the skin-shade and class hierarchies that give him power in Trinidad are irrelevant in America. Wrongly accused of raping five white girls, Thomas paid the price of his ambition. He was less unfortunate than other Caribbean immigrants for being the wrong race in the wrong place at the wrong time. Mrs. Clancy connects his attackers' mind-set to the insults she hurled at Sara earlier: "He probably called himself doctor. They wanted to put him in his place. All they saw was the bush. I don't mean Trinidad bush. Africa. All they saw was the jungle. To them we were animals" (Nunez 46).

The massive result of western contact leads Thomas to be lynched and George killed, this is the conclusion that Sara's grandmother retains from getting in contact with America or Britain. There is a tone of warning that overshadows Sara's path towards the unknown in a hostile land. Sara is also aware of what her race connotes in America especially after the sense of humiliation and alienation she felt when meeting Mrs. Clancy. However, more importantly, being Black means facing similar violent prejudices

regardless of national origins and class status. By insulting Sara, Mrs. Clancy was trying to put her "in her place," (Nunez 28) to make her aware of the racial codes in the U.S. These elements serve in Sara's silence that we can understand in Freud's defence mechanisms: repression. She assumes silence as an act of resistance and empowerment and says: "I wanted to forget that evening when I took praise for my accent and kept my silence. When I allowed Mrs. Weaver to separate me from the burning and looting Negroes…She had trapped me…Silence was my only weapon against her" (Nunez 176). Silence is not only a trait inherited from the Other but also a way to face the provocation of the Self.

The Patterns of race and migration reflect another incident that Sara faces with a White man in which she tends to wonder whether she is really able to be integrated in the American society. An example of the White gaze and stereotypes fostering are clear in the white taxi driver's humiliation of Sara. The taxi driver thinks that Sara comes to America for domestic work and here lies the fixed stereotype: a Black woman equals a maid. Yet, it has never crossed his mind that she comes for education, thinking that Black subjects are born on the outcast and supposed to stay on the margin. This interaction symbolizes the encounter between the Self and the Other and the fixity that the White subjects exercise over the Black subjects. The taxi driver shows a voice of dissent against the authorities who granted a minable person like her the opportunity to be part of an elite institution in America, he says: "with such disbelief that it immediately triggered [her] defences" (Nunez 50). He wonders why those in charge of this school bother themselves and went down to the jungle to Trinidad in order to choose her in particular. He also minimizes Black people's capacity to understand or produce anything significant.

After this assault, Sara feels shame and needs to apologize. She understands that she has overstepped an invisible boundary, one that limits a woman of colour from the Third World from acquiring more than what a native-born white American man has been offered.

This first encounter freezes Sara's enthusiasm and left her with a shock of unchangeable racial prejudices that the White subjects still maintain even after independence. "I have to work also," I said, the lie coming rapidly to my lips. "to pay for my scholarship"…"what kind of work?"…"cook," I said. Miraculously, I had chosen the right word. He grinned…and leaned back against his seat. "Thought so," he said. "Thought so, "a satisfied smile crossed his lips." (Nunez 52).

In order to escape the sense of humility that the driver shows, Sara feels an urge to quickly make up a lie. The driver, who grins a "satisfied smile," internalizes the validity of racial order, the fact that a Black girl from Trinidad is granted a scholarship contradicts the conventional racial norms he accepts. Sara is now aware of the ever-existing racial prejudices and stereotypes which go beyond time and space to engender the persisting clash of the Self and the Other.

This tense interaction is not over, upon their arrival to the school, the taxi driver drops Sara's suitcases at her feet on the curb instead of carrying them inside. Mother superior quickly realizes that "something in the way he stepped backward toward the car, rubbing his hands against his thighs and shaking his head, warned her not to press him further" (Nunez 54). With a sense of despise, the taxi driver refrains from carrying Sara's luggage as he is supposed to do with all the passengers.By doing so, he wants to restore the racial order intact which is also defined by notions of superiority and inferiority according to previous master/slave paradigm. For him, she is not a customer but an inacceptable guest who should conform to the institutionalized rules of Western societies. This racialized, nativist act gives Sara a hint of her situation in the U.S. and what her race, culture, and nation represent. Two incidents were enough to put Sara in the right place, the place set by the racial order. These incidents foreshadow her painful journey in an alien land where democratic universal values and accepting the other, which she usually read about in

books, are nothing but bare ideas away from reality.

Sara felt the impossibility to achieve her aim from the outset and foresaw the outcome of her blind enthusiasm behind leaving her homeland to break free from her native patriarchal society to get shocked by the hypocrisy of the western society. Much later in the novel, Sara gets back to African beliefs and spirit-cantered practices. Through getting in contact with *Obeah*, Sara maintains the sense of belongingshe misses in America. Through *Obeah* and trance, she tries to subvert normative assumptions of insanity. When delving in*Obeah* rituals, she transcends the real world to a more mystic space that connects her to nativity. When going in trance, Sara is re-discovering her identity away from silence and alienation as Hall denotes that this process is "not only the rediscovery but the reproduction of identity. Not an identity grounded in the archaeology but in the re-connecting or re-telling of the past" (*Cultural Identity* 393).

Sara's romantic relationship with Sam, and African American activist, conveys the possibility of bringing both race and ethnicity together in the sense that African Americans and Afro - Caribbean origins stem from one source, Africa. Though she strongly resists the idea of accepting African American people as belonging to the same ethnicity and culture, she changes her mind and finds out that the White gaze does not differentiate between a Black American and a Black Caribbean. Both are Blacks and both represents the rejected Other.

This psychological transformation towards maturity that Sara undergoes helps her smash the boundary of silence to voicing her ideas as an act of resistance. Sara suffers alienation at school that makes her change her mind about American culture assimilation in addition to her involvement with Sam who disturbs her attempt to accept any white assumption. Sam aims to embrace all Caribbean subjects regardless of their cultures to the realm of African origins to bring them to a united Black African consciousness. He states:"

black intellectuals and activists recognized that racial belonging operates at scales that are both smaller and larger than the nation-state, and voiced visions of communal possibility that consistently surpassed the conceptions available in the prevailing idioms of U.S. political culture" (Nunez 44). Sara comes to accept and act upon communal shared culture and origins. She shifts from a personal resistance to a political resistance to racial discrimination that a migrant Caribbean woman faces from the beginning of her journey in America. Sara understands the relationship between White inherent racist attitudes towards Blacks; she juxtaposes it to notions of class and culture relationsin the context of colonial and postcolonial Trinidad.

Back to Trinidad, Sara heard about her Uncle Thomas being lynched as an act of American racism but she could not realize that racism may lead to assassination. Sara's grandmother describes how Thomas was killed in Georgia: "The word is *lynched*…Lynched. Your great- uncle Thomas was lynched. Strung up on a tree, American style. No questions asked. No jury. Rope round his neck. His body like any old sack of black coals" (Nunez 17-18). At first, Sara considers her grandmother's account as exaggerating due to her mental disorder. She may imagine or re-invent facts ; nevertheless, Sara comes to recognize that her great grandmother was right concerning cruelty and racism of the U.S. Sara describes her first encounter with Black American saying that: "Milwaukee shocked me with its blacks and its poverty…The people on the street were brown like the people I had left in Trinidad, and yet they frightened me. When they turned to stare at the bus, I saw guardedness and anger in their eyes I had never seen before" (Nunez 191-192). Sara recognizes that her situation is incomparable to theirs. Being an immigrant she enjoys the privilege of being an outsider that would go back home one day ; however, African American people are deprived of feeling their belonging to their own country due to their long history of slavery in American plantation well before the

establishment of the U.S. nation.

Reading the novel further, we realize a racial preference and discrimination among the Blacks as far as whether they descend from African origins or not. Sara comes to know that the situation of the Black American of African origins is not parallel to her as a Black Caribbean. In a conversation with Sam, she discovers that the grant she has been given can never be granted to an African American. Sam makes it explicit by saying:"this grant is for you not for us" (58). Here, Sara remembers her father's advice before quitting Trinidad saying: "be careful…to them, you owe them everything. They owe you nothing. Your scholarship? They have paid for your silence and friendship" (Nunez 38). Sara understands that this grant is not on proportion to her intellectual capacities but on account of benevolence in the pursuit of civilizing and enlightening the black communities. This is what justifies her scholarship categorization (taking Sara as a Third World fellow was an act of charity).

The Catholic School where Sara studies gave chance to brilliant black people to get educated in the U.S: besides Sara, readers are introduced to Angela Baboolalsingh from British Guiana and Courtney Adams who descends from Indo-Caribbean origins from St. Lucia. Angela and Courtney, though both Caribbean, they maintain different ideas about their homelands. Between assimilation and rejection, both Sara's Black classmates are in limbo, a limbo that reflects her own fragmented psyche and opposing attitudes towards ethnic and racial differences in America. This limbo also represents Sara's fragmented splitting sense of belonging. The complexity of racial, ethnic and cultural attributes of Caribbean identities influence the classmates' relationships. Courtney grows aware of the unfair racial practices that remain prevalent in the U.S. and emphasizes that Black people's a long history of alienation, enslavement and injustice does accept the ancestral legacy. Sara describes Courtney as:" I think I saw Courtney's face turn to wood, the African mask

she resembled made real" (59) She prefers staying away from any contact with White classmates to represent "the Other". On the other hand, Angela represents Courtney's opposite in being ready to assimilate American culture and life. When she knew that Sara's great-grandmother was a British white, she invited Sara to reclaim her mixed-race privilege rather than sticking to her blackness. Sara is in between both girls, between assimilation and alienation ; Angela comments on Sara and Courtney saying, "It's the African in her…All that mumbo jumbo. She's pure African, you know. Not coloured like you. I can see you have white blood. You and I are more like them" (Nunez 84).

Contrary to Courtney Angela rejects her Blackness and her Caribbean belonging altogether. She also regards *Obeah* as "mumbo-jumbo" as ridiculous and primitive and denies any significance to African spirituality. She prefers to re-fashion her identity by being identified to an enlightened nation and an advanced culture like Western humanism and American cultural enlightenment. Angela attempts to step forth convinced that self-actualization is related to globalized present and future contrary to postcolonial identity which is re-shaped in relation to the past. Sara is haunted by an incessant feeling of loss and lack of agency when getting distanced from her motherland. The racist behaviours she faces on her very first day makes her think over or rather resist the American project of reducing her to an unchangeable label of the "Other".

In the diaspora, Nostalgia to the mother land is always there. Sara goes back to Trinidad in her imagination whenever she gets disappointed in America. Sara still reclaims her belonging to her motherland. Sara's process of maturation shifting from innocence to experience can never be achieved without undergoing a journey t o America. She understands her sense of self, ethnicity, identity, and culture and juxtaposes them with

notions of slavery, racism, and exploitation. She is a cluster of selves bearing the legacy of the whole nation still regarded as marginal and victimized by its blackness and alienation. Sara clarifies:

> I, through whose veins ran the blood of slave masters, closed ranks with [Courtney] with my African blood…My African ancestors and Courtney's were brought to the Caribbean as slaves, chattel, commodities to be used and then traded or put out to pasture. Angela's ancestors came as indentured laborers. No slight difference in countries where the people had learned to mimic the intricacies of British class structure. (Nunez 82-83)

This quotation reflects Sara's understanding of her motives and current situation. This calls to mind Mignolo's assertion in *Local Histories/Global Designs*, where he asserts the emancipation and self-empowerment of "third world" identity just when getting diasporic consciousness or more precisely is only achieved in diaspora away from the native land. He proposes the notion of "diversity" as a way of representing diasporic identities in transnational context. They are hybrid identities co-existing simultaneously and related to other subaltern identities (50). This term is useful here because it accounts for Sara's transnational relation to Courtney who accepts her Blackness and still affiliates to African cultural and religious heritage.This assumption would imply that Sara, previously represented as exotic and Other by the White Americans, may deconstruct the shame of belonging to native principles by subverting the stereotypes of humility and rejection of the former Self.

Eventually, Sara starts to accept her Blackness and gets aware that her dream of becoming Americanized is far from reach. Sara reconstructs her identity in more than individualistic or communal perspective but through a transcultural transnational standpoint. Sara's development transcends her personal journey to attain personal objectives but she turns to more communal and transnational concerns that link her to African Americans, Indo-Caribbeans, Afro- Caribbeans, and even the misunderstood White Creoles.Spiritual belonging and diasporic discourse are what enable Sara to overcome

ethnic and racial differences and asserts her rooting into African cultural, racial and gender identities. Sara wants to erase the sense of guilt she felt when losing her self as a result of excess in handling the idea of achieving a better life in America, Sara says: “my excesses, those that had caused my father to so fear for my sanity…had once again entrapped me “ (Nunez 222). Sara assumes that exceeding the limits and being blindly fascinating by an idea without being exposed to its reality results in failure and disappointments. She also thinks that being away or rejecting her African culture and origins is what makes her feel insanity. She attempts instead to re-inscribing her identity in accordance to her African Caribbean culture.

When the novel unfolds, Sara moves from re-fashioning her national, cultural, and ethnic identity to her gender roles and female self. Sara seeks to deconstruct the traditional female functionsthat Spivak argues are imposed on the imperial female: sexual reproduction and (Christian) soul-making (276). Instead of conforming to the female’s role in giving birth and reduced to the cult of domesticity, Sara decided to abort her illegal child by associating *Obeah*’s abortion ritual with resistance and rebellion. She wants to subvert the oldWhite idea of linking Black women reproduction to the plantation economy. In this respect Nunez mentions:

> We gave back our unborn children to the ancestors. You call that abortion? We call it life. Think of how your spirit has helped us already. She will help us again. Think how, if you did have a child, it would stop Sam from doing what he has to do. Think, Sara. You can’t run away. The spirits connect you and me and Sam and Mississippi and all black people in America. Remember that. (Nunez 258)

Due to historical accounts, Black men can never occupy the role of fathers. In Sara and Sam’s case, Sara is quite convinced that this equation can never be subverted. Interestingly, nevertheless, the act of abortion itself serves as a form of resistance and opposition to Catholicism, for the Black woman whose body was historically regarded as a space of invasion relegated to its basic reproductive purposes for the economic and sexual benefits

of the White master.

As an assertion of African origins and rituals, *Obeah* is also related to Caribbean identity. Sara and Courtney consider *Obeah* as a line of connection and a site of belonging with their slave ancestors crossing the Atlantic to be enslaved and exploited in plantations for the White masters. In trance, they get back to their ancestors' past to the images of millions of African men sent to the new worlds against their will, leaving behind families, memories and culture. Sara remembers her parents' oral stories: "*Tall, thin men, bodies hard and rugged like the trunks of coconut trees, their muscles taut from cheekbones to ankles, leopard skins draped across their shoulders, in their hands a long, knobbed pole,"* which Sara "blink[s]…away"(204). This image represents African existence in America and West Indies. This image goes in accordance with the stereotypes that still cover them,still articulated by their white classmates' perceptions of a Caribbean where natives wear grass skirts and carry buckets of water on their heads (Nunez 204). Sara, through adopting and accepting *Obeah*, she sets a bridge that links her spiritually back to Africa, and eventually she transcends national boundaries to reach all Black communities in the Caribbean or America who still share the same roots. Sara develops a new self-image; her journey to America helps her be aware of her identity components: gender, race, class, and ethnicity.

Assimilation Failure in Joan Riley's *The Unbelonging*

The politics of location, belonging, hybrid identity, racial prejudices, and gender roles are the major themes in contemporary Caribbean literature in English. By putting the spotlight on the postcolonial subject not only the male but the female subject suffers difficulties of representation and subalternity, postcolonial Caribbean women writers attempt to portray a vivid image of the female character who suffers social and gender

subalternity at home in her native land. She also faces rejection and alienation in diaspora. Here, this woman finds place nowhere and fits in no society.

Nunez's female protagonist, Sara, undergoes a journey to the United States in hope to achieve her Academic dream and set a better life away from the strict primitive society back in Trinidad. However, her journey is not easy and covered by difficulties, cruel racial practices, and verbal abuse. Therefore, she is unable to attain Bhabha's Third Space in which she can negotiate American and Afro-Caribbean identities simultaneously due to the severe rejection she faces. Riley's *The Unbelonging* deals with the same Caribbean females' concerns especially those of the immigrant Caribbean in diaspora. Questions of assimilation and defying the stereotypes of the Other, that the colonial system has already fostered, complicates the journey of Riley's protagonist, Hyacinth, who, as the title suggests, belongs nowhere. In contrast with Nunez's Sara, Riley's Hyacinth also goes on a journey to Britain but against her will. In Jamaica, Hyacinth used to live with her aunt Joyce in a small village, though poor, she is satisfied with the cosy atmosphere that surrounds her.

In *The Unbelonging,* Hyacinth's identity fragmentation and cultural dislocation due to racial prejudices and gender troubles began with her father's decision to join him in London. At the age of eleven, Hyacinth quits Jamaica and undergoes a journey towards Britain, the formerly colonial power. In Britain, she faces internal and external problems that impede her path towards shaping a balanced hybrid identity in diaspora mediated between Jamaica and Britain. The sense of un-belonging seems to be a blueprint that escorts Hyacinth in the major stages of her life. "Mental breakdown" is also another major theme explored in Riley's *The Unbelonging* in the sense that, contrary to Nunez's understanding of Sara in *Beyond the Limbo Silence*, Hyacinth is not aware that she undergoes a mental disease because of the label of Othering that symbolizes deviation,

savagery, and disorder. Hyacinth comes to realize that immigration, though seen as an act of liberation and empowerment, serves in fostering pain, and alienation which result in mental disorder. Hyacinth's mental disorder is also due to consecutive traumas on racial and sexual basis; furthermore, it is a result of the Other's curse, an internal individual breakdown constructed by ideological, political and cultural factors inherent in her Blackness, her gender subalternity, and her abused innocence.

Riley's *The Unbelonging* differs from that of Nunez in the destination, Trinidad was colonized by Britain and neo-colonized by imperial exploitation of the United States. Therefore, Trinidad's relation with the U.S. is based on economic profit and imperial exploitation whereas Jamaica's relation to Britain remains that of the colonizer and colonized. Therefore, Hyacinth's journey is more complicated as compared to Sara's in the sense that she is crossing borders from the periphery to reach the centre. She still belongs to a formerly colonised nation, commonwealth country, where the stereotypes of exploitation and humiliation still exist when the former colonized gets in contact with the colonizer. In the colonizer's country, the Caribbean immigrant is caught in a vulnerable situation that forces him/her to negotiate tropes of racism and former ideologies of colonialism in the course of re-shaping his/her identity in diaspora.

When reading *The Unbelonging* further, we find that Hyacinth is inflicted by displacement, disorientation and uprootedness as though she is stripped from her peaceful sense of belonging to both her aunt and Jamaica when she put her feet on the English soil. In her first contact with the West, Hyacinth feels distress and shame of her Blackness and ugliness whenever she receives unwelcoming, despising and racialized looks from the passengers in the Airport. She gets to recognize her difference, her inferior difference:"the

shame of being made to feel different; in Jamaica her colour didn't matter, for everyone else was the same”(Riley 81). Hyacinthstarts developing diasporic consciousness, conceives her un-belonging, and develops a deep shame of representing the colonial image of the Other. Riley describes: “there had been a sea of white faces everywhere, all hostile. She had known they hated her, and she had felt small, lost and afraid, and ashamed of her plaited hair” (Riley 13). Psychologically speaking, the first encounter with the White is enough to make Hyacinth aware of her difference that makes her filled with fear and shame of being in an atmosphere that elicit her urgent need to get invisible to overcome her deep shame of Blackness. Hatred and rejection that Hyacinth retains from the White people’s racist looks leads her to hate herself and despise her race, colour, and body. Riley describes Hyacinth’s self-contempt: “how much she hated her brittle hair, the thickness of her lips…she had always wanted long hair, would have given anything for it, and she wished with all her might that her prayers would be answered and would become like them” (78). Hyacinth’s awareness of her racial and ethnic Blackness that denotes ugliness juxtaposes with its opposite, Whiteness, when she first laid her feet in London.

Hyacinth’s self-hatred of being Black calls to mind Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye* where her female protagonist, Pecola, questions the relationship between ugliness and Blackness. She wonders why the standards of beauty that White Barbie doll embodies go in accordance with White Western fixed ideological standards and norms. This also reminds us of Bhabha’s mimicry as a way to cover shame and humility that the native part of identity represents. The Other tries to imitate the Self to accept and overcome the sense of shame and adequacy that accompanies the meeting between the Self superiority and the Other’s inferiority. To be accepted, Hyacinth needs to strip the Blackness. Hyacinth is a commonwealth immigrant. She tries to escape the White gaze, the very gaze that used to humiliate and bother her colonized ancestors. This incident is just the inauguration of a

long painful chain of racist abusive practices that made a massive mutation in Hyacinth’s course of identity shaping in an alien space.

Hyacinth goes to London against her will. For her, the White West is a world to which she can never belong. When recalling her memories of Jamaica, her life has been strictly related to female community: to her loving Aunt Joyce and friends Cynthia and Florence where she felt no difference, shame, or hatred. However, her shift or migration from Jamaica to Britain marks a psychic shift in the sense that Hyacinth gets severed from the realm of the mother figure: her mother land and her aunt. She moves to the realm of the father, the opposite as Clarisse Zimra defines “the Logos of the Father” and “The Silence Song of the Mother” (156). This reminds us of Julia Kristiva’s the Semiotic and her parallel views of Lacan about the Semiotic and the Symbolic in the child’s mirror stage. Hyacinth is experiencing a mirror stage. She is figuring herself out when she is stripped away from the mother figure and directly faces the Symbolic, the realm of the father which symbolizes order and sometimes cruelty. Ann Morris and Margret Dunn state that in “Caribbean female literature the land and one’s mother are co-joined” they assert that “if a woman is able to claim a connection between both, she is well prepared for the journey towards self-identity and fulfilment (219). Hyacinth’s migration is related to the native/western colonial perspective.

Drawing upon Clarisse Zimra, she claims that the logos of the father symbolize the Western sphere and colonial historiography which ignore and silence the presence of the mother which symbolizes the native culture and sense of belonging (156). Therefore, Zimra suggests that the postcolonial female subject, such as Hyacinth, faces difficulty in recognizing and clinging to the realm of the mother (native culture) in front of the

challenges of the father colonial authority which aims to transform her (157). Many feminist theorists claim that a female identity cannot be constructed without mother-daughter relationship; female identity develops through early and continued connection with the mother (Morris and Dunn 220) in opposition to the male identity which marks the massive separation to the realm of the mother figure. Hyacinth is in a limbo, in-between two realms of female nurturing and intimacy and the male harsh authoritative behaviour. This idea is well clarified when Hyacinth feels her father's abusive behaviour from their very first meeting.

Hyacinth's father has immigrated to Britain recently. He transfers His discontent withthe racist behaviour he endures on a daily-basis to his family and especially his daughter. Transferring violence is way to preserve his idealistic masculine authority he longs to have in Britain. Riley writes that "he himself is already victimized by British racism" in regards with his relation with Hyacinth Riley continues: "he also utilizes Hyacinth's double fear and need against her (the fear of white racism and desire for home) in order to maintain his control of her" (18). It is noteworthy to say that racial and sexist oppression go simultaneously and make Hyacinth feel "trapped sandwiched between the hate in spite of the White world and the dark dingy evil that was the house of her father" (Riley 30). Both facets of oppression, racist and domestic violence overlap and nurture each other. The external racism of British society helps the internal sexist violence of Hyacinth's father. His abuse and addiction to alcohol intensifies the stressful atmosphere that surrounds Hyacinth and keeps on saying that "you think you get bad treatment here?...well let me tell you, if you run go tell the white teacher them going to take you away…they don't like neaga (black people) here" (12). He is also afraid of punishment in case Hyacinth notifies police about his deeds that is why he keeps warning her of the outcomes of any stupid reaction in case she thinks to quit the house or complain about his

abuse that “white people smile up them face with them plastic smile, and then when you trust them, them kill you” (15).

Hyacinth father’s physical, verbal, and emotional abuse serves in increasing Hyacinth’s self- hatred to be a female and diminishes her sense of self-worth. He constantly reminds her of his authority over her and that staying at home requires a set of rules opposite to the jungle education she took from her aunt in Jamaica. He always complains about her aunt’s education and says that “she ley Hyacinth get away with too much freedom” and that makes Hyacinth “dumb and insolent and unfit in Western social orders” (14). Seemingly, Hyacinth is also considered as “Other” by a Black person like her but here on the basis of sexism Izabel Suarez supports this idea saying: “black women are…the only available “other” to black men” (294). Her female self can never be recognized and is reduced here to the status of subalternity, silence, thus doubly oppressed.

Can Hyacinth re-forge a new version of identity under such circumstances? That gets us back to Spivak’s question: can the subaltern speak? As a way to escape her father’s abuse and strict authority, Hyacinth finds solace in memories, dreams of her homeland, and her loving aunt who though poor she gives her female nurture and intimacy. These dreams bridge up her pat h back to Jamaica to the mother figure to overcome the sense of loss and oppression. In “Absent (Mother) Lands”, Isabel Carrera Suarez argues that “there is a literal and metaphoric absence that shapes Riley’s books: the absence of a mother, a mother tongu e and therefore the self- female and black-can only be reconstructed when this gap is bridged” (295). Hyacinth longs for her childhood in Jamaica for the warm atmosphere her aunt represents signifies her helplessness. Hyacinth’s obsession with the mother images in Jamaica and her aunt makes her idealize Jamaica as a way to escape the ordeals of reality on an alien soil. Hyacinth needs to develop her female identity which is roughly based on the mother-daughter contact. Hyacinth needs to live in the past through

female-cantered environment, this helps her re-construct idealistic memories and remain her dream of every night. This situation echoes Freud's the Conscious and Unconscious. At night, Hyacinth retreats to the world of dream, to the hidden past, the authentic part of herself which dwell in her Unconscious to alleviate the pressure of the outside world: her father's rebukes and the racist British society. Hyacinth often wakes up on her father's verbal abuse, slapping or whipping. The physical and verbal abuse that she experiences at the hand of her father puts an end to her dreams of the motherland.

In her task of re-shaping a new identity in the diaspora that reconciles both her Caribbean and British cultures, Hyacinth is caught in an ambivalent situation where her former identity starts eroding when she starts studying at school. Hyacinth's migration is parallel to Middle Passage where African immigrants reluctantly left behind families and memories and start a new life away from home. Due to violent events upon her arrival, Hyacinth feels the strong rupture with safety that home represents. Even her familial home does not provide her with the safety and warmth she needs.

The nostalgic idea of "home" has blasted into pieces. She realizes that Jamaica and Caribbean culture can never co-exist with the British culture as their relationship is based on excluding one another. She realizes that the world she travels to each night has nothing to do with reality. London's bleak weather serves in intensifying the coldness and gloominess of her feelings towards a country to which she never intends to belong. Hyacinth rather bears a double consciousness of her sense of self in the process of identity negotiation. Judith Butler explains the multi-layered perspectives of the immigrant identity:

> It's not so much a double consciousness-gender and race as the two axes, as if they're determined only in relation to one another. I think that's a mistake-but I think the unmarked character of the one very often becomes the condition of the articulation of the other. Then the question is how to sustain an analysis that is able to shift perspectives sequentially in such a way that no one reading this is actually adequate without the other. (Hook 168)

As the quotation suggests, Hyacinth needs to understand the significance that race and gender add to the process of her identity negotiation. Hyacinth is living in a violent and cruel house that abuses her female self. She also endures racist practices at a school where racialized prejudices haunt her wherever she goes. So, amid all those constraints that rejects her femaleness and Blackness how can she promote her identity negotiation to a socio-cultural level?

Haunted by otherness, immigrant Hyacinth stays vulnerable to sexist abusive and racial oppressive practices. She internalizes her hostility, self-hatred, and shame of Blackness when she started studying at school. She experiences the same alienating and hostile feeling she felt at the airport. Hyacinth's self-hatred reaches school-hatred; she hates the school because her classmates do not stop humiliating her and calling her "a monster", "nigger", always reminding her that she is an outsider. Riley writes: "you blacks had better learn that you are in our country now! (17). Likewise, Hyacinth cannot stand the panoptic surveillance of the teachers who regard her potential source of danger and disease. Here, Riley explains Hyacinth's conception of the school as a site of racial and ethnic oppression and justifies that "Hyacinth hates Beacon Girl school, and the thought that she was sentenced there for another four years was hard to bear" (15). The school, instead of being an academic atmosphere where the pupil learns getting contact and socializing with others, symbolizes a cell in a jail that intensifies Hyacinth's victimization. The teachers order Hyacinth not to reveal any barbaric or savage behaviours at the classroom; otherwise, they will send her "back to the jungle where you come from" (Riley 16). These words re-inscribe the effects of racism and colonialism on her diasporic consciousness.

In African-American agenda, the dark skin generally carries out the colonial legacies and commonwealth neo-colonial approaches. It symbolizes the non-White as simply the

opposite or the "Other", an outsider that justifies the colonial occupation to civilize and elevate him. However, the "Other" is still inferior and savage. Hyacinth cannot escape violence, especially her peers' violent assault. Riley describes "it was a loud cry from somewhere in the crowd, but suddenly it didn't matter where, for it was picked up and flung back from everywhere. "Kill the wog! Kill the wog!" (16). Hyacinth does not even ask for help from teachers because she knows well that they can never help her. She is unprotected both at home and at school. There is no attempt for self- defence which will be regarded as a savage inacceptable attitude. The unjust situation that Hyacinth undergoes serves in weakening her sense of self and relegates her to loneliness and silence, a thing that leads to psychological trauma and mental disorder.

By the second half of the novel, Hyacinth experiences a traumatic event when her father bit her up after her step-mother, Maureen, took her children and left the house. Staying alone in the house makes Hyacinth's father turn all his anger and physical abuse to her. This incident reaches its peak when he attempted sexual abuse. Hyacinth got a psychic shock and left the house immediately. She left the house bearing in mind that Jamaica can never produce a deviant, untrustworthy man like her father. In a given moment, she realizes the motive behind White racism and tends to justify colonial discourses. It is because the writers understand Black people's behaviours; they know that they are violent, abusive and savage so they justify their otherness. Upon her father's violent attitudes, she understands White people's racial stereotypes and the constructed image of the "Other". She determines to adopt it and conform to the White racialorder as a way to reject and deny the shame and the guilt that her Blackness connotes. When she notifies the police of her father's abuse, they assume that this deed is not something surprising or extraordinary for a Black person; it is something inherent in his Black Other self. The police show no compassion or sympathy to her situation ; they promise never to get her back home. Eventually, Hyacinth

is sent to a Youth Reception Centre in Leicester for children “where she stays in the limbo, waiting to be placed in a more permanent youth home” (Riley 26).

In fact, Hyacinth escapes one level of oppression: sexist abuse, and finds it lighter to endure the White gaze than the physical violence she undergoes at home. She grows familiar with their racist unwelcoming and despising looks. She decides to cope with the situation to break away from sexist patriarchal boundaries as a first step towards rejecting or rather getting beyond cultural and ethnic constraints. In order not to get hurt as she usually does whenever she comes in contact with White subjects, Hyacinth “always has to remind herself that they had not hurt her yet. Of course, they let her know she was not wanted, did not belong, but at least they were not violent like black people” (Riley 69). Even after she devoted years in Reception House, Hyacinth still clings to the memories and dreams of Jamaica and her aunt Joyce as a way to survive, however, the memories of abuse still flicker her mind and fill her with hatred for Black men. Ahmed explains hatred as “organized around the people and institutions that injure us, Hate is economic; it circulates between signifiers in relationships of difference and displacement” (44). What Ahmed tries to explain here is that hatred is a justifiable logical reaction to the fact of getting hurt or injured by someone or an organization. It is a way to protect oneself from its effects. Hating something is a result of stepping beyond it or stepping on it to move on. This is the case for Hyacinth ; staying years in the Reception House teaches her to be self-reliant. When she lives in a White environment, she learns how to negotiate her identity without skipping the perpetual hostility. She dedicates all her energy to study in an attempt to subvert the stereotype of the subalternity and weakness of the Black women. Indeed, she succeeds at entering university and working part-time to cover the charges of her fees.

Studying at university helped Hyacinth get in contact with Afro-Caribbean and African students. This contact brings out perspectives of origins, (be)longing, pain of

gender-related and racial prejudices in the process of re-inventing her identity. Her childhood and adolescent life in Britain is tainted with violent events of racism and oppression. Violent incidents help Hyacinth expand feelings of cultural marginalization and Blackness hatred. Hyacinth shifts from dealing with a homogeneous White society to getting in touch with Black persons like her. Between sympathy, solidarity, and rejection, Hyacinth develops a new perspective of her cultural identity in relation to social and cultural paradigm in situating herself vis a vis the other African Caribbean and African students. Sometimes, readers may feel that Hyacinth shows indifference towards Black students.

Riley's Hyacinth is just like Nunez's Sara who feels indifference and difference towards Black people of African origins. They both recreate a second-level of racism over their own race. We can justify Hyacinth's hatred to Blacks especially men because she got convinced that Blackness connotes curse, otherness, and violence; that is why, she strives to keep away from them. Maybe because her father who is supposed to be a protector was the first one to oppress her and suppress her sense of self that she develops a cumulated hatred towards specifically Black men and Blackness in general. In this way, Hyacinth responds to the colonial hierarchy of skin colour and to the difference between the Self and the Other. She also joins Sara in her contempt with African-Americans who represent perpetual otherness and regards them as a second class. The colour classification pyramid starts with White people on the top, coloured or Indian people, then the Black Caribbean to finally Africans in the bottom of the pyramid. Hyacinth, just like Sara, always makes a point of ignoring the Black students by lifting her nose high when they came close to her. She needs as Riley points out "to show her difference in other people's mind" (81).

Rejecting and despising African roots entail a re-production of other racialized actions which stem from the same racial paradigms that Hyacinth suffers from. This

double-racialized action is imminent to a poignant moment at school when Margret White, an Indian girl, used to hate Black students more than White students. Now, Hyacinth can understand her peer's reason why she decides not to befriend Black people in order not to assert and accept her Blackness. She prefers instead getting in contact with light skinned students to feel safer and confident. Hyacinth does not internalize the fact that she descends from African origins. She thinks or rather imagines that Jamaica, in contrast to Africa, is a more democratic and organized nation never compared to African nations who are still suffering from military coups and economic upheavals. She tries to convince herself that there are two levels of Blackness and that the Caribbean Blackness comes before of the African one. She rejects her otherness and associates the image of the Other to Africa as "tribal, primitive and uncivilized" (Riley 82).

Clinging to the childhood dreams and memories back home, Hyacinth does not cease to idealize Jamaica whenever she discusses African and Caribbean's national concerns.However, African and Caribbean students emphasize that "the Jamaica" she talks about or she imagines is totally the contrary of what she says. They assert that Jamaica is overwhelmed by political problems, corruption and violence. Hyacinth denies such assumptions because she wants to purify her dreamland, her motherland from violence, racism, and oppression that characterize her life in Britain. It is a moment of shock when those ideas bring her back to reality. Her refusal stems from her insistence not to stay homeless, the sense of un-belonging, that Riley wants to emphasize, again in her motherland. She sees that belonging nowhere is a personal attack to her identity. Joan writes that "Hyacinth herself could remember Jamaica perfectly and the one thing she had to say about it was racism did not exist there. She supposed there might be some prejudice among the more ignorant people, but it was certainly nothing compared to Britain, and Jamaicans never means any harm anyway (117). That is why, Hyacinth decides to befriend

Perelene, a Jamaican activist, and Charles a political exile from Zimbabwe to understand the shortcomings of the idealistic image that she long drew about Jamaica in her mind. Perlene and Charles, just like Nunez's Sam, are political activists whose first doctrine is African solidarity. They embrace all Blacks regardless of their nations and openly declare that all Blacks are Africans. They all endure racism, the White gaze and share origins, colour, and preoccupation. Hyacinth admires Perelene's courage in reclaiming her origins and tackling Black people's issues such as revising history and constructing African cultural identity in the diaspora away from shame or otherness. On the other hand, she envies her for her ability to speak, a quality that Hyacinth lacks due to her father's abuse and racialised education.

Civil rights movements and activists stand in opposition to strategies of discrimination, especially Jim Crow Law, are revealed and criticised by Black students at British universities. Black activists, such as Perelene, play a key role in Hyacinth's transformation from a colonized subject deeply satisfied with White mimicry. White mimicry makes Black immigrants live and act, and think in accordance with the British colonial discourse. When she followed Black activists, Hyacinth experiences an initiation into an African subject seeking for her history and identity back at home. Perelene tries to transform Hyacinth from a contemptuous "Other" to an active political participant. Indeed, Black activists need to reach self-separation from Britain to re-shape an alternative identity that applies to postcolonial Black histories and contemporary activism movement to revive the African heritage. Riley clarifies:

> Everyone seemed to be in the business of claiming their history, and she found the idea of Africans having civilizations too far-fetched to believe. But every time she raised objections, Perlene would find another book for her to read, more pictures to convince her. They were strange, these black people, but grudgingly she learnt to respect them and to her surprise even seek them out. She still cannot bring herself to consider people from Africa as her equals, but was prepared to compromise by accepting that her people came originally from that continent (112-113)

This quotation reveals how Hyacinth starts getting back to roots and learns to accept her roots back there to tribal "Othered" Africa. With her African mates, she felt fellowship and solidarity instead of contempt. Hyacinth comes to realize her split consciousness of her identity, her Third Space or grey zone: between Africa, Jamaica and Britain each of those spaces serves in the re- shaping of her transnational, transcultural fluid identity that is not Jamaica -centred but open to other political and socio-cultural aspects.

In an attmpt to reach emancipation, Hyacinth gets involved in Perelene and Charles activism but without making her voice heard because of lack of self-confidence. When she juxtaposes her racial experiences to those of Perelene and Charles, she feels relief that these experiences were not exclusive to her. Her friends assert that without facing those hardships, an African subject may never feel an urge to voice his long history of ordeals and colonialism. Her fellow Africans adopt and embrace her painful experiences and regard them as part of a shared African long series of cultural clashes, racial exclusion, and ethnic assaults in Britain. They invite her to go back to roots, to accept her ethnicity and celebrate her Blackness instead of regarding it as a source of failure, guilt, and shame. Hyacinth together with Perelene and Charles represent the new generation of postcolonial subjects who “are giving back African a new postcolonial history to all African people, radicalizing the way it is written and creating a tool, a potential for ce for liberation” (Riley 115). African’s potential role of liberation lies in recognizing and subverting the Other’s representations to identify themselves as no longer carrying out the colonial legacy set on the periphery of political and cultural borders. They grow aware that their identities are no longer fixed or exclusive to a certain nation set by colonialism. They instead reflect a multi -layered identity which escapes fixity to be more fluid, open to transnational transformation, and constantly changing.

Resistance: The Binding of the Past and Present

Nostalgia, belonging, and the notion of "home" stay idealized and mystic for Black immigrant communities. Racism and mistreatment that Black people endure in white societies urge them to get back to origins, to home. After being convinced of political activism for African liberation, Hyacinth starts thinking seriously of going back home, the mother land, Jamaica where her dreams and purposes dwell. Even though Charles warns her that she may get disappointed when getting there due to violence and corruption, she turns a deaf ear to theseremarks and clings to her indulgence to her native land. In a Caribbean newspaper, Robin Cohen comments on the Caribbean immigrants' attachment to their homeland. Cohen argues:"[T]hrough their roots and branches, or to be precise through their rooting and branching, the people themselves make their diaspora. The frontiers of the region are beyond the Caribbean --not only in the consciousness of Caribbean people to be sure, but also in their social conduct, migration patterns and achievements in their places of settlement and sojourn" (42).

Diaspora is a progressive process; it makes immigrants aware of their positions outside their native land and gives them the ability to look back and get a clear vision of their countries. Hyacinth limits her identity, her belonging to a geographical space while her co-patriots insist on embracing the macrocosmic African identity that makes her connected to all countries of African origins. She wants to recognize her experiences of exile, constant state of fear and alienation in Britain in an attempt to step beyond geographical borders, cultural, and socio - political constraints. Hyacinth never changes her mind concerning Jamaica in spite of Charles' recurring remarks "watch that when you go back to your island, you are not disappointed" (Riley 89).

Jamaica represents the mother figure which remains deeply rooted in Hyacinth's soul. Any attempt to uproot it from her life is a threat of confusion and loss. In fact, Hyacinth is afraid of losing Jamaica in order not to lose her sense of self. She decides to go back home to re-visit her home land and regards this return as a solace and a celebration of re-connecting again with origins. Indeed, Hyacinth travels to Jamaica, filled with a blind excessive enthusiasm for a warm healing connection with the Semiotic, the realm of the mother figure. Once she steps on Jamaica's soil, she felt that the childhood images and dreams of Jamaica do not correspond to the actual Jamaica she sets her feet on. Hyacinth feels hostility and threat though she tries her best to hide it. Riley writes: "she looks around blankly at the unfamiliar landscape…this is not the place she remembered" (135-136). Hyacinth's aim behind going back home is to find solace and overcome her fear and hostility; however, she faces the same attributes there.

The first contact is enough to make Hyacinth incapable of identifying with her homeland. A freezing sense of disappointment hovers over the disordered atmosphere. She felt a switch, a transformation towards identifying with and longing for London more than her former village in Jamaica: "she thought longing of…England, so far away and safe. God how civilized England seems now" (Riley 138). She comes to realize that what she used to dream of and the images that used to alleviate the pressure of violence and racism were nothing more than fantasies while reality is disastrous. For a moment, Hyacinth feels that she loses a land and her memories there. Aunt Joyce is her second destination. She walked along the way towards the old "shak" and happened to meet Florence, her friend. She found her ill and decayed. She informed Hyacinth that Aunt Joyce died many years ago. Hyacinth feels that she comes to the edge of her journey by losing the mother figure she clings to. Florence says: "Yu is a different person wid you speakey spokey ways. You noh belong ya soh…go back whe you come fram. "The words whirled about insider her. How many

times had she heard this since coming to Jamaica, or was it since she had gone to England? She felt rejected, unbelonging. It was all so pointless, all for nothing…If it was not Jamaica, where did she belong?" (Riley 141-142). Florence's words are straightforward and significant to Hyacinth's critical situation ; she is an outsider everywhere .Her idealized dreams and memories shuttle in Jamaica and can no more cover her current un-belonging and victimization. She realizes her un-belonging that she fits nowhere. The knowledge she has of anything around her is relative and ever -changing. This incident leads to her mental breakdown. She realizes that her self or subjectivity is split and can never be constructed again without notions of disappointment of Jamaica and oppression of Britain. She also comprehends her invisibility and insignificance as unable to negotiate her Caribbean-British centre-periphery binaries in which case she cannot reach Bhabha's the Third Space.

Riley and Nunez indicate very little hope that the authentic female self and the authentic Black self, which racism and gender oppression have buried so deep in Hyacinth and Sara change their self-perception accounts for self-hatred, will ever find expression. Instead, they are bound to the status of subalternity. They remain silent undergoing psychological confusion and mental breakdown. Therefore, "home" which essentially represents security and the land of dream is nothing but an illusion. This is why, immigrants are engaged in along strife to reach "home". In the next chapter "**Arab-American Women Rewriting Home**", we will explore another facet of otherness, controversary meaning and conceptions of "home.

CHAPTER THREE:

ARAB-AMERICAN WOMEN REWRITING HOME

In the last decades of the twentieth century, Arab-American women's writings emerged for the sake of self-representation to claim agency whilst challenging mainstream public and official discourses. The scope of contemporary American literature has widened in the wake of the civil rights movement as well as the passage of the 1965 Immigration Act. The American migratory policy has become flexible to host immigrants and refugees from Third World countries. The W.A.S.P culture has become less prominent with the emergence of the "Melting Pot" policy. The U.S grew more and more multicultural and got mindful of a new hybrid aspect of American culture. Due to its diverse cultures, the U.S. steps beyond the mechanisms of assimilation to more tolerance and acceptance of its mixed-race citizens.

This chapter aims to trace and examine the on-going progress of Arab-American writings in the United States and how they enrich current Arab-American studies.It is also important to probe notions of exile, home, un-belonging, diasporic consciousness, and hybridized identities in the Arab-American novels especially those produced by women. Further, it aims to demonstrate that Arab-American women' novels have become a forum from which they voice their reading and interpretation of current views on discrimination, exile, negative stereotypes as well as emphasizing the diversity of Arab identity in the diaspora. They also draw a line between Arab representations amid socio-political and cultural perspectives before 9/11 and in the aftermath in order to comprehend Arab subjects' position in contemporary multicultural America. These hyphenated identities

especially of the second generation immigrants, are away from being essential or static; they vary across geographic and cultural borders of the Middle East and North Africa in the American diaspora.

Diana Abu-Jaber and Laila Halaby examine Arab American women in the context of appearance, beliefs, traditions, and the manner in which they are treated as the"Other" from cultural and gendered perspectives.They question Arab-American women's construction of identity, torn between two distinct and antagonistic cultures. They challenge the limits of assimilation and acculturation to reach a common ground where their bicultural nature is understood without breaking away from their Arab origins or being rejected and marginalized by American society. In short, they aim at reaching Bhabha's the Third Space.

Literature, likewise, reflects the American cultural diversity through treating themes of ethnicity and race, among others, to promote new cultural literary traditions. In fact, this new hybridized literature gained fame for being multiracial and multicultural. It rather demonstrates a mosaic image of the new American society. In addition, contemporary American literature and literary criticism witnessed a drastic change concerning women's movement during 1970's. Literary works produced by women gained more and more attention especially vis-à-vis the developing methodologies of Feminist criticism in literary studies as a whole. As a result, one can notice contemporary women's writing of mixed-race authors are included in university courses program, anthologies, and shortlisted for literary awards. Thematically speaking, by the 1980's, literary studies started focusing more on crosswords between ethnicity, race, class, and gender in the context of mixed or hybrid identity.

Moreover, Abu-Jaber and Halaby try to defy the stereotypes of Arab women that the West consider as pitiful creatures deprived of their rights, staying silent, enduring polygamy, and reduced to a status of men's subordinate. Arab-American authors meet at the point of portraying the Arab- American women in diaspora who resist one single confined Western racialized representation and tend to portray the myriad of their experiences in the diaspora struggling between individual and communal concerns. Both novels present the major characters that embrace, and in the meanwhile, resist both American and Arab cultures. They insist on celebrating their duality, hybridity and reveal their difference as they are constantly involved in a continuous negotiating process of both cultures' differences, including the notion of "home".

Contemporary American literature includes diverse hybrid cultures and authors and reaches an extent of success and wide readership. By drawing upon book publications, literary prizes, anthologies, and University syllabi, readers find that this new literature, eventually, reaches the mass of American readers (Majaj 269). Some works have attained bestseller status and others are subjects of film adaptation and receive much fame among the critics and audience. Khaled Husseini's *The Kite Runner* is a novel dramatized into a film and gained a high appreciation. Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club,* Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* are some of the best racial-mixed works adopted into movies. As far as Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies* and Roy's *The God of Small Things*are concerned, they achieve a revolution in Pulitzer Prizes which was just awardedto men till 1983. Speaking of prizes, mixed-race women authors stray away from the Pulitzer to gain the Nobel Prize of Literature such as Toni Morrison in 1993.

Contemporary mixed-raced American authors address issues of gender, class struggle, and ethnicity in the current globalized American society. Since the multicultural

American society hosts racially and culturally hybrid citizens, questions of identity and home politics come to the scope of analysis. It is a fact that in the arena of contemporary literary studies, portrayals of authors strive to come up with a clearer understanding of hybridized identities. In history, Third World subjects are racially and culturally the "Other", so ethnic American women writers straddle races and cultures and try to achieve more negotiation as far as otherness of gender and social agency are concerned.

Having assumed that the new American culture and society become hybrid in an increasing way, it is also important to mention a point that changed the American social assumption of Arabs, especially in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001. This event brings to discussion again of political, racial, and cultural differences especially after the American government decided to target Muslims as terrorists. It stuck the label of terrorism on them whereby Islamophobia emerged to accuse all Muslims of violence and set fixed stereotypes of cruelty, blood-shed, and anarchy.The Arab community is into a critical situation since Arab identity is still related toa large percentage of Muslims. It is noteworthy to mention that a large number of Arab immigrants are not Muslims. Here lies the problem of duality Arab/Muslim which does not represent two faces of the same coin.

The veil of suspicion is always covering Muslims, Arabs, or anyone from Arab countries. It brings the U.S. back to issues of past racism and discrimination over African Americans many years ago. Being excluded from the mainstream of European culture and non-Christian, and not fitting into any large group such as African, Asian, Latino, or native Americans, Muslim and Arab Americans live are marginalized because of the differences of their religions, cultural traditions, gender relations, lifestyle, and beliefs. This misunderstanding between the American, Arab, and Muslim cultures made Muslim and Arab American writers produce works that touch upon the difficulties they endure. On the other hand, feeling marginalized inspires Muslim and Arab authors to introduce distinct

hybrid identities that defy stereotypes and prejudices and seek to take part in the process of hybridization of the American culture.

Arab-American intellectuals' intention to develop a strong substantial corpus of Arab American literature makes their works attract critical attention in the recent decades. In "Shahrazad's Legacy", Amal Abdelrazak argues that the literary texts produced by Muslim and Arab authors, mainly by women, explore what it means to have a *hyphenated* identity and to live in *between* cultures, in the sense of always being both Arab and neither American, yet they are neither Arab nor American (155). Through varied forms of writing, Arab-American women stand primarily in opposition to the perpetual judgement on racial and ethnic bases, often put on the margin of cultural borders. They are looked upon as unwelcomed immigrants and as outsiders relegated to silence and alienation. In addition, Arab immigrants are also part of the ethnic tissue in the United States; they develop hyphenated identities and mediate between two cultures. They navigate political constraints between the boundaries of the Self and the Other, between assimilating the culture of the Self and clinging to the exotic Otherness that is usually intertwined with Arab identity and cultures. Arab-American women are driven, like the women of colour everywhere, by political motives, to speak against stereotypes.

The political and ideological clash between the East with its fundamentalist regimes, and the West, with its urge to assimilate and break away from Arab family traditions makes second generation immigrants get torn between two spaces. The pressures they face heighten the tension of the hyphenation for contemporary American women writers. While embracing and resisting both "homes" (the East and the West), they simultaneously reject and belong to both spaces. In fact, Arab-American writers tend to resist and reject Arab rigid oppressive socio- political systems as well as the American's gaze which limits them to the exotic, domesticated Other. In the pursuit of claiming an Arab identity and a

Western bicultural upbringing, they find themselves challenging both atmospheres of Arab patriarchal and fundamentalist authorities in contrast to the belittling view that Americans label them with, a dialectic situation that makes them fit in none while belonging to both.

Seemingly, Abu-Jaber and Halaby try to search for home in its geographical and cultural significance. They comprehend home as a familiar yet hostile space between ancestral memories of a lost land and the notion of home in *la Mestiza* or the Third Space. Moreover, they negate the notion of one monolithic, fixed Arab identity but a prismatic-like identity. Geographic borders between Arab countries and diaspora are fluid as long as memories are persistent. Through their works, Arab American women show a form of resistance to react against the Orientalist prejudices and Western feminism which both consider Arab American women as passive victims of patriarchal subjugation. They try to voice the silenced Arab community via openly examining issues of cliché such as Harem, the veil, and fundamentalist regimes in the context of racism, patriarchal oppression and cultural marginalization in post 9/11 American society.

Historical Evolution of Arab-American Literature

Arab-American literature began hostile whose roots reach back to the twentieth century. Early Arab immigrant writers decided to introduce their works under a certain league called “The Poets of Al Mahjar” (the poets of diaspora). Those writers reflect fundamentally the reality of Arab intellectuals settling down in the U.S. These expatriate writers bear a whole cultural heritage from the Middle East and tend to introduce it in an American context. In fact, the works of the poets of Al Mahjar were mainly bilingual. This affirms that they were obliged to use English as well as Arabic in order to attract the audience. On the other hand, they needed recognition from the mainstream American elite. Gibran Khalil Gibran, Mikhael Naime, and Amine El-Rayhani are canonical figures in

early Arab-American literature. Those writers mark, as Ludesclier points out, a certain bounce in promoting cultural, social, and political reform in the East. Their works respond to the Western model to encourage the spiritual awakening i n the West based on the Eastern model, producing in this sense a new tradition called “literary diplomacy” (98).

By following the process of mutual exchange between the models of the East and the West, early Arab-Americans started to mark existence especially with the success of Gibran’s *The Prophet*, which paved the way for a new Arab-American literary tradition. Evelyn Shaker affirms that *The Prophet* is built upon the implicit claim that the Arabs’ homeland is a fountainhead of wisdom and spirituality (5).Though it began new, successful, and compelling, Arab-American literature remained under the shadow of marginalization. It needed to be part of the 1970’s pedagogical multiculturalism. In the beginning of the multiculturalism movement, the American intellectual mainstream began to comply with the new literary works produced mainly by immigrants. Arab-American literature, though ethnic and new, remained undisclosed due to diasporic implications. It was not included in ethnic studies curricula such as those of Asian-Americans, Native-Americans, or Latino/as. Arab-American literary works were included in course syllabi to be studied by Arab communities. By the end of 1970’s, America proposed an intellectual project that demonstrates American multicultural orientation which aims to embrace the literary works produced namely by non-American and ethnic minorities’ writers to recognize and insert them in the American literary mainstream. Arab-American writers started to write about the features that distinguish them from the other ethnic groupssuch as culture, ideologies, folklore, naming conventions, race, and politics. Going back to roots and celebrating difference are a means to reach ethnic affirmation and diasporic implications.

Contemporary Arab-American writers deal with issues of assimilation, acculturation and the major quest for self-perception in diaspora. They focus on writing on Arab origins, culture and society no more in Arabic but in English to attract and gain more Western readership. Following this process, Arab writers succeeded in finally getting their works significant American mainstream recognition and were eventually published in American academic journals. It is out of necessity to get recognition and stay relevant in the age of multitude and globalization that contemporary Arab-American authors attempt to narrate their ethnic experiences to give a poignant assertion of Arab identity. Authors like Naomi Nye, Sam Hamod, and Eugene Paul Nassar treat issues related to the complexity of the immigrant identity and focus on the Arab identity to trace what is left from the Arab identity through ages of forced assimilation.

In order to bring back the traditional past values, Arab-American writers rely upon memory to follow the conflation of ethnicity which is portrayed in childhood memories, ethnic customs, food, community relations, language, and social roles. In this context, ethnicity makes room for meeting with an imaginary land that pertains to certain traditional social norms and patriarchal authorities which are going to embody the key issues in their writings. While some writers call upon memory to get in contact with the mother land, some others expand the sense of nostalgia to trace the development of ethnic identity. Both groups intend to set bridges of understanding between two distinct cultures that immigrants adopt through introducing a self-critique rather than a bare representation to create an Arab-American literary tradition.

Wrapping the Grape Leaves: A Sheaf of Arab-American Poets is among the first anthologies which present to audience a set of literary portrayals of Arab self-critique mingled with socio- cultural reviews. In fact, self-critique celebration emerges as an original theme thatreveals problems of identity and self-affirmation in Arab-American

writings. One example of Arab self-critical concepts is Mervat Hatem's questioning of Americanizing names for second generation immigrants as an act of assimilation and suggests that the name is the first symbol of identity and belonging (Hatem 38). Likewise, she sees that when Arab names cease to reflect the Arab identity, the whole Arab culture, history, and independent sense of self are subjected to erosion and disappearance. This is why asserting Arabness via self-identification and self-affirmation starts to cover Arab-American imageries as well as their themes.

By the last decade of the twentieth century, the focus on self-critique started to expand to explain the inevitable transformation from Arab ethnic monolithic to multiple hyphenated diasporic identities. Arab-American writers and sociologists follow the mutation from Arab to Arab-American.They study the plight of assimilation for immigrants, and above all, the quest for identity negotiation for the coming hybrid generations. In his poem "Dying with the Wrong Name", Hatem depicts the dilemma of immigrants' forced identity hyphenation not only through adopting but also accepting American names where he writes: "there is something lost in the blood, something lost down in the bone/in these small changes. A man in a dark suit at Ellis Island says with/ tiredness and authority, "you only need two names in America" and suddenly as cleanly/ as the air/ you've lost your name" (49). The issue of name reflects a whole identity, culture, and history which is destined to duality.

Joseph Geha's short stories collection *Through and Through: Toledo Stories* gives another insight into self-identification and reflects on the Arab immigrants' position in diasporic environment and their ethnic experiences where the immigrant lives two distinct lives simultaneously. Geha introduces characters put under the tension of Arab communal values and individual freedom. He points out that all Arab immigrants in the U.S belong to the deep-rooted familial connections and communal identity whereby the immigrant is still

called "Ibn Arab" (qtd. in Naber 36) (i.e., this immigrant subject is culturally belonging to a whole Arab community). However, when stepping outside the Arab community, the immigrant is also American living on the American soil, follows its rules, and respects its norms. Here, the transformation from Arab to Arab-American mentioned above is by no means evident where there is a shift from the communal identity of Arab community to the individual agency. Arab - American writers try to give an image of openness to both cultures, native and host, which coexist together within both identities socially and culturally.

It is quite evident that Arab-American literature draws upon issues of revival and celebration of Arab culture as far as ethnicity, language, and ideologies are concerned. In this sense, Arab - American literature stems essentially from Arab inspiration and topics articulated and interpreted in English. On the other hand, it is also important to be aware of the Americanness of Arab-American literature as it also gets inspiration from the American society and produced on American soil. This literature also focuses on the nuances of hybrid identities and traces the relationship between ethnicity and the American society within the context of multiculturalism.

Arab-American literary framework is quite clear now; however, there lies the question of the topics treated. Some writers insist on preserving the Arab identity by focusing on Arab-identified topics based on nostalgia, native traditions, and the revival of the past literary heritage expressed in Arabic. Some others criticize ethnicity because it fosters the idea of the Self/Other and would enforce the premise of marginalization. They think that ethnic issues belong to and are understood by a specific community in which case it remains limited and enclosed to other communities.Torn between ethnicity and openness, Arab-American literature is distinguished from other ethnic literatures in its commitment to foreign political events. In this sense, one may deem that Arab-American

identity is not only hyphenated bringing two identities together, but also transnational and transcultural.

Arab-American writers need to give voice to Arab cultural heritage while at the same time make room for change and development. Naomi Shihab Nye discusses the issue of preservation and openness of Arab identity where she argues that Arab-American identity is not something that they preserve, deny, escape, or romanticise but it is just another way of being human (qtd. in Naber 37). Nye reminds that language, which is readily accessible to a mainstream U.S. readership creates a new space in which Arab and Arab-American experiences can be articulated (39). Nadine Naber insisted that nostalgia remains a trivial feeling. Instead honouring the diversity of experiences and the necessity to develop and change are the main points which should be prevalent in contemporary Arab-American literature (45).

It is in straddling spaces and cultures that Arab-American literature gains its transnational dimension. Writers like Naomi Shihab Nye seek to set aside the articulation of a static Arab-American identity dependent on the past and defined through preservation of cultural heritage. Nye maintains that what it means to be Arab-American, or any identity for that matter, is discovered in process of diaspora, by making sense of disparate experiences and cultural contexts and by nurturing the sparks generated by their juxtaposition (18). In her writings, Nye attempts to subvert the static paradigm of the human self and insists that selfhood isever-changing through the process of discovery. Not away from self-critique, openness, and change, other Arab-American writers of the 1970s and 1980s stepped beyond exploring and affirming the Arab-American culture to rely on "another technique engaged in a firm appraisal against the Arab world" (Majaj 270). They basically reject the celebration of Arab identity in the U.S. and try to escape ethnicity and turn their attention to more transculturaland transnational framework in dealing with the

quest for Arab physical and cultural survival within the contexts of violence and oppression.

In his critique of identity devolution in the Arab world due to violation of rights and oppression, Etal Adnan suggests that identity affirmation in the Arab world stems from revolution. In the process of self-affirmation, one should make room for cultural critique and self-criticism (Hartman 160). She expresses this revolutionary voice in her poem “Beirut Hell Express” in which she declares:” In New York I say the hell with America/ In Moscow I say the hell with Stalin/ In Rabat I say the hell with Hassan II/ Hello the beggar/hello to the fedai/ people of Beirut… take your vertebrae and squeeze out/ colonialism” (Adnan 98).

"Home" and Belonging: Controversial Meanings

The persistent search for “home” is one facet of identity quest and a site of controversial interpretations where ethnicity, culture, nation, gender, and class intersect. Some Arab- American writers try to bring together the Arab and the American identities without preferring one over the other through the acculturation process. The struggles of assimilation makes Arabs either break away from their traditions or goback to their origins to record again their homeland stories. Their journey back home enables them to decode silence and uncover displacement in an attempt to escape racial prejudices, Orientalist negative views, social hostility, and alienation in America. Home remains an operating notion behind diaspora whereby the search for the sense of belonging is located beyond the binary tradition of the history of oppression and violence in the homeland and alienation in the U.S. The notion of home represents a fluid and relative meaning that makes the idea of self-stability and belonging to a specific spaceimpossible. Through Arab-American narratives, readers may find that the journey motif is recurrent, i.ea journey generally

undertaken in exile through memory and history in quest of home and self-identification. This journey ends up in a virtual image of home in a space existing in the writer's imagination brought about by language that interprets historical and individual realities. However, the dilemma lies whether home is found or created.

Evelyn Hammad, a Palestinian-American writer, focuses on the notion of home as not a romanticized space outside history but as a home inside each Arab immigrant living in the diaspora. In fact, she longs to go home to her origins, she writes "I never lived a home within me within us/…return to what we've forgotten…to the drum the hum the sum of my parts (qtd. in Alshihabi 39). Hammad gives reflections on exile that incite Palestinian experiences. She imagines a lost land geographically inexistent. It is rather an imaginary home or just an idea of a land called Palestine, Sama Alshihabi suggests: "when you belong to a people without a home, or a home that you are not allowed to reside in, you home stays a mere idea (45).

Natalie Hendal, on the other hand, treats the exile question of Palestine in relation to identity negotiation, communal existence, and individual selfhood. Hendal edited an anthology called *The Poetry of Arab Women* where she insists on regarding Arab-Americans not only as a part of the American society but also as transnational individuals. Majaj suggests that Hendal traces a nuanced progression from exilic displacement to an understanding of "home" as self-created in language, to an active feminist stance, and an instance on claiming arrival, no matter how provisionally (Majaj 268). Hendal asserts Majaj's idea that Arab-American identity exists at the point of crossing: in the hyphen linking two cultures, the gulch between worlds: but with identity firmly rooted on one side of the division (266).

Languages and spaces intersect and collide to create a sense of both richness and longing. In her poem "Baladna,"Hammad writes that home is not a space but it is who we are. It keeps slipping out of grasp (Majaj 270). For her, identity is fluid and never pure or unique, she states that "standing at the corner of a small road somewhere between my grandfather and what seems to be my present, we write a ballad to celebrate ourselves, baladna, and wonder is that what it is like/ to dance in Arabic?" (270). Contemporary Arab American literature takes part in the larger debate on the meaning and usefulness of the term "Arab American" and how this community should be represented in literature and art. This debate is rooted in six key conditions which formulate the "room" in which Arab Americans write the continuing elusiveness of the term "Arab". Arabness defines a certain category and a part of a specific history that Arab Americans have undergone in the United States: Ottoman, Syrian, and Caucasian characterized by white skin in opposition to Bedouins who are mostly coloured and sometimes black skinned.

The first wave of Arab immigrants was mostly from Syria and Lebanon. They did not suffer racial prejudices, they found no harm in embracing and assimilating the American culture. However, what follows of Arab immigrants in the succeeding waves finds it difficult to break away from their traditions and culture (Naber 85) . This led to the re-actualization of the previous Orientalist representations during colonialism that result in neo-Orientalist representations of Arab immigrants and Arab- Americans who have been integrated in the American society. Arabs are represented as two distinct groups of the same origins in Western media. Politically speaking, the alienating policies that Bush's administration has enacted towards Arabs in America and abroad was considered as part of its "War on Terror," along with the propaganda that the American media has turned against Arab Americans before and after9/11. Political assaults contribute to very controversial, and largely unresolved issues in Arab American writing.

Arab-American Writers and Orientalist Representations

The term "Arab" is too general and represents a deep complexity of identification under this epithet. Among pure Arab race, Arabized tribes, and Arab occupied areas covering the Middle East towards North Africa lies a myriad of controversial cultures, religions, political and social differences and basically Asian and European influences due to the geographical situations. Arab Americans show belonging to their Arab ancestors in the Middle East along the Persian Gulf towards the Maghreb to reach the Atlantic Ocean. Some westerners associate Arabs to Islam (though not all Arabs are Muslims). They have different religious affiliations depending on their geographical location. This diversity that Arabs represent endorses their openness and acceptance to transnational and transcultural frameworks into the American multicultural society.

In the Arab-American migratory context, some American intellectuals of Arab origins drop hyphenation and reject the dash that relates both identities together to suggest accepting fluidity and the transnational quality of their identities. While other Arab-American intellectuals insist on hyphenation to reflect their difference as Carol Fedda-Conrey suggests: “we identify with the hyphen as a manifestation of the complexity of our Arab migratory experiences by which American identity is intrinsically transformed to encompass a multitude that is no longer marginal, but co-exists with and ultimately changes the centre” (45).

In the field of propagating for Arab literature primarily produced in Arabic then translated into English, Edward Said focuses on the importance of the Arab literary presentation in his essay “Embargoed Literature” and sheds light on Arab literature’s role in giving a substitute explanation of Arab realities. Said mentions that : "of all the major

world literatures, Arabic remains relatively unknown and unread in theWest for reasons that are unique, and I think remarkable at a time when tastes here [the United States] for the non-Western are more developed than before and, even more compelling, contemporary Arabic literature is at a particularly interesting juncture." (Said372). Said's essay brings out the marginalized reality of Arab literature especially that of Arabic expression and questions the silence and ignorance that pervades Western critical contributions to Arab-American literature produced in English. In the essay's conclusion, Said wonders, "Is it too much to connect the stark political and military polarization with the cultural abyss that exists between Arabs and the West?" (280). Capitulating the "pathetically utopian impulses" (280) that determines ways of reading Arabic literature in Western conditions; Said insists on reading and criticising Arabic literature as a significant way to its impending recognition and development. Said wonders about the relevance of Arab literature to the American multicultural heterogeneous literatures that recognize and encompass a new body of literature created by women of Arab, Middle Eastern, and Muslim backgrounds and descent.

Contemporary literary trends turn their attention to recounting (hi)stories of their native land with a Western touch. Arab-American writers assert their presence beyond the silence and limitation that often accompany Arab and Muslim differences. Azhar Nafisi realizes a breakthrough in Arab-American literature and gains fame and recognition for blending Iranian- Muslim social issues with a western reading.*Reading Lolita in Tehran* gains the presumable fame it anticipates because it reaches the immediate intellectuals and layer readers' requirements where they identify themselves with current political and cultural challenges that a hybrid immigrant might face in America.

In her critical analysis of Azhar Nafisi's memoir in women's book clubs in the United States and Canada, Catherine Burwell argues that "the celebratory embrace of this work can be attributed, in part, to the presence of framing structures that simultaneously promise white readers reassuring familiarity alongside "exotic" difference, which reinforces notions of First World centrality and superiority" (290). Bruwell focuses on the persisting notions of superiority and inferiority, Western centre and Orientalist Other, and insists on the importance of subverting exotic Othering embedded in Orientalist views in an American context. She goes further to assert the relevance of re-inscribing or re-historicizing the contributions of Arab/Muslim women in order to step beyond the image of subalternity which labels Third World women.Arab-American women comprehend the relationship between theliterature they produce with current Arab-American politics especially in the aftermath of 9/11. Likewise, commenting on 9/1 events and giving a political insight to their literary texts serve in gaining more attention by western readership.

Among the conditions listed, neo-Orientalism is particularly noteworthy as itdominates the on- going representational space of Arab Americans especially after /11 events. As a discourse, neo-Orientalism is an updated version of the Orientalist practices Said described in his book, *Orientalism*; yet it operates within current political, social, and cultural frameworks and agendas. Although in a rejuvenated form, neo-Orientalism proceeds the legacy of representing the "East as the "Other", it restores the binaries of exclusion: primitivism/enlightenment or inferiority/superiority. In doing so, the Other can never escape the inherent inferiority that Western forces seek to install. Therefore, the Other is set far away from independent self- representation of his identity and attitudes. As with Orientalism, the Other is imprisoned into strict de/confined binarieswhereby the West takes the role of superiority and guidance exemplifying masculinity, modernization, and secularism. While the East exemplifies its antitheses: submissive femininity, primitivism

and strict fundamentalist religion. Most of the old Orientalist paradigms still influence the neo- Orientalist discourse, religious representation and the veil predicament. Neo-Orientalism, however, adds an additional lens of colour differences and gender-related issues.

Arab-American writers tend to treat the current issues of Arab immigrants in diaspora and use their literary productions to voice the Arab-American community's preoccupations. The position they achieved in mainstream American literature enables them to transcend local and communal issues to more transnational issues in their broader sense. In short, Arab American writers are in a double-edged challenge: they are entitled to give a new image of Arab cultures and attitudes that reverses neo-Orientalist representations. However, the Arab reality is not that extraordinary and some Orientalist views are not far from the truth. So, their task is to give an honest image of Arab realities which is not too idealistic and not too bleak. Some issues cannot be ignored or changed such as persisting patriarchal authorities that suppress the position and the role of women to the cult of domesticity. Arab-American writers are charged with changing the public mind but can only reach this great entity through certain negotiations, many of which are political and discursive.

Arab Cultural Identity in the Diaspora

Lebanese immigrant writers are active in the intellectual and literary productions. D.H. Melhem is the first Arab-American woman to publish her novel *Notes on 94th Street* in 1972. A year later, Etel Adnan got her "The Beirut-Hell Express" published. A decade later, American- Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) published *Wrapping the Grape Leaves: A Sheaf of Contemporary Arab American Poets*, a small pamphlet of poetry published (Naber 82). The publication of this collection announced theemergence of a

newly ethnic Arab-American poetry that led, for the first time, Arab-American writers in the United States to realise their collectivity as an immigrant community.

Some Arab-American women writers wanted to escape the racial stereotypical r hetoric and cultural constraints, they sometimes emphasize on adding the dash as a way to assert their hyphenation to reclaim that they are in part Arab but not conformed to all the elements of Arabness. The devastating events of September 11 have complicated Arab-American communities' life and reception. They were treated with a suspicious or rather rejecting gaze that fills them with guilt to belong to Arab origins often described as not only inherent, primitive, and backward but terrorist as well. The United States discourse on the 'War on Terrorism' against Islamic fundamentalist organization sometimes victimizes Arab communities. The War on Terrorism project has fostered the previous Orientalist views which emphasize the goodness and effectiveness of Western civilization and thoughts as compared to the evil deficient Eastern thoughts and politics. Such an unjust generalisation has victimized various Arab-American communities in America and eventually serves in the persistence of suffering a double level of alienation due to racist suspicion of their presence and position in the American society.

In the post-September 11th period, Arab-American communities have been subjected to violations at the hands of the FBI. They were previously exposed to intense investigations, strict surveillance, detention and deportations. In fact, Arab communities experienced systematic political racialization in the decades before September 11. Arab-American writers felt the threat of otherness well before 9/11. There was a political activist category among whom writers who focused on their relationship to their origins: the Middle East. Consequently, they evoke political resistance to Orientalist prejudices and monsterizing the Middle East. They defy racial prejudices, marginalization, sexism, and patriarchy.

Having enclosed a variety of old and new forms of racialization, imperialist and globalised transnational connectivities are an atmosphere where those discourses are tolerated and allow multiple identities to coexist as well as to shift flexibly from one subjectivity to another. Hyphenated subjects utilise such a diasporic transnational approach in treating the position of hybridized identities. This enables researchers to explore the articulations of Arab - American subjects notably women and their identity formations across national boundaries and cultural borders. Instead of being simply hybrid subjects incorporating two races or dual consciousness of nationalism, Grewal explains that these transnational connectivities have made these subjects more flexible and dynamic in relation to multiple identities, nationalisms and communities (200). They move from one subjectivity to another, and become capable of coexisting with antagonistic and diverse subject formations.

In *Orientalism*, Said explains the Western gaze over Arabs and the East. The West has become the leader and started putting the parameters of social, political, and academic hierarchies which respond to certain cultural standards. These measures sought to exclude the Arab existence as Said makes it clear that the West"started to set itself off against the 'Orient' as a sort of surrogate and even underground self, an on-going discourse perpetual by the basic assumptions of the Orient as mysterious, unchanging, unable to represent itself, and ultimately inferior" (4- 5). The American view of Arabs promotes the idea of the East as inferior coming in opposition to standard values and conventions in addition their inherent inferior. The Arab subject is also mysterious, dangerous, and strange. In this situation, the American culture started to introduce a worldview of the West as Self and East as the Other. Steven Salaita maintains that, "a cultural essence contained in the constructed representation of the Western mind as superior to a nd highly differentiated from the Oriental and backward mind" (155). This idea also calls to mind Foucault's

concept of Knowledge and Power in the sense that the American authorities of knowledge and power, including propaganda and foreign affairs, reveal a constant assault against Arabs, their culture, and their political issues.

Arab-American writings fall in the arena of postcolonial studies which represent a channel through which the question of whether works by postcolonial and ethnic writers are appreciated, read, or even published come to the fore during the turn of the twenty-first century. The issues of Third World subjects in diaspora are categorized within studies of ethnic positions in the United States. Stylistically speaking, conducting within the limits of what he calls "the alterity industry," Graham Huggan refuses to posit postcolonial and ethnic writers as objects of this process. He suggests, instead, that these writers simultaneously participate as subjects and objects of "exoticist codes of cultural representations in their works" (20). For Huggan, "postcolonial authors are embedded within the process of their own commodification and thus contribute to varying degrees, in the production, transmission and consumption of postcolonial literary/cultural texts" (20).

In fact, Huggan's work is significant to understand the postcolonial literary contributions to reflect on the global circulation of literary texts from one space to another. His work clarifies what he calls the process of "*cultural translation* through which the marginalised Other can be apprehended, comprehended and described in familiar terms" (24). Huggan's insistence on analysing both the opportunities for, and the restrictions on, ethnic writers in global markets is crucial for propagating the study and analysis of Arab American women's literary production.

Because Arab American women's literature has become a valuable cultural and literary commodity, Diana Abu-Jaber and Laila Halaby seek to tackle the psychological and cultural dimension of diasporic consciousness of the concept of home. When reading*Arabian Jazz* and*West of the Jordan,* it is obvious that they focus on the Jordanian

and Palestinian case of immigration by looking at the way they explore issues of migration, hybridity, and home through the representation of their characters.

Arabian Jazz and *West of the Jordan* portray how migrants build a certain ideological pattern in dealing with home in the light of hybridized identities. These novels' characters undergo emblematic mutation in the way they search to locate a safe place, known as home, in a hostile environment through developing transnational identities and adopting transculturation. Most ofthe characters in both novels represent the second generation of migratory subjects, and none of them is confined by a distinct geographical homeland to which they might return. Both Palestine and Jordan do not seem to be good options for the Americanized second-generation immigrants. That is why Abu-Jaber and Halaby suggest a new construction of the notion of home by eliminating fixity and instilling instead fluidity to construct the definitive place of belonging not in the original home but in the host country. However, this idea is challenging as the U.S. provides immigrants with a place for residence and shows many restrictions concerning discriminatory forces which make the idea of building a new home in America very difficult to achieve.

Both Abu-Jaber and Halaby's contribution to studies of Arab diaspora in the U.S. locate home in the native land as dwelling just in their memories and stories told by the ancestors. Home is the native land, a place with which they have no immediate physical contact. Yet, it stays a myth of origins occupying a certain geographical location that remained an unreachable imagined space. Seen in the light of diasporic terms, Jordanian and Palestinian immigrants travel across different real and imaginary borders within the American history as a "melting pot" nation. The Jordanian history from its onset is inhabited by refugees. Sharif Ali, the last Hashemite and the founder of the current Kingdom of Jordan, was himself a refugee from Saudi Arabia to Jordan. After that, he represents the Palestinian exile and Bedouin culture.

Indeed, by the 1960's and 1970's, the number of Jordanian and Palestinian immigrants grew due to the war waged in the Middle East against Israel. It is something that the American statistics assure that more than 40.000 Americans are of Jordanian and Palestinian descent. Alixa Naff suggests:

> Not until 1899 did the designation 'Syrian' appear on immigration rolls, and the term Palestinian entered use even later. More recently, Arab Immigrants have often been registered according to their last country of residence, which also causes confusion. In 1948, with the creation of Israel in Palestine, Palestinians lost official recognition of their nationality. They came to North America from the various Arab countries to which they were displaced and were listed as citizens of those countries. Arab immigrants including Palestinians can still receive the imprecise classification "Other Asian" or "Other African". (63)

The quotation sums up the kind of diaspora and Jordanian immigrants' experiences, specifically the migratory subjects about which Abu-Jaber and Halaby write. The good political relations with the West that Jordan maintains is analysed in William Cleveland's *A History of the Modern Middle East,* which proffers an insight to the specific factors that set the geographical boundaries knowing that Jordan has evolved as a young nation shaped by the British protection.

In terms of Palestinian and Jordanian immigration to America, some Arab critics account for conflicting historical constructions of Arab American ethnicity that led to the United States Bureau of Immigration's 1899 policy of distinguishing the immigrants of the first wave: Lebanese, Syrian, Jordanian and Palestinian origins from the Turkish immigrants and effectively classifying Arabs as "White". From a racial standpoint, Salaita declares that "Arab Americans have been classified and treated as both "White and colored" (153). Therefore, the official legal assignment of the "White" racial category upon Arab Americans meant that Arab Americans were privileged concerning civil rights and opportunities that other racial minorities in the United States cannot attain. This status makes many of the Arab American communities ask for the right to naturalize as Arab Americans often meant that Arab Americans had to distinguish themselves from other

racial minorities and closely align themselves with Christianity over Islam (Hartman 148). Although this official designation of Arab Americans as racially white is still persisting till the present days. Its probationary and precarious nature is clearly exemplified in the political recognition of this category.

Shifting Beyond Nostalgia: Diana Abu-Jaber's *Arabian Jazz*

Over the past few decades, a significant interest in Arab American cultural and intellectual contributions has made Arab American writers like Diana Abu-Jaber questionthe political aims and motivations of Arab-American literature. Unlike Arab women authors who sometimes downplay the political, socio-economic, and literary significance of their roles as mouthpieces for Arab culture and experience to Western audiences, Abu -Jaber believes her writing can positively contribute to the project of hybridized identities of Arab Americans. Majaj mentions that strict racial classification, which estimates Arabs as racially White, creates similar kinds of "contradictions" and limitations for other minorities in the United States (286).

In an essay on the politics of race and belonging in the United States, Ella Shohat, herself an Iraqi Jew, asserts the limitations of the United States' cynical categorization. Sha asserts that "The multi-layered history especially common to postcolonial displacements 'exceeds' the misleadingly tidy five-part United States census categorizations of 'race.' The census is in fact heterotopic, mingling issues of race (Blacks), language (Hispanics), and geography (Asians) as if they were commensurate categories." (291). Shohat's view of the limited American census categorizations, which confuses issues of race, language, and geography, is especially important when seeking to understand the role that Arab American fiction plays. This census categorization is important in analysing heterogeneous,

multivalent narrations of Arab- American writings which reflect Arab American realities and experiences.

This section will be devoted to Abu-Jaber's first novel, *Arabian Jazz* and its preoccupation with the search for "home". It attempts to locate a category of identification for its characters which accurately display what the author perceives regarding Arab-Americans' multiple identifications and states of physical, racial, cultural, political, and religious differences. With its interest in and the study of the issues of racial prejudices and standards of categorization, the outcomes behind revealing ethnicity and cultural differences is to examine the difficult realities that confront the ethnic "Others" in the United States. Abu-Jaber's novel, as any other "ethnic" literature in the United States, attempts to subvert fixed stereotypes.

American idealistic views and paradigms of what the American citizen represents remain an idea that relies on the racist juxtaposition of "real" and "ethnic" Americans. This section's aim is to explore and clarify how *Arabian Jazz* engages this troubling and often racist binary through scrutinizing the constraints and limitation of politicalrepresentation in the process of challenging the image of the Other. This section also takes *Arabian Jazz* as an intellectual medium from which the author reveals resistance and criticizes the limitation of some American narratives and views in the context of the myth of "melting pot", democracy, and the politics of accepting the other.

Abu-Jaber's first novel, *Arabian Jazz* achieved a significant critical and intellectual praise and recognition. This novel gained Abu-Jaber the Oregon Book Award and reached the final short list for the National/PEN Hemingway award; Abu-Jaber's work explores the lives of an Arab American family called the Rammouds, who live in 1990's Euclid, New York. The novel narrates the story of Matussem Rammoud, an immigrant Jordanian father who marries an Irish- Catholic American woman. Upon his wife's sudden death, Matussem

finds himself in a huge responsibility of raising their two daughters, Jemorah and Melvina. Abu -Jaber addresses issues of diasporic consciousness for both the first and second generation Arab immigrants. She wonders whether the meaning of "home" encompasses all the historical amalgam of Palestine along with the cultural and ethnic accumulation of the original homeland in America. On the other hand, she reflects on the real and imagined level of the national and cultural identity without maintaining ethnic paradigms. Abu-Jaber also wonders about which kind of "home" does Jordan, Palestine, or America represent for the second generation immigrants and whether the second generation, as hybrid subjects, accept or reject the ethnic part of their identity. In short, Abu-Jaber seeks to understand how "home" is constructed within migratory and diasporic standards and experiences.

In *Arabian Jazz*, Abu Jaber narrates the story of Matussem. He is a Jordanian immigrant in America who represents a bohemian, hippie artist, and a celebrator of *carpe diem* concept. Similarly, he advocates the importance of the present in opposition to the past and the future; he prefers living in the "here" and "now" and never laments past losses or thinks seriously about the future. He can be described as the artists of Lost Generation in Paris during the crazy years after WWI. Matussem is an unbiased example of Bhabha’s concept of “unhomliness”, liberated by the absence of a fixed definition of home rather than feeling loss and alienation. He thinks that belonging to a fixed geographical space in the world leads to a frightening stability, limitation, and difficulty to live elsewhere. Exemplifying a diasporic character, *par excellence*, he alludes to the classical example ofa wandering rootless observer. He got unattached to any country or community; he simply sees little use in belonging to any nation. Matussem suggests that it is all the same wherever he goes, and that there is a false distinction between states in America or even countries around the world, “he assures Jem, Utah or Jordan is the same” (Abu-Jaber 39). The lost, absent-minded and sometimes clueless father splits his time between playing jazz with his

band and working in the maintenance office of the Euclid hospital.

Left without the parental guidance, Matussem's daughters, Jemorah and Melvina, find themselves amid a hybrid environment between a careless cosmopolitan father and a strict traditional Aunt Fatima. They must negotiate painful memories of their mother's death and gradually discover their place as Arab Americans who just do not "seem right" (Abu -Jaber 12). The novel traces the Rammoud family's search for a better understanding of itself by delving into both their Jordanian ancestral lineage and their contemporary American experiences. In his essay on the dilemmas of "Arabness" in the United States, as explored in the author's second novel *Crescent*, Nouri Gana argues,

> Abu-Jaber does not seem to have a taste for squabbling over philosophical and intellectual privileges and alleged pleasures of exile, which many postcolonial writers and critics boasted about and then derided. Instead, she delves into the real, everyday experiences of Arabic Americans as they incessantly find themselves arched in what Marwan Hassan calls the 'eloquent vulnerability' of being Arab. (242)

These "real, everyday experiences" that Gana mentions above are clearly depicted in *Arabian Jazz* through Abu-Jaber's interest in tracing the elements of otherness in the novel though the main character. Matussem rejects any label or representation. She also needs to portray the characters', especially his daughters, confrontation with racial judgement, rejection, and categorization in the United States. By showing a deep interest in the politics that determines the lives of Arab-American communities in the United States, Abu-Jaber discusses the difficulties and writes about Arab Americans' racialized realities and experiences. Abu -Jaber describes the complicated racial and cultural predicaments of Arab identity and sees that it is so confounding when dealing with race and cultural identity (Majaj 271). Cultural identity like that of the Arabs is mostlyfluid because a myriad of different strains of identity and cultures make up the Arab peoples in their homeland. Abu-Jaber declares that Western people tend to think of race as being a definitive marker of identity and Arab identity in particular (Majaj 272). Readers may find out that Arabs look

in different ways and they do not have a homogeneous skin colour such as Africans. However, the Arabs are neither Black nor White, they are in-between, therefore they transcend standards of racial categorization to reach the level of multi -identified subjects.

On a racial basis, Abu-Jaber's is aware of the vagueness and incertitude of a racial classification of Arab communities in America under any label. No final parameter can be applied to categorization of Arab identitybecause Arab realities, origins, religious orientations, and cultural traditions cannot lodge in one homogeneous pattern. Abu -Jaber finds out that openness and fluidity are the major attributes of Arab identity. She explains that Arabness cannot be confined in one single definition of identity. Abu-Jaber's conclusion goes in accordance with Majaj's argument that "Arab American racial identities occupy a contested and unclear space within the American racial and cultural discourse" (281).

Contrary to his dynamicity and cosmopolitan fervour, Matussem lives in an economically disadvantaged community of Euclid where everything"was virtually the same as it had been one hundred years ago" (Abu-Jaber 2). The novel explores Matussem Rammoud's acceptance of his unbelonging and rootlessness; he rather adheres to the principle of the multiplicity of choices. Abu-Jaber states that Matussem wakes up each morning with a status of disbelief: "Matussem is unable to come to terms with the fact that his wife has died. He thought of her as he drove to work in the mornings through ice and rain.

Matussem's lifestyle reflects a typical exqmple of diasporic characters. His language is a mixture of English with Arabic registers in addition to Spanish and Italian. He rejects any exclusionary category on the basis of race, class or gender or any binary terms of seeing the world. He just finds no advantage in sticking to one political or cultural affiliation. He does not approach his idea of home as a fixed static location presenting in

this way the limits of hybridity as a complicated situation of a diasporic subject.

By embracing Jazz, Matussem is set in a continuous process of transculturation; he imagines a "home" that can accommodate discrepancy, tumult, chaos which is not part of thestatic traditional Jordanian lifestyle. He embraces the discordance that the house whichis "always filled with the thunder of Matussem's drumming, Jazz music, and heated Arabic of visiting relatives and Old Country friends" (Abu-Jaber 33). Matussem's love of Jazz is a healing factor. It is through Jazz that he can bring together pieces of his shattered memories of home. His daughters find possibility in diasporic identity, which was assumed as instable, fluid and independent. Subsequently there is no static ethnic identity or essential Other.

Indeed, Matussem does not approach any specific nation as his fixed home to which he longs and belongs but he finds a way to consider the world his home albeit not aware of the discriminatory and alienating forces that surround his daughters. His youngest daughter, Melvina, identifies her father's displacement as a feature of his personality. Matussem's state of loss and disorientation is not singly experienced: his daughters suffer as well. The loss of their mother dominates the daughters' interactions with members of their family, such as their Aunt Fatima, and their community at large. The loss of the mother in the novel signifies the loss of roots and the sense of belonging. Like their father whose awkward relationship with the American society is manifested throughout the work, Jemorah and Melvina are orphans and represent the migratory subject as an orphan figure away from the mother land. Both girls struggle to understand their place within a predominantly White society, especially after losing their maternal connection to it. Jemorah and Melvina feel lost and disoriented when disconnected from the mother figure ; they show discomfort in their homeland, America, and are victimized to their partial belonging to Arab origins.*Arabian Jazz* shows the different choices granted to the

characters, the Rammoud members, to construct a new sense of home, not in Jordan but in the diaspora. Matussem shows comfort in diaspora and rejects fixity of home. He creates his own home where both Jordan and America are mingled assuming that Jazz is an encompassing open home for all people regardless of their nationalities or races. He sees Jazz as a space where he "could see it all when he was playing. He was at home, at last truly home" (Abu-Jaber 352).

Jemorah and Melvina develop an incessant endeavour to be American, however, they find themselves limited by their aunt's rigid education based on Arab traditions and the sense of hostility, rejection and alienation that American society proffers. Nevertheless, home in this novel is not treated in the denotative definition as a nation but as an identity. Home is not a national or cultural space ; it is instead an individual zone where a person develops his own understanding and consciousness of his self. Rosemary George points out:"home is a way of establishing difference in terms of patterns of inclusion and exclusion" (2). She joins Said's argument: if roots are a conservative myth, then all the homesickness is fiction. She wonders whether a postcolonial subject should look for ways to move beyond home (the mother land) to resist and unlearn the seductive pleasures of belonging (199).

The Rammoud sisters, Jemorah and Melvina, both born and lived in the United States, try to find a place in their society without being harassed by Arab negative connotations. Jemorah works as a credit clerk. She feels alienation and finds difficulty in communication with other American people because of her innate sense of otherness. On the other hand, Melvina is a head nurse who suffers daily from the American gaze vested in her racist boss Portia and tends to reject ethnicity seeing it as an immediate factor to Othering. Both sisters find themselves Othered by their community and unable to come to terms with the hyphenation that connects Arab origins to American nationality. Matussem

shows satisfaction in the diaspora unlike the Arab immigrants of the first and second wave who used to suffer from cultural discrimination and loss. Fatima's view of "home" is torn between the original and the host country. Melvina and Jemorah's sense of belonging to Jordan stems from their aunt's insistence on clinging to origins. Aunt Fatima tries to emphasize that "a good woman does not leave her home" (15). In fact, she has a limited definition of home that makes it impossible to feel safe in belonging to America. She still adopts a dual mythical conception of Jordan and Palestine as a united homeland due to the intertwining history to which she belongs but can never return to. Fatima's experience with the concept of home is slightly paradoxical and covered with hesitance and fear.

Fatima develops an antagonistic relationship with her origins and native land. It is true that she longs for them and still maintains Palestinian traditions and language but she never intends to go back to Palestine again. When living in Palestine, it happened that she witnessed the burial of four alive new-born girls when her refugee family could not afford to feed and take care of them. Therefore, Fatima always relates "home" to loss, psychic trauma, and undesirable memories. She constantly considers her homeland as a source of terrifying disastrous experiences. In fact, Fatima seems to find safety in America but she is never ready to be Americanized or adopt any American tradition except the Palestinian ones, "she wanted what the Americans had, but at the same time, she would never relax her hold on herself. It was not appropriate to mingle" (Abu-Jaber 36). Avtar Brah wants to say that the concept of border, in its physical concrete meaning, symbolizes cultural, racial, and social hierarchies. The geographical separation from the land of origins also entails a psychological split and characterizes the diasporic displacement that covers the immigrants' life in America (15). This situation can be clearly seen in Jemorah and Melvina's sense of dislocation in their native land. They feel that there is no specific space in which they can accommodate their ideas and projects. They are simply in the limbo

between Matussem's rejection of the need to belong, and their aunt's desire "to have that land to call home" (Abu - Jaber 339).

Being torn between two distinct concepts of home has been a conflicting subject between Jemorah and Melvina's Irish mother and their Jordaneo-Palestinian aunt Fatima who keeps telling them that when they grow up, they will "come back home soon, come back to Old Country, marry the handsome Arab boys and make for us grandsons" (Abu-Jaber 77). However, that very same night, their mother would tuck them into bed and say:" your home is here. Oh, you will travel, I want you to. But you always know your home is here" (Abu-Jaber 78). Hence, the girls are left with two distinct meanings of home : between "here" and "there" where their sense of loss and displacement intensifies.

In contrast to Matussem's conception of mutative fluid home, his wife taught her daughters that they should learn about their place and cherish its atmosphere just like having an intimate bond with a companion. Their relatives in Jordan also emphasize this idea of home as a single fixed place by insisting on the girls that America is not a safe place for young girls. It is not their right place and "the mirage would someday melt and they would be back in the family home where they belonged"(Abu-Jaber 99). Both sisters cannot find a place in Jordan or America because they are considered as outsiders in both spaces. Anzaldua points out that we can find home from the knowledge of the inner self. Melvina and Jemorah are both hybrid subjects. Anzaldua refers to hybrid subjects as "both native to the Americas and with non- Western, multiple identities" (5).

Discriminatory forces and racial prejudices are perpetual in the U.S society. The unwelcoming neighbourhood and difficult childhood are what characterize the Rammoud sisters' presence in the United States. They endure and understand, at an early age, their positioning as racial and cultural Others in Euclid. Through Jemorah's and Melvina's

childhood recollections, readers of *Arabian Jazz* recognize the contradictory and often impossible task of achieving "authentic" Americanness. As a young schoolgirl, Jemorah is insulted and teased by her classmates. These episodes in her childhood mark Jemorah and make her aware of her difference:

> The other children taunted Jem because of her strange name, her darker skin. They were relentless, running wild, children of the worst poverty, the school bus the only place they had an inkling of power. She remembered the sensation of their hands on her body as they teased her, a rippling hatred running over her arms, legs, through her hair. They asked her obscene questions, searched for her weakness, the chink that would let them into her strangeness. (Abu-Jaber 92-3)

Jemorah has been treated as an outsider from the beginning of her interaction with American subjects, especially at school where the pupil starts being aware of his difference and capacities. Her experience is tainted with the pain of being discarded and labelled as undesirable. The trauma of alienation at an early age accompanies Jemorah for the rest of her life and stresses her excessive sense of humiliation. Silence is her only arm and solace. That also reminds us of Spivak's question: can the subaltern speak? The subaltern is not only related to the lowest class but to the one who is unable, under some circumstances, to speak, to voice his ideas or to defend himself like Jemorah. Traumatic memories of childhood make Jemorah unwilling to step back to the past to search for her inner self. Thus, she is in a way joining her father's rejection of the past and living in the present.

Going back to the physical aspect of one's identity, Jemorah grows aware of her difference from her Arab face and her strange name. Her face and name are the first identifications of who she is. She starts to internalize her difference from other pupils. The incessant series of provocations and annoyances that she encounters daily on the school bus gives insight into the ways that all ethnic minorities face their difference and experience racialized alienation in the United States. Jemorah's inability to face or defend herself against the pupil's annoyance makes her hate herself, her ethnicity, and her national

belonging. In short, she starts exploring her alienation and otherness as there "was no one to bear witness to her pain" (Abu-Jaber 93).

Through bearing pain in silence, Jemorah confirms the pupils' insults that she is a monster and an outsider. She decides not to confront them because she recognizes and accepts her otherness. Jemorah's violent experiences in America confirm Anzaldua's view the U.S. society as "mired in discrimination where multiple lines of oppression and exclusion cross over the body of migratory subject" (17). Jemorah is the offspring of a migrant couple and bears the legacy of marginalization put on the borderland of class, race and culture ; she declares: "I was afraid in plain sight for all to see. The secret I tried to conceal was that I was not normal, that I was not like the others. I felt alien, I knew I was alien" (Abu-Jaber 56).

While this social exchange might suggest the existence of a homogenous category of real Americans whose cynicism over the ethnic Other continually happens, Abu- Jaber's work exposes the artificiality of this category. Jemorah's feelings of un-belonging and of being an outsider in the small city ofEuclid seems to remain a blueprint till her adulthood. As her life moves forward, seemingly without purpose, she longs for finding a meaning, a purpose, and a space, precisely a home to which she belongs. She realizes that to be an American is not simply determined by an American birth certificate. There is a poignant moment in the novel where she yelled at her father saying that "there is only so much you can do to become American!" (Abu-Jaber 106). Jemorah sees that the process of Americanizing immigrants is not that easy and knows that Americanness is an ideal far from reach. Besides, she assumes that difference is a source of weakness and alienation whereas Matussem sees it as "a feature of his personality which has so far proven the strength and an asset in the diaspora" (98). Jemorah has somehow inherited Matussem's refusal of committing to a fixed space where racism and ethnocentricity prevail.

Through analysing Jemorah's aimlessness and social alienation, Abu -Jaber introduces Jemorah as a racialized half-American heroine whose environment, cultural and ethnic influence her self-image. This makes her more hardworking and perseverant, something irrelevant and inadequate in the eyes of her American bosses. Indeed, Jemorah's continual attempts make up her otherness. The will to belong to nowhere or no one are traits inherited from Matussem. Jemorah leads an empty life without projection to have a family of her own or belong to Palestine, Jordan or America. In fact, the only commitment she has is her job which she eventually quits in order to be liberated from social constraints.

Jemorah's will to liberation through resigning from her job is one of her chief priorities to escape commitments as well as her white boss's gaze. The author hints at the relationship between Jemorah and the other ethnic workers with the White American boss, Portia Porschman. That relatioship reflects the traditional Self and Other, Superior/Inferior, master/slave. Jemorah is so afraid of interacting with Portia that she feels reluctant to inform her of her decision to avoid her anger. In the novel, Portia is characterized as the stepmother archetype and presented as "one of the toughest women Jem had ever seen" (Abu-Jaber 134). Portia's authority inhibits not only Jemorah but also the other ethnic women who work under her administration. She symbolizes abusive capitalist practices that America is pertinent to over employees. Steven Salaita too recognizes this hold and comments on the metaphor of the hospital as prison where freedom is limited (145). Throughout the novel, Salaita argues that the hospital acts metaphorically as an imprisoning social environment for Jemorah. She has tried numerous times to quit but has hopelessly bent to the intimidation of Portia, noting each time that the entire clerical staff seems eternally bound to the machinery of the office, under Portia's thumb (159).

The "imprisoning" environment, to borrow Salaita's term, is not just applied at hospital but can be traced in Jemorah's psychological state throughout the novel. Imprisonment is also related to Anzaldua's borderlands where both focus on the social dimension of imprisonment limited by its omission of the economic and physical aspects of psychological and emotional confinement (119). In this respect, Salaita comments on Jemorah's metaphoric constraints through staying imprisoned in the social and political ideologies validated by the superior state. Jemorah is treated in relation to her race and ethnicity while her social contributions at work are usually unrecognized or minimized by her boss due to racism. Jemorah's situation is applied to the prisoner, no matter how hard he does to change his label as guilty; no one would recognize his efforts.When she realizes that imprisonment starts getting unbearable, Jemorah finally decides to confront firmly her boss and maintain her intention to leave the job, the site of her torment. The quotation below reflects an anti-Arab racism in its Orientalist dimension:

> Your mother met your father in her second year [of college] and she just wanted attention. This man, he couldn't speak a word of our language, didn't have a real job. It seemed like three days after she met that man they were getting married. A split second later she was pregnant. I know for a fact her poor mother, your grandmother, had to ask for a picture of the man for her parish priest to show around to prove he wasn't a "Negro". Though he might as well have been, really, who could tell the difference, the one lives about the same as the Other. (Abu-Jaber 293-294)

Jemorah's confrontation with her boss opens up justifications that lay behind Portia's despise and contempt for her. Jemorah finds out that Portia used to know her parents and now she can understand why Portia used to criticize her language and attitudes. When Portia points out Matussem's ignorance of English, she puts it as a parameter of assimilation. The language here is the first step towards being accepted and that confirms Anzaldua's premise of language as a medium that crosses borderlines.

It is also worthy to note Portia's juxtaposition of Matussem with "Negro" which get us back again to the problem of Arab racial categorization. Matussem is previously assumed to be the Other; a Negro or not, he stands for attributes of primitivism and ignorance whereas the White, his wife, represents independence, enlightenment, and success. Portia stands in front of Jemorah just as the "Self" faces the "Other"; she still maintains the paradigms of racial discrimination even for an American citizen. Portia's harsh assault signifies Spivak's epistemic violence. What we retain from such an encounter is the persistent classical American project of classifying Arabs in terms of race or skin colour.

As it has already been mentioned, Arabs are not an homogeneous race and can never be unified under a single racial label. Andrew Shryock asserts that Arabs are not uniformly White or Black and this racial categorization is not a safe parameter. Indeed, Arabs look like a large variety of people as compared to other races: Black, White, and Asian categories. He also contradicts the fact of considering an American citizen of Arab origins who belongs to three or four generations as an Arab. He exemplifies an American descending from Syrian or Lebanese origins of white skin to be identified as Arab "White". Another odd example is vested in an American who springs from Sudanese immigrant is identified as "black" Arab whereas a Yemeni who migrated to the United States from India, where his family has lived for three generations, as "Asian" Arab, yet all of them pertain to the same origins "Arab". (92 -93). Shryock decisively reveals the boundaries and superficiality of American classifications and rediculizes the fact of determining one's identity in relation to the colour of skin, ideas that Shrylock considers outdated and absurd to be related to the heterogeneous nature of Arab - American communities.

Eventually, Jemorah can never stand staying under Portia's administration after this encounter and she may never accept Portia's racist/ racialized views of her dark skin as "tainted or roughly dirty" (Abu-Jaber 313). Portia's despise of dark skin harks back to early American racial categorization on the basis of skin colour. Jemorah rejects Portia's equation of whiteness equals Americanness and sees that this extremist premise strays away from the principle of the "melting pot". When she rejects Portia's authoritative behaviour and racial views, Jemorah can overturn all the images of racism she endures in her life and served in her self-enclosure and self-hatred. This encounter helps Jemorah recognize the limits of Americanness and the limits of her identity construction in the country known of immigration and mixed-race. Jemorah can now come to terms with her traits of weakness: her skin colour, Arab face, her name, and her memories of humiliation and rejection. Now, she can comprehend the motive behind being rejected from the first contact with American subjects and can finally recognize, accept, and celebrate her difference or rather her otherness.

Interestingly enough, Jemorah and Portia's encounter brings forth the previous racism agenda in America and re-examines the relationship between race and the dominant Western ideologies of exclusion. As Michelle Hartman comments, "rather than negotiate an in-between status, Jemorah here claims a black identity" (155). Before this encounter, Jemorah was in need to Bhabha's Third Space or the grey zone to justify her presence in both cultures, however, she changes her mind and refrains from giving justification of being American by birth. Instead, Jemorah accepts her otherness and declares her belonging to the "Black heritage that embraces all outsiders" (Abu-Jaber 336). Jemorah is not African, neither is Jordan nor Palestine located in the African continent, but she shows a sense of solidarity to the largest community which suffered racism at the hand of White Americans. Jemorah rejects ambivalence and duality. She turns towards more multiplicity

in carving out her new identity.

Subsequently, Jemorah not only accepts her dark skin and relates it to the Black community, she also tries to re-fashion her identity on this basis. Racially speaking, she finds similarities between Blackness and Arabness as both Othered and alienated. This new equation seems to gain more significance by the disastrous events of 9/11 of which Arab terrorists were responsible. Arabs were first alienated and then victimized and stigmatized.Abu -Jaber *Arabian Jazz*, was published well before 9/11 but it foreshadows Arab impending marginalization. This is not the only novel that treated the situation of Arab immigrants and Arab-Americans' challenges in the American society but it subtly put into questions idealistic premises starting from the "melting pot" principle, to democracy and harmony between racial and ethnic communities.

In Ethnic and Racial Studies, Nadine Naber wrote an article on Arab "invisibility" within American political and public discourse standpoint. Arab-American's invisibility or alienation is related to their classification as Black. Arab-American researchers and sociologists try to understand the extent of this categorization and question the binary of non-White and non-Black. The question of Arab racial categorization is open and heterogeneous just like the amalgamation and multiplicity that the term Arab connotes. The diasporic consciousness of Arab- American subjects enables them to be identified with other ethnic minorities classified on the basis of skin colour. Such openness to other immigrant communities explains the change in dealing with such a topic after 9/11 as far as the position of Arab-Americans in the American society is concerned.

In *Arabian Jazz*, Abu-Jaber's Arab American characters confirm what Naber suggests of interaction with other colour communities who show sympathy and solidarity with communities which endure invisibility and marginalization in the United States. Abu-

Jaber has chosen Black identity for Jemorah to show solidarity between ethnic communities beyond their geographical homelands, cultures, and colours. Maybe this is why Abu -Jaber has chosen Jazz than any other musical genre. Jazz started with Black people and gained them fame then it overspread across America and Europe to unite all people rega rdless of their color, ethnicity or religion under one banner of art and solidarity. Through *Arabian Jazz*, Abu-Jaber gives a vivid image of one facet of Jordanian immigrants' experiences in America and puts the spotlight on Arab immigrants' psychological aspect towards their hybridity, double culture, and distorted Orientalist stereotypes. Her work helps in presenting the reader with immigrant narratives which reflect Middle East immigrants' experiences and problems. Such works have enriched contemporary American literary traditions. Abu-Jaber emphasizes that cultural hybridity is important in constructing a fluid rather than fixed image of home in the diaspora. Moreover, she asserts that home is not necessarily the country of origins and is not necessarily inherited by the coming generation but is a matter of choice whether to belong or not belong.

Contesting Ethnicity and Hyphenation in Halaby's *West of the Jordan*

The second section of this chapter is devoted to Laila Halaby's *West of the Jordan* also explores hybridized realities of Arab immigrants in the U.S. as well as the discriminatory forces on the basis of gender. This novel is Halaby's first trial to write and eventually gained her the PEN / Beyond Margins Award. As far as the form is concerned, *West of the Jordan* iscomposed of four parts each of which is entitled by one of the female narrator's name who narrates her story. Through a polyphonic narration, Halaby conveys confessional and confidential voices that give readers the impression of reading a series of letters of travel writings or personal journal entries filled with lyricism. The four narrators

of the book are the cousins: Hala, Soraya, Khadija and Mawal. They tell their stories in terms of experiences of diaspora and gender-related problems with patriarchal strict norms within religious and cultural outlooks that restrict Arab women's agency.

Technically speaking, the novel's plot presents characters with multiple facets and experiences, and thus, each chapter introduces readers to intense stories always told with feminine delicateness and subtlety. It is also interesting to notice that, despite the fact that the four girls belong to the same family, they have different backgrounds and personal specificities which make them have distinct attitudes towards their condition as hybrid immigrant subjects. Hala, Soraya and Khadija represent the second-generation hybrid subjects. They experience cross- cultural influences in America. Things differ for the fourth character, Mawal because she strives to achieve the Third Space between the Arab and the American culture via her on-going negotiation of her hybrid hyphenated identity. Due to their "in-between" situation, those female characters have no choice except living in the border zone or in Bhabha's term the Third Space between Arab and American cultures to escape racial categorization, obstinacy, and alienation.

The main characters of the novel: Soraya and Khadija were born and grew up in America, but their parents are Arab immigrants who still cling to Arab conservative traditions and Islamic values. These girls do not mean that America is completely alien to them, since many members of their family who live there end up influencing their worldview and beliefs. Each of these female characters positions herself differently against her diasporic background of the fact that they are from the same ethnic group and from the same family. This heterogeneity of Arab experiences in the diaspora stems from the multiplicity of individual experiences in opposition to the general unifying community's experiences. It is true that Halaby joins Abu-Jaber and practically most of Arab-American women writers in their project of resistance writings against Orientalist stereotypes which

distorts the image of the Arab women. They defy outdated Arab fundamentalist and patriarchal authorities in an effort to reconcile splintered American identities and cultural challenges of bearing Arab legacy in diaspora beyond Western racial discrimination. Moreover, they seek to emphasize the importance of women's agency in terms of their sexual identities through achieving freedom to re-construct their identities to understand their hyphenation, hybridity, difference, and cultural duality.

The concept of "home" is also prevailing in this novel and emerges as multifaceted and complicated. It is usually related to pain, trauma and exile especially when the first and second generation of immigrant Palestinian parents and their Americanized children reflect on their home differently: the first generation assert their Arabness while the second generation prefer to stick to their Americanness. In both cases, home remains a complex site that encompasses memories and experiences of exile, rootedness, and diaspora. Said has commented on the exilic and fluid nature of the Palestinian life and their understanding of home saying that "a life of exile moves according to different calendar, and is less seasonal and settled than life at home" ("Reflections on Exile" 186). As Said has clarified, exile has become a criterion and a legacy that both feature the everlasting process of inheritance in the Palestinian diaspora.

Khadija is Halaby's first example of second generation Arab immigrants. Her parents are both Palestinians, who due to their radical ideas find difficulty to cope with the American society. Khadija's relationship with her conservative rigorous parents is usually tense. For her, the U.S. is her homeland. She was born in California and has never gone to Palestine which is her parents' native land. However, the fact that she does not show much interest in her Arab origins does not mean that she is strongly attached to the United States either. Since she does not feel comfortable with many aspects of the American culture and lifestyle ; Khadija behaves as straddling in between two cultures with which she does not

feel any strong identification. This situation of being uncomfortable with both spaces has often been treated by Arab - American writers and literary critics. The characters of bicultural upbringing seek to maintain Arab identity without accepting patriarchal values or suffering from exotic otherness or social marginalization.

One's name sometimes denotes the first dimension of identity, origins, or religion. From the very beginning of Khadija's chapter, we find a girl who rejects her name. Khadija needs to explain the meaning of her name in relation to Islam, "in Islam, Khadija was the Prophet Muhammad's wife. She was much older than he was and had a lot of money. He was said to have loved her very much" (Halaby 36). Khadija dislikes her name, yet her parents justify the choice of this name to the long life and love that real Khadija lived. However, right after this, Khadija is not convinced of the value of this name as long as it sounds different from those of her friends: "In America my name sounds like someone throwing up of falling off a bicycle. If they can get the first part of it right, the "Kha" part, it comes out like clearing your throat after eating ice cream. Usually they say Kadijah, though, which sounds clattering clumsy" (Halaby 36).

The immediate contrast Khadija makes between the nicely religious origin of her name and the humiliating way that Americans have to pronounce it seems almost like someone is deceived of the beauty, an illusion about something while the reality reflects the opposite. Khadija would be more satisfied if her namesake would symbolize a value or an idealistic view than a mere old name of an old rich Arab woman in pre-Islamic period. Besides, in spite of her attempts to change her name into an another lyrical, poetic Arab name like Lana or Nagham she finds herself inclined towards inventing a rather Westernized name that goes in tune with her American identity into Diana or Catherine for example. Nevertheless, she finds difficulty in naming herself as such because Western names do not reflect Arab faces, so she desperately goes back to Khadija because it fits in

her dark physical Arabness.

Khadija has probably chosen a Western name because she knows that Americans would not pronounce any of the Arabic names exactly as they are supposed to sound. In addition to this, by wishing to have a name that is not Arabic, Khadija also wants to feel more integrated, assimilated into the American community. If Khadija does not already feel like an Arab Khadija and is not identified as such by the others, so how are things going to be with Diana, the new Americanized name? Consequently, what Khadija asks Roberta can be interpreted as a request for help in searching her own identity. Therefore, right from the beginning of Khadija's narration in *West of the Jordan*, it is possible to see that she does not feel comfortable with one of the most noticeable and significant symbols of one'scultural identity, which is her name.

Let us assume that Khadija is not dark skinned and has no facial traits that make people around her guess to which ethnic community she belongs, her name remains a hint that reflects her ethnicity. American people who get to socialize with Khadija will immediately guess to which ethnic group she belongs or at least to recognize her religious orientation.Subsequently, Khadija would like to erase her name to erase her otherness due to belonging to the Arab community and think of naming herself Diana to get the chance of enjoying Western privileges of acceptance and appreciation rather than the alienation and exoticism that Khadija connotes.The intention to change one's name that reflects his ethnicity elicit this sense of alienation, this very name distances the immigrant subject from integration in the American society. Historically speaking, using rather Americanized names instead of the Arab ones goes back to the first wave of Arab immigrants in the United States. As it has been mentioned in the historical background section, Arab immigrants tend to name themselves and their children in Americanized names in order to

erase ethnicity, and eventually escape racism.

There are reports of immigrants changing their names at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, when masses of them arrived in the United States through Ellis Island. Dinitia Smith declares that "workers from immigrant-aid societies who helped the new arrivals may have suggested that they change their names to simplify or "Americanize" them. Certainly, immigrants changed their own names after they arrived" (Smith 32). Therefore, more than a century ago, Arab immigrants accepted replacing their Arab names by more Western American names to get jobs and achieve integration. Changing names to escape ethnicity is perpetual in contemporary times when Khadija follows the same path of herancestors.

Contrary to the first wave immigrants' problems with naming and cultural differences, the following waves which "began in 1967 and continues to this day" (Ludescher 94) are interested in preservingthe Arabness of the native land's cultures. This means that they do not necessarily reject the American culture, but they keep up with what happens in the Arab world, usually participating in political discussions, intellectual forums and events. As Tanyss Ludescher argues, this third wave of immigration is characterized by the formation of Arab-American organizations and by the rejection of "negative stereotypes of Arabs in the popular press and develop hyphenated identity" (94). As regards hyphenation Lisa Majaj suggests that "as Americans we seek to integrate the different facets of our selves, our experiences and our heritages into a unified whole. But the schism in our vision often affects our balance: as we turn our gaze in two directions at once, we sometimes lose sight of the ground beneath our feet" (272). Thus, Majaj's quotation explains Khadija's ambivalence where she oscillates between two cultures and becomes out of step with the current tendency of Arab immigration in the United States. Diasporic groups present differences among them as individuals within the same ethnic

group.

There is a passage in the novel in which Khadija gets aware of her difference; she wants to be regarded as an American at home while she is regarded as an Arab outside. She argues with her mother exactly over intergenerational problems: it is roughly the difference between you and us. According to Khadija, the fact that many people, including her mother, do not consider her a full-fledged American subject is extremely disturbing her. During one of the frequent quarrels that she has with her mother, where she gets really mad, Khadija presents some arguments in order to prove that she is American, and not Arab. She says: "I can't speak Arabic right, I've never even been there, and I don't like all of those dancing parties. I like stories and movies. I can be American and still be your daughter" (Halaby 74). Here, we can notice that Khadija does not see any connections between the Arab world, the source of her otherness, and herself because it is a place that she does not even know. All the information she has about it comes from other people's perceptions of it, people who probably are not part of her generation. Accordingly, the way Khadija sees Palestine does not have any strong connections to make her feel Arab. Indeed, Khadija wants to develop her individual identity away from communal ethnicity. She feels that she looks like her mother but does not think like her; briefly, she wants to assert her difference.

As far as generational ethnic clashes are concerned, Braziel and Mannur emphasize that the difference between generations can lead to a gap in terms of origins and cultures since the second and the third generation can approach the ancestors' culture as a part of familial folklore (145). The experiences of the following generations are totally different from those of the ancestors' because of the difference in handling America and its culture and language as native instead of a mere host land. Khadija's ambivalent aspect of her parents' memories of childhood in Palestine and Jordan, pointed out by Braziel and Mannur, is extremely important, since some individuals from the younger generations,

such as Khadija, do not havetheir personal memories about the places of origin, because they simply were not born there (148). All the memories to which they have access are constructed by the older generations, and therefore, the contact that Khadija has with the Arab culture is always mediated by her parents and relatives who actually cherish these memories. Consequently, the way she relates to this culture and the importance that it has in her life is obviously different from the people who have, or had, a more direct contact with it.

Memory plays a major role in linking the immigrants with their motherland. Mary Chamberlain emphasizes the importance of collective memory. According to the critic, besides the individual characteristics, memories also contain those all important traces from an older past, those deeper levels of values, attitudes, and behaviours, clues to a collective memory (186). This collective memory is what creates coherence and a sense of continuity that can be found in diasporic communities. Regarding this issue, Michael Pollak shows that, at first, memory might be understood as something individual. Hehad already underlined that memory must also, or mainly, be understood as a collective and social phenomenon, that is, as a phenomenon which is collectively constructed and submitted to fluctuations, transformations and changes (201).

The changing aspect of the structure of traditional memory and its understanding as a continuously constructed phenomenon can immediately relate to the diasporic condition itself, which is also something fragmented, collective, fluctuating, and in permanent transformation. Still in the context of collective memory, Michael Pollak also mentions the importance of events indirectly experienced. According to him, these are events in which the subject has not always participated, but they acquired such a projection in their imagination (202). Apparently, it is almost impossible for anyone to know if they have participated in it or not. If we go further, along with these events indirectly experienced are

the events which are not situated within the time-space of a person or group.

The fact of showing no attachment or interest in collective memory of Palestine before Israeli occupation makes Khadija think that this entity called Palestine exists just in the minds of her ancestors. She justifies her detachment with anything Palestinian to the extent that she has never visited Palestine before to develop personal memories of this lost land. She shows no desire to get in contact with any of her cousins back in Palestine's West Bank. The collective memory, which is accessible to people who have not actually experienced the events, as Pollak states, is not appealing enough for Khadija for being dramatic, often mingled with violence, psychological traumas, desperate journeys of refugees, and constant displacement. Although collective memory is present in Khadija's life, as Chamberlain argues, it contains traces of older attitudes, values, and behaviours ; Khadija unavoidably has no contact with it or cannot notice its presence. Collective memories are responsible for maintaining the coherence and continuity of any diasporic community (185), since Khadija does not feel any sense of belonging to the Arab community, then it is impossible for her to relate tothese memories.

Showing detachment and lack of interest in collective memory entails the new generations' will to be independent to develop their own memories away from their parents and grandparents. In this respect, Braziel and Mannur highlight the importance ofunderstanding such a detachment which is not a betrayal of their ethnicity and culture but a will towards individuality beyond the communal interests (8). They write about the fact that young people may not want to look back, as their parents many times want them to do, simply because when they look back, they do not have the same view as their parents. The critics come to the conclusion that diasporic consciousness that the new generation subjects develop as well as their hybrid sense of subjectivity stray away from their ancestors' nostalgic desire to go back home to come in termswith their lost subjectivity.

The new generation sees that self-actualization is not determined by getting back to the country of their ancestors but to search for their sense of self in America in the light of hybridity, heterogeneity, and multiplicity. Braziel and Mannur believe that hybridity, multiplicity and heterogeneity still characterize the situation of many diasporic communities and individuals (9). Therefore, one should not expect diasporic experiences to be homogeneous and predictable. To examine these problematic dynamics, diaspora studies need to move beyond theorizing how diasporic identities are constructed and consolidated, and must ask, how are these diasporic identities practiced, lived, and experienced? So, according to Brazil and Mannur, it is only through the daily experiences of diaspora that its heterogeneity and the way it operates can get clearer.

Through Khadija's experiences, it is possible to see that being a hyphenated subject seems to be a burden. She is always trying to make people see that she is American because in her view she has more than a reason to be considered an American girl. She appears to be tired of frequently facing situations in which people express their opinion about her as a foreign girl, outsider and not American. She mentions that this happens at school more often, and she specifically talks about Mr. Napolitano, her social studies teacher in the following terms: "he expects me to know more than the other kids about Arab world because my parents are not American, though there are lots of other kids in the class who aren't American themselves. I want to scream at him that I am just as American as anyone here (Halaby 74).

In terms of Khadija's view of her own nationality, what is problematic is that she does not seem to accept the Third Space that she can be both American and Arab, and therefore, she wants to declare that she is only American. In one of the arguments she has with her mother, Khadija says: "You are Palestinian. I am American" (Halaby 74), to which her mother replies: "No! No daughter of mine is American" (Halaby 75). Here, it is possible to

notice both the resistance of Khadija's mother to accept that she becomes American and Khadija's resistance to identify her origins as Palestinian. Therefore, both the mother and daughter are trapped and lost in classifications that in their views are mutually exclusive. They are not able to see that, instead, these two conditions can contribute to and enrich each other. As regards the politics of difference, Minha also asserts the possibility of appropriating an in-between space as a new model for hybrid identities that opens gates for the negotiation of differences; she argues that "we cannot make a clear dividing line between 'I and not I', between depth and surface, or vertical and horizontal identity, between us here and them over there" (71).

In terms of the clash between generations, Radhakrishnan focuses on diasporic locations and diasporic subjectivity in the formation of diasporic subjects. The critic assumes that the generational conflicts are inevitable and predictable as time changes; however, the gap of this conflict widens in the diaspora between conservative parents and Americanized children. He suggests:

> If the formulaic justification of parental wisdom is that the parent "has been there before", the formula does not apply here . . . The tensions between the old and new homes create the problem of divided allegiances that the two generations experience differently. The very organicity of family and the community, displaced by travel and relocation, must be renegotiated and redefined. The two generations have different starting points and different givens. (206)

From the quotation above, it is possible to conceive that the reason for the problems evolving between generations lies in the difference of experiences in diaspora and the refusal to understand each other's opinions about subjectivities. Radhakrishnan emphasizes the importance of shared experiences as part of their own collective memory. The absence of the Third Space that unites their memories and experiences on one common ground justifies the misunderstanding that leads to potential rejection of ethnicity altogether. In the novel when the new generation characters attempt to look back to the past they do not find

Palestine but images of their memories in America. They think what their parents lose when they severed relation with their homeland is no way their own loss.

The parents assume that their children do not take their ethnicity and history seriously, they regard such an attitude as a deviation and a threat for the continuity and authenticity of their state of being, identity, and history. The parents keep on imposing their memories, lifestyle, traditions even food and ceremonies on their children who tend to reject this heritage and get connected instead to the atmosphere with which they are acquainted.Some ceremonies and traditions seem to be outdated and eventually despised and ridiculized by the new generation. The instance that Khadija proffered in the novel is an example of the whole generation's discomfort with the past. None of the parents or their children accept to let go their culture and identity and stand in opposition to each other; this opposition is mainly ideological and cultural. There is no common ground that embraces conservative strict rules of Palestinian families and the freedom of thought and life that their children aim to achieve. This extremism in handling both America and Palestine leads to a significant clash and impossibility of implementing Anzaldua's *la Mestiza* where antagonistic cultures and identities are negotiated and tolerated.

There is an instance in the novel that is worth analysing. Khadija quarrels with her mother over Arabian nights and Palestinian fables. She declares that these stories are folklore, outdated and have no relation to reality. Khadija prefers American movies which tell stories of the society she is familiar with; however, Khadija shows a deep interest not in the movie or the audio-visual dimension but in the storytelling itself. This idea leads us to conclude that the new generation Arab-American subjects' intention to reject their Arab traditions does not stem from their hatred, despise or rejection but from the inability to disclose their Arab cultural and national heritage or literally ignore their significance, or maybe they are badly transmitted. What Khadija actually misses is to get in connection

with the rich heritage of Arab storytelling. Being afraid of origins is what makes Khadija distances herself not from a communit y, or a nation but from a whole Arab cultural heritage.

In fact, Khadija suffers from several restrictions throughout the novel. She does not feel comfortable in either spaces. No matter how eager and enthusiastic Khadija may be to embrace all American traditions and culture, she sometimes gets disappointed by the hypocrisy of the Western culture. She tries hard to erase the inner Arab she owns inside of her self but it is always there. This kind of ambivalence makes her, on the one hand, terrified by the American freedom and itsdifferent customs. On the other hand, she shows the same feeling towards her parents' conservative traditions and strict mentalities. If identification with the more traditional traits of the Arab culture seems appropriate to fill this gap that the American culture leaves in her, Khadija cannot feel a sense of belonging to her parents' culture because she is a second- generation immigrant and was not even born in Palestine. Therefore, Khadija is caught in - between two cultures where she belongs to neither and to which she does not identify. This situation of in-betweenness leaves her with a strong sense of loss and displacement.

Additionally, Khadija is living with a perpetual imbalance of powers concerning gender -related issues. Her father is a violent and abusive man who thinks that any alteration or break of the rules he sets is a direct threat to his masculine authority. He needs to make the patriarchal authority intact to guarantee his own position as a man and a father. Her father's authority is attributed to the authority of the Self over her mother's submission and obedience without conditions symbolizes the Other. Khadija rejects her burden of carrying the legacy and honour extension of the family. As a result of the tension she experiences daily at home, Khadija is inhibited by hesitation and fear. Commenting on Khadija's fear of belonging, family and the idea of Arabness itself, Abdelrazek very

appropriately argues that "fear governs Khadija's life, a great fear of the future, of the unknown, of her present as a misfit in both cultures, and more importantly of her father, whose abusive and aggressive attitude towards her is crucial in shaping her fragmented and displaced identity. Hers is a story of loss: loss of a homeland, of dignity, of self-confidence, and of dreams". (151-152). Khadija's fear and constant state of psychological displacement are mostly derived from her diasporic consciousness. This psychological displacement shows how diasporic issues can affect immigrants'identity and position in the world and how second generation immigrants are doubly influenced by their parents' dislocated condition since the input they receive from their parents tends to be extremely different from the input received from the cultural environment.

Homeland Memories: Toward a Compromise with the Past

Displaced second-generation Arab Americans are regarded as second-class citizens due to their hyphenation, a thing that makes them shift towards assimilation in order to step to first class to be fully Americans. This attempt interprets their effort to escape their oppressive past by standing in opposition to the sociocultural constraints that patriarchal Arab families still maintain. The latter also impose authority over their children, especially girls. In the pursuit of finding a more definite positioning in the midst of the patriarchal authority and American rejection, the female characters in the novel want to escape hybrid victimization in diaspora and rebel against fixed ideas. Unlike Khadija, her cousin Soraya, was born in Palestine, but moved to the United States with her parents when she was still very young. Living almost her entire life in America made Soraya feel more attached to the American culture than to the Arab one.

Contrary to Khadija who dreams of freedom and can never do something to achieve it, Soraya rebels against traditions and the very idea of Arabness. She considers herself as

sexually liberated and just cannot see the world in terms of binaries or exclusive relationships that impede her way towards freedom from the restrictions imposed by racialcategorization, ethnicity and nationalities, such as “Arab” or “American”. Halaby describes Soraya’s pride of being different in a passage: “Soraya is always depicted as “Americanized” and feels proud of being different from her mother Maysoon and her sisters’ Palestinian’s value system” (Halaby 24). However, when the novel unfolds, readers may notice that Soraya’s attitudes and behaviours interpret her aim towards an unattained Americanization. She is overwhelmed by a desire to get integrated into the American society; however, most of the Americans she usually deals with take her as an Arab. Soraya’s incessant efforts to reach assimilation are usually tainted by disappointment since the full assimilation is a myth, just a dream impossible to attain. A thing that makes her think seriously to direct her attention towards her Palestinian roots later in the novel.

Standing in defiance to strict patriarchal rules, Soraya rejects strict Arab traditions. She later finds out that the assumptions she has got about her-self, as a woman, are important to build her particular self-image away from rigid Arab traditions and values. Soraya knows she is an attractive girl and is aware that this attraction is often associated with the stereotyped exoticism that revolves around the image of Arab women. In this respect, she declares: “I have fire. Everyone knows it. They see it in my beautiful brown exotic eyes that I paint full of Maybelline kohl to turn my tears black. ‘She’s Arabian’ they say at my high school as I pass by them” (Halaby 24). At first, when reading how Soraya conceives herself, readers might think that she shows pride of her Arab origins flagrantly apparent in her Arab face. However, when it comes to her “Arabness,” or Arab traits, she aims to validate and reinforce the Western stereotypes of Arab women to confirm the authenticity of the Western gaze. She rather justifies the myths and misconceptions of Orientalist stereotypes that used to draw the boundaries between the East and the West.

Eventually, Soraya tries to see her Arabness through the eyes of the Americans, the Western gaze. When she discusses some probems in Arab countries with her classmates, they first show racial conceptions of her Arab origins.This attitude does not make her humiliated; on the contrary, she confirms and joins their mystifications. Even when they relate her to the Arabian stereotypes thinking that: "In her country they don't have furniture or dishwashers, only camels and oil" (Halaby 29), she shows no resistance. It is possible to conceive that Soraya appeals to the Orientalist stereotypes related to the Arab world, acting as if the Arab culture is only about Sahara, sheikhs, camels, and oil. In fact, Soraya's major aim is to convince primarily her-self, her family, and then her American surrounding mates of her metamorphosis from Arabness to Americanness. Surprisingly, she accepts insults of Arabs and acts as though she does not belong to this community just to convonce them that she doesno longer belong to the Arab community. Her family considers such a shift towards assimilation a betrayal to the whole Arab community. Her mother's violent reactions against Soraya's rebellion to conventions are not enough to make her change her attitudes. Soraya says: "my mother exploded the first time she heard about a story I told. 'You have to show the best of us, not the ugly lies'. But I let my ambassador sister and cousins do that while I talk ghetto slang" (Halaby 24). Soraya mocks her sister's illusion that Arab identity is a source of pride and shows no interest in being another "fool ambassador"(29) for the Arab community; consequently, she does not need to give a good image of the Arabs in the diaspora. Halaby portrays the contradictory dimentions that the hybrid subjects represent:

> My sister and cousins are the way my mother wishes I were and she is always comparing us and telling me what good girls they are and how I am just a headache . . . She can't accept that my way of being different is just as good as everyone else's way of being the same. I like to enjoy myself, unlike my sister Pauline who, despite her American name, is very conservative and believes that all answers lie in God's words and that suffering is good. (Halaby 25)

It is interesting to notice that Soraya associates liberation with embracing American

culture.Therefore, when Soraya shows difference and offence, she is, in her understanding, getting closer to the American culture and more distant from the Arab world.

A possible reason for the great distance between Soraya and the Arab culture is related to the absence of memories of her parents' homeland. Since the character moved to the United States when she was very young, Soraya has no memories of Palestine and has no cultural references of the Orient. This is why; she asserts her belonging to the most familiar: to America. In "Diaspora and Nation: Migration into Other Pasts", Andreas Husseyn treats the ulterior generations of immigrants, the case of Soraya and Khadija. The critic considers that they are different from those of the previous generations. She thinks that they do not view the memories related to their places of birth in the same way that her parents and grandparents do. Husseyn states:

> The traditional understanding of diaspora as loss of homeland and desire to return itself becomes largely irrelevant for the second and third generations who . . . are no longer conversant in language and culture of the country of their ancestors. Whether or not they were to describe themselves as diasporic subjects, the key problems lie in their relation to the national culture they live in rather than to the imaginary of roots in the culture of ancestors. It is primarily a problem of life in the present and the negotiation with the host culture. (162)

Different from what happens to the first-generation immigrants, the establishment of firm connections with the United States becomes much more important for Arab immigrants than the nurturing of the memories related to the Arab community.

The schism with the native land happens when connections with the host country are the fundamental points for Arab-American subjects. They are exactly how Soraya's life will be and how she will be viewed by the people who belong to the Arab community in the diaspora. Regarding this, Soraya states that "the older people all act the same way they did when they were home, which isn't fair in a lot of ways because they are in America now but they tell us we are not supposed to be living an American life" (Halaby 31). Different from the previous generations of immigrants, Soraya does not feel shame or the

loss of a country because in her present situation when she focuses on the present, and not on the past, she does not even consider that she has had a relation of belonging with a place other than the United States. She thinks, one cannot lose something that one never really had. Soraya's behaviour towards the Arab memories and culture is a source of conflicts between the girl and her mother, who believes her daughter was seduced by the American illusion, leaving her roots behind.

When Maysoon says that Soraya is not a "good daughter" (Halaby 65), the character's mother implies that a good daughter is the one who strictly follows conventions and applies strictly what is expected by the Arab culture. However, it is impossible for Soraya to have such a rebellious response to the matter of cultivating and appreciatingthe memories of her homeland since she has lived the greatest part of her life in the United States. It is also interesting to notice that Soraya blames her mother for having taken her to a distant country, very different from Palestine, and still expects her to cultivate strong attachments to her prior homeland.Similar to Khadija's case, for Soraya, the generation gap is a cause of gender conflicts between the female characters and their male parents.

The arguments developed by the theorists Braziel, Mannur and Radhakrishnan all show that belonging to different generations of immigrants strongly influences the ways in which the diasporic consciousness is perceived and experienced. Accordingly, this is a relevant aspect both for the analysis of Khadija and Soraya. However, there is an important difference between these two characters when it comes to generational issues. While Khadija complains about her parents' inability to understand the way she relates to the Arab and American cultures, Soraya takes a step further to criticise and rebel against her parents' attitudes. Soraya wonders why her mother cannot see anything beyond the Arab rules and traditions. According to Soraya, then, a possible reason for her mother's rigid behaviour is the fact that she does not know how good it is to exercise her freedom, and

therefore, she feels scared and prefers to stay away from it. Besides, Soraya’s declaration that she is "in between", in the previous quotation, refers to the fact that she has supposedly found a balance within this new space to which she belongs.

The second generation immigrants reject the rigid line between good and evil in the Arab culture which determines them either as a saint or a sinner. Regarding these classifications that end up confining people, and especially women, Soraya says: “I’m so sick of everything being *haram* or *halal*, but nothing in between. I am in between” (Halaby 117). Soraya denies binaries and reject extremities in favour of a more legible reality. By subverting stereotypes and renouncing labels, Soraya developsa sense of individualism to carve out a transnational identity that reaches the Third Space. In short, she re-fashions an identity of her choice. The antagonistic attitude she takes against Arab culture makes her believe she is going through a unique path away from the otherness that Arabness connotes. Soraya’s new path does not restrict her freedom within both the Arab and the American culture. Therefore, she has become aware of the hardships faced by Arab women and rejects the traditional cult of domesticity. Nevertheless, Soraya grows conscious of the otherness and limitation of ethnic minorities in America in spite of the propaganda of open opportunities given to all immigrant communities. She realizes that what America propagates for through movies is a project that does not include her or any other ethnic group.When she watches a movie or listens to pop music, Soraya tends to search for herself in both cultures but never finds a hint for her or any other ethnic minority. Halaby supports Soraya’s sense of exclusion by stating that: “plots are never favourable to minorities, and the presence of such characters in the mainstream storylines tends to be restricted to inexpressive roles or to villains that must be combated" (Halaby 96). Soraya goes further to claim that the tense cultural exclusion and victimization touch notably Arab community more than any other immigrant ethnic community.

On an intellectual level, one of the more implicit strategies of rejection is the systematic exclusion of Arab-Americans as hyphenated, not fully Arab subjects from the "American" project of assimilation. Arab-Americans are often victimized and alienated from the American political discourse though they do represent a recognized minority group. Until September 11th, Muslim and Arab-Americans's alienation reached a cultural level. They were completely absent from American popular progressive discourse. In "This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Colour", Moraga and Anzaldúa write about the discourse of multiculturalism whose aims are to "represent the wide array of diversity in the United States, yet ittends to exclude Arab-Americans in particular. In the non-progressive media", Moraga continues,"whenever Muslims were represented, they invariably appeared in the role of villains, terrorists and always as foreigners as Arabs, not in hyphenation Arab-Americans"(156).

Throughout *West of the Jordan*, Halaby attempts to show the importance of memory in the process of identity re-construction in the diaspora. She tells the stories of Arab immigrants related to the Arab community. When she narrates the Arab immigrants'stories, she gets in contact with the collective memory of her community. Memory helps immigrants' coherence of themselves and their hyphenated identities.

By the end of *West of the Jordan*, we find a shift towards exploring and appreciating the origins. This shift makes Halaby'sfemale characters build bonds once again with their Arab community. However, the integration that Soraya and Khadija need both in Palestine does not mean that they have suddenly become comfortable with the Arab rules and traditions. They are rather filled up with confusion and feeling of loss and displacement.Eventually, Halaby's female characters are considered as diasporic subjects staying in between cultures. These female characters pass through the realization that re-fashioning a hybrid identity is something impossible to be completely achieved.

Conclusively, they find out that they are relegated to displacement and loss in the midst of the Arab and the American different realities. However, even if the most prominent tone of the characters' narratives end up navigating two cultures drifted by loss and confusion, it is important to emphasize that multiple possibilities of re- fashioning their identity again are still available. The following chapter **"The Politics of Location In Indian Diaspora"** will tackle the issue of diaspora as a component of Indian cultural identity. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* and Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* demonstrate how Indian immigrants strive to reach a cultural location in the diaspora.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE POLITICS OF LOCATION IN INDIAN DIASPORA

Diaspora has occupied a significant position in socio-cultural studies. It has become a source of rich literary outputs mainly produced by non-native writers. A major argument of the diasporic discourse is its conjecture of cultural complexities and a constant state of ambivalence basically due to the tensions between two distinct spaces (the homeland and the host country). Diasporans are looked upon as rootless population whose cultural and ethnic origins are found in a land distant from where they currently live. However, their economic, political and social connections transcend the borders of the host nations.

The aim of the present chapter is to bring forth the extent to which Desai and Lahiri locate and stabilize the transnational identity through the process of self-fashioning in diaspora rather than the native land. In order to overcome cultural issues of their characters in both *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Unaccustomed Earth*, they explain the cross-cultural conflicts of Indian immigrants in the West, ethnicity, race, historical trauma, belonging, violence, and the crisis of identity. This chapter also focuses on the term of diaspora as one of the major issues of current multicultural studies. The first section presents a brief background of different concepts of diaspora and elaborates the background to South Asian diaspora of which Indian diasporic women are an example.

The points of discussion above are important in supporting further analyses of the migrant experiences in *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Unaccustomed Earth*. The second section is devoted to the analysis of the process of self-fashioning of those Indian immigrant characters, especially the first generation, who tried to overcome their cultural

displacement. It puts the spotlight on the change these characters bring by re-fashioning and mobilizing received idea from their native culture and host culture to reach the "Third Space" proposed by Bhabha. This section is important to examine how "new hybrid identities" are negotiated in both novels. This chapter also sheds light on the predicaments that native or ethnic belonging entail in diaspora, so it is important here to probe issues of culture and hybridity presented by Edward Said and Homi Bhabha.

Diasporic studies focus on the existence of displaced groups of migrants who retain a collective sense of identity. The process of living in diaspora, being a migrant in an alien country, makes immigrants experience a dispersal of roots that usually involve pain, identity crisis, dislocation, and a persistent sense of instability. It is an alienating experience that separates the migrant from home, native culture, and origins to the extent of undergoing an enforced transformation to fit in the new western society. This transformation differentiates and alienates the migrants in order to understand the hybrid situation of cultural identity. This perception enables immigrants in the diaspora to see clearly and objectively the state of culture of both that of the original homeland and the country being migrated to. Following this process, diasporans find themselves under an urgent need to re-shape or re-fashion their identities to be reborn again into new diasporic identities.

The question of identity is always dialectic and dwells within an episteme of dislocation especially for culturally dislocated immigrants who challenge exile. In this respect, diasporans do not have a fixed identity but a fluid one ready to be re-formulated again under certain imposed social circumstances. Accordingly, the accounts of diaspora as a category of sociological and political premises are intelligibly divergent since there is a constant sense of mutation and endless history of diasporic displacement. The concept of diaspora has been extended to represent not only the mixed or hyphenated identities of

individuals or a whole ethnic community, but also the texts that explore and express this condition.

The diasporic writings are a series of accounts and experiences that revolve around immigrants' life in diaspora living in divergent socio-cultural locations. The major concerns of the diasporic writers are fragmentation, fluid and individual identities in order to reach a full understanding of the generational differences between the old and new Diasporas as far as relation to their native and the host cultures are concerned. A close reading of diasporic writings reveals some common themes such as nostalgia, the quest for identity or "roots', trauma, and cultural anguish due to the fact of being torn between two different cultures. The urge of assimilation and acculturation imposed by the host country makes diasporans retain their cultural traditions through which they can maintain their obligation towards their native land. This attitude makes them reject and criticize everything native; instead, they glorify everything new. This is the case with Indian writers in Europe and North America who live and write on the theme of East/ West encounter in their own way in order to negotiate cultural boundaries between home and multicultural societies.

In fact, Diasporic writers' sense of inability to belong to a fixed nation, along with alienation imposed by the host society, adds an over-doze feeling of otherness and loss. This loss becomes tragic when the idea of going back home comes to the fore. The native country or 'home' ceases to be permanent as it undergoes transformation and becomes nothing but a nice memory or a nostalgic illusion. This cultural dislocation provides diasporic writing with its special themes of "loss" and "nostalgia". In *A Fine Balance*, Rohinton Mistry argues that Diasporic writers are obliged to deal with "broken mirrors of memory" in order to re-fashion a new version of identity. He adds that an immigrant, even though westernised, has certainly undergone a painful experience in the host land (16).

This immigrant is left tormented with an identity crisis since his native culture unconsciously interferes with the logical grasp of an alien culture.

It is broadly acknowledged that immigrants are torn between their duty and dedication to their native traditions and to the urgent need for assimilation in order to be accepted in the host society. This sense of instability serves in inflicting a feeling of insecurity as Bhabha mentions: “our identity is at once plural and partial and sometimes we feel that we straddle two cultures (…) it is a fertile territory to occupy for the writers” (15). He points out that the new type of human being transcends national boundaries by being neither Indian nor English. The immigrants are forced to remake their identities by their own location and by "mediating between two distinct cultures" as they are empowered by a more open transnational outlook.

Apparently, the identity crisis or the quest for identity is no longer an individual issue but transcends to a group, a community, and even to a nation. As the question of identity and dynamics of belonging influences the diasporic writers notably the Indian writers, they constantly examine, criticize, and reflect on the status of being in between, being pulled and pushed between two cultures or “straddling two cultures” (Bhabha 15). In fact, they lack a shared collective memory of the homeland, which is an important idea in the historical literature of a country or a nation. Therefore, the feeling of cultural alienation represents a part of the diaspora which refers metaphorically to both the physical and psychological displacement as well as the re-establishment of different sensibilities. Hence, gradually, the hyphenated identity of the diasporic writers has become a significant topic in Indian literary writings in English.

It is commonly noticed that diasporic literature has made a significant literary input to the Indian writers using English for their literary productions via its open exposure of

multiculturalism. Writers of Indian diaspora have been roughly recognized in the last decade especially due to the new theoretical assumptions they produced. They are now widely discussed and generated by criticising their works especially with the recent growing interest in postcolonial and cultural studies. Native Indian languages and cultures are witnessing a significant change as they are no more isolated under the wide globalized contacts. Indian diasporic writers raise questions about the definition of ‘home’ as it not only constructs the sense of self, but also touches upon the ties with culture. It is obvious that the sense of homelessness is quite genuine and springs from the human need to be familiar with the universe; however, this intense sense turns to be minimized due to the human acceptance of the new environment. Through acculturation and assimilation, Indian immigrants attempt to cope with the western culture through social networking and adjustment with this new culture.

Likewise, the floating nature of "home" and identity hybridization has challenged the concepts of "fixed home" since it evokes the spatial politics of home and the sense of displacement. In some notable narratives of the West vs the East, such as those of Edward Said, "home" is a point usually located in opposition to the notion of the Other. In this sense, Said maintains that through the process of decolonization, of which the Asian Diaspora is by-product, one can see how these post-colonial societies are left with a dual vision of self-image, politically independent from colonization yet culturally belonging to it via language (*Culture and Imperialism* 75). For Said, "home" is no longer a product of arbitrary elements but it has become a product of a political will or desire as the construction of the homeland is analogous to the process of narrative discourse. On the other hand, Rosemary George contends that home which was perceived by the Western narratives as “rooted” and “fixed” is in fact a “hybrid entity” instead of “national” constructed out of the continuously shifting sands of political and cultural paradigms (42).

As regards to Said and Rosemary's definitions of "home", one can take hold of Bhabha's idea of immigrants' empowerment as efficient since the latter ar e the ones who straddle both Western and Asian cultures in which their location is fluid, due to globalization that results in the fall of national boundaries to bring out a variety of hybrid cultures.

With the emergence of Diaspora writings, the English language has widened its existence in diasporic literary productions. Women writers of Indian diaspora such as Bharati Mukherjee, Jhumpa Lahiri, Chitra Banerjee, and Kiran Desai still write under a diaspora label and try to chronicle the trauma of the identity crisis of their protagonists in different contexts. These writers are preoccupied by notions of nostalgia and displacement along with the mechanisms of negotiating the cultural space of the host cou ntries. Diasporic writers are often drifted towards the borders of culture and representation of both nations: the native and the host. They strive to comprehend their ambivalent position and guarantee a safe space in both cultures by negotiating both nations' cultural constructs. Indian writers usually write back to the mother land, India, and depict its complexities which contain everything in multitudes: the rich cultural heritage, rites, traditions, multiple realities, truths, and beliefs. Hence, the In dian cultural diversity is shown to worldwide awareness through the medium of literature.

It is also important to mention that after independence, India has become the world's largest exporters of Anglophone scientists. Unlike other Asian immigrants, Indian immigrants were equipped with English due to the British colonialism and this enables them to adapt to and integrate themselves in the host nation (Grewal 74). Although being privileged, Indian professionals did not escape the inevitability of identity crisis as they still faced the problems of living between two distinct cultures. Tandon supports here that due to their physical and cultural differences, Indian immigrants felt isolated, although they did not experience harsh racism, a glass ceiling environment prevailed. He adds that Indian

expertise was recognized by the local people yet they are still on the margin of society (15).

The history of the movement of the Indian diaspora is obviously different from the other immigrant counterparts. Referring to the first and second wave of Indian immigrants to the U.S, Vijay Mishra suggests two categories of Diasporas in his essay “The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian Diasporas”. He calls old diaspora as ‘exclusive’ whereas the new diaspora as ‘border’ in which he declares them as “two interlinked but historically separated diasporas”. He continues saying that these two diasporas of classic capitalism and mid- to late twentieth century diasporas of advances capital have their own modes of movement towards India (421-22).

Indian immigrants of the first wave, "old diaspora", moved out of India in search of work in the sugar plantations, railways, and tea in Trinidad, Guyana, Surinam, Mauritius, Fiji, and South Africa (Mishra 420). This old diaspora was also called an "extensive diaspora" since they founded a new ‘India’ via adapting the Indian traditions to the new environment. The New diaspora, however, is also called ‘border’ diaspora and differs in the motives of immigration since this wave quitted India to the U.S and Britain as the result of advanced capitalism to the metropolitan centres of the Empire, the New World and the former settler colonies (Mishra 421). As opposed to the old diaspora, the new diaspora shares characteristics with other similar diasporas such as the Chicanos and the Koreans in the U.S.

As it is the case of the other immigrants from different parts of the world, Indians were required to find a position in the host society and challenge the idea of acculturation especially due to their physical appearances which make the premise of identities hyphenation persist ent. They keep ties with their homeland intact through assemblies, religious ceremonies, and traditional parties. On the other hand, border diaspora faces the

circumstances of living in the new world which has no room for the traditions and language of the homeland. The native land is just an imaginary land which lived in their imagination. This situation deals with all differences that further stimulate an extreme form of double consciousness. On the other hand, border diaspora is well defined by Mishra as related to the involvement of identity which is mainly influenced by the host land seeing it as their actual home. It is a powerful source for diasporic discourses of disarticulation, abandonment, displacement, dispersion, as well as a site for the re-articulation of an intercultural formation through which global migration; the positioning of identities, the nature of bourgeois subject may be interrogated (426).

Women's Migration and the Politics of Location

It is obvious that the old and new generations conceive the idea of home from different perspectives as they relate the sense of belonging to the native geographical space. This is reflected in Desai's presentation of the image of Indian immigrants appropriating themselves to the Western societies. In *The Inheritance of Loss,* she portrays some characters of the Indian community who settle down in popular areas or ghettos such as Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. In these areas, Indians still maintain their ties with their mother nation by preserving their patrimony and practising their rites.

Immigrants undergo a set of challenges in the process of positioning or adjusting themselves in the new society which imposes values and traditions completely different from those of their mother land's. When taking the challenge of self reconfiguration, Rayaprol argues that migrant Indians especially women are not simply projected as women but as differentiated categories; the apparatuses of the nation such as culture, economics, and politics are in collaboration to shape the social images and roles of women (16). Indian immigrant women are put in situations whereby they should cope with an alien society

while they also bear the responsibility of being the preservers of traditions' continuity in the diasporic environment. In fact, they are required to create a microcosmic Indian society within the macrocosmic American society. Rayaprol states that Indian women often serve as the transmitters of traditions that the immigrant women, in particular, take on this mantle. However, this very role of traditions' preservers, to some extent, can lead them to keep engaging with the past and replicating it within their diasporic household (64). Likewise, Indian immigrant women's experience in diaspora is quite different from men's since men keep their process of acculturation obvious with the fast truck of individualism in the American society. Women's role is much more internal and is basically connected to the past and traditions in order to keep in touch with the culture of the homeland. So, they remind their men and kids of their cultural background.

The migration experience influences women in different ways in *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Unaccustomed Earth* as being away from the native land; they might be seen as a space of liberation and confinement which will be discussed in the self-fashioning section of this chapter. The relation between Indian women and traditions is one of the dialectic relations since the Hindu society sets traditions and regards them as more important than the human being himself. In such a case, Radhakrishnan makes it clear that women are looked upon as less important than the tradition itself (121). This paradox is also found in religion and castes. Things changed when India was under the British colonialism. Indian people started to get influenced by the new Western thoughts, lifestyles, and Christian doctrines. In this respect, those new challenges between the Hindu strict cultural practices and English open social reforms serve in creating some conflicts between traditionalists, who rejected and resisted any Western practice, and reformers who sought to change the norms of the Indian society. Reformers found it important to re-localise Indian women in more open-minded areas where they can represent themselves

instead of being no-one in the Hindu traditional society. In Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss,* Nimi represents those faithful Indian women who still cling to the Hindu cultural values still embedded in their new lives. These faithful women still apply and believe in the effectiveness of those traditions in the U.S in an effort to install the significance of their identity, not only as Indian in nationality but also as Hindu in religion. Radhakrishnan maintains that cultural traditions control a woman's entire life-from early socialization as a daughter, indoctrination into a wife (polygamy or nuclear family), mother, or if less fortunate, into widowhood (121).

From a feminist point of view, facets of discrimination against women come at the core of feminist projects of which the Indian case marks its peculiarity. Because of the unequal social hierarchy not just on the basis of class but also on gender, Indian women occupy the status of Spivak's subaltern in the sense that they are reduced to the cult of domesticity having no say regarding their needs, ordeals, or rights. The traditional female virtues dictate women to focus on activities and rituals that serve in family and traditions protection. Any possible kind of rebellion or rejection of patriarchal authorities can lead women to be excluded from society and live in exile. Therefore, exile or immigration for other reasons than accompanying husband or family is regarded as a punishment. These traditions remain a blue-print in the Indian women's identity, a cultural heritage those women acquire before travelling westward.

Gender roles stick to the norms set by traditions whereby males and females are not regarded as equal individuals but represent two different castes. This idea is clearly reflected by Simone de Beauvoir who argues that the society which embodies a set of humanistic values is based on a male reference in which women are not autonomously represented but in relation to the male. She also suggests that women's role and individuality are defined within the boundaries that the male has previously set and asserts

the idea of subalternity of women in saying that the male is the essential and the subject as opposed to the women being inessential and the other (Spivak 286). In the feminist context, Desai attempts to subvert the image of Indian women's subalternity and their inability to represent themselves and achieve self- empowerment. The writer also highlights the idea of challenging gender bigotry set by old beliefs and false gender discrimination to highlight the equality of individuals as social subjects and put the spotlight on the difference of female sensibilities and experiences vis a vis those of the males in the process of female identity construction.

Desai focuses on gender discrimination in relation to social values, culture, and hierarchies scrutinized under the scope of feminism. On the other hand, Lahiri proposes a revolutionary style in which she defies fixed stereotypes and assumes that leaving homeland might rempresent a shify from the female subalternity at home especially for specificIndian castes. Defying stereotypes is a way out from patriarchal and social oppression and a definition that contradicts the common idea of migration as related to exile and painful dislocating journey towards alienation and discrimination. Migration, in the case of Biju, is a process of re-birth andre-incarnation into a new self on an alien soil where identities are re-fashioned again shifting from innocence to experience to result in a new diasporic identity.

The cultural overlap between the immigrants' past existence limitation and the possibilities of self-empowerment in the host land paves the way towards a very convoluted mechanism in their way towards self-refashioning in diaspora. Indeed, there is a gap between past engagements and present needs; however, Indian women face another challenge in the process of their adjustment in the host land. It is relevant to raise the issue

of the intersecting nature of ethnicity, race, and gender. Radhakrishnan argues that in constituting diasporic identities and communities, it is crucial to include the categories of race, ethnicity, and nation, along with gender, class, religion, and language (123). Diasporic women are differentiated from other European or American women, meaning "White" women by the image of "Otherness" still traced in dichotomies of East/West or First/Third world because diasporic subjects come out with a heritage which is completely different from the one in the western culture which is sometimes regarded as inacceptable or nomadic. Eventually, due to their cultural, physical, and intellectual differences, Indian women experience another kind of marginalization and are regarded as "Other" lest they approve acculturation and assimilate the new lifestyle. Linda Mc Dowell argues that women as a group are Othered, often seen as closer to nature and more sexually available than the more civilized "White" women. This is a common thread that runs through the discursive construction of women of colour (219).

As it is mentioned above, the formation of identity in diaspora and the gender role in the Indian patriarchal society are still persistent and mingle with the discourses of race and ethnicity. Nevertheless, the migratory process urges Indian women to cast aside their past so that they can be easily immersed in the host society. It is quite difficult for Third-World women, who were brought up to respect some traditional confinements which define their past, and therefore, their original identity, to break away from traditions and develop a new version of identity within the immigrant community. The immigrant, whether influenced by the attractive Western culture which sets freedom in the fore position or not, undergoes the Eastern values. Minha states that it is difficult for many women of colour to choose between both cultures as they feel prompted to make the difference between ethnicity and womanhood while both are actually essential in the re-establishment of identity (104).

Obviously, the so-called Third World woman thus confirms the Western cliché that

women in under-developed nations are poor, sexually-oppressed, illiterate, and unaware of their rights. They are basically victimized under the harshness of their traditions. On the other hand, the First World woman is usually viewed as liberated, educated, and having freedom to take decisions. In “Three Women’s Texts and Critique of Imperialism”, Spivak introduces “the strategic essentialism” of the First and the Third world women which creates paradoxical homogenised groups, one is liberated and the other is subjugated. This difference brings out projections and fantasies of the Euro-American self as the desirable norms to represent women of colour as being in need of rescue (285). Spivak maintains that women of colour need to be saved, and to be given a chance to re-define themselves according to the conventional norms of freedom. The construction and self-victimization of Third World women suggested by Spivak is traced in Desai and Lahiri’s female characters’ identity transformation.

In Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss* and Lahiri’s *Unaccustomed Earth,* the characters undergo different conceptions of the diasporic experience regarding their self-fashioning in response to their migration, assimilation, and acculturation in the West.Desai and Lahiri question the ambivalent efforts of maintaining the traditions and heritage of the mother land for both the first and second generations in the process of integration in the American society. They find themselves internalize unconsciously the new values of the United States. As for Indian women in the diaspora, Indian characters still carry out some traces of their native identity while they experience the process of “erosions and accretions” as Hall puts it (*Minimal Selves* 42) in order to appropriate themselves to a state that mediates between the two different cultures simultaneously.

The Journey of Pain and Empowerment: Desai’s Characters

Kiran Desai is an immigrant writer of Asian-Indian origins who rejects the

hyphenated identity of "Indian-American" and adopts instead a hybrid identity, that accepts, in this sense, her ethnic belonging and declares herself as hybrid by choice. Desai exemplifies the global project that transforms the local to a westernized immigrant to achieve in the end the status of a citizen. This flexible transformation and cultural translation between the local and the American citizen, passing by the migration process reflects a postmodern view of celebrating fluidity. Even if fluidity somehow connotes fragmentation and ambivalence, it reflects the immigrants' need for self-definition away from the "Otherness" label. The western obligation of self- reshaping results in fluid hybridized identities and interprets immigrants' desire to escape the Western gaze towards achieving a more transnational empowering status that challenges the boundaries of marginalization rooted in western societies.

Desai's novels have gained fame because she vividly portrays the immigrants' experiences, ordeals, and challenges especially of those coming from South Asia to North America. In her novels, Desai focuses on elements of the "reframing" or reshaping identities which basically deal with the "unhousement" and "rehousement" in Dalaska's terms especially about the mechanism of breaking away from the native culture to which one belongs and re- rooting oneself in a new culture (Dalaska 1). The immigrants' experiences are divergent and emphasize the notion of cultural identity.

Desai is obviously interested in embracing the new identity and shows a certain affiliation to the native traditions and bears the burden of past obligations. She assumes that the immigrants have experienced rapid changes in the history of the nations in which they lived. When they uproot themselves from those countries and go to the U.S., either by choice or out of necessity, they learn to adapt to American society. Desai suggests that the immigrants' journey westward is remarkable and often heroic although the fictional immigrant characters are often hurt or depressed by setbacks in their new lives and

occupations ; they do not give up (Dlaska 5). Desai sees that the immigrants take the risks they would not have taken in their old, comfortable worlds to solve their problems. Therefore, once they change citizenship, they are reborn again with a new identity of their own choice.

Conversely, Lahiri still clings to diasporic traditions. She is among the diasporic writers who are themselves experiencing the process of hybridity and straddling two cultures, that is why, they focus on elements of memories, mythologies, dreams, nostalgia, and allegory in framing their characters. Those writers are fundamentally afflicted by a sense of dislocation which elicits social alienation. Accordingly, the term 'diaspora' signifies both physical and ideological dislocations alongside the re-framing of a new politics of location. It paves the way to the discussion of the hyphenated identity of people in diaspora which has become one of the prevailing subjects in the Indian writings in English. Thus, the diasporic experiences are well documented by the Indo-American diasporic writers, Desai and Lahiri.

The notion of re-fashioning identity is related to the geographical space and is revealed in Desai's works not as a deliberate sense of belonging and nostalgia to the native space (the homeland) but as the need for immigrants to carve out a narrative of home through the continuous negation of their relationship vis-à-vis the host land. Hence, this dialectic relation between the immigrant and his homeland as well as the new land is neither homogenous nor constant, but rather based on the heterogeneity of the immigrant experience. This leads us to inquire about the immigrant's position between home usually associated with the notion of otherness and belonging to a new nation. Said points out that "through the process of decolonization of which Asian diaspora in a result, one can see how that far from being unitary or monolithic or autonomous things cultures actually

assume more foreign elements, alterities, differences than they consciously exclude (*Culture and Imperialism* 165).

The notion of "home" and nation is clearly described by Said as based on capricious arbitrary aspects due to the long colonial system that transforms home (the native land) in proportion to its own political and cultural vision that asserts its supremacy in shaping its features. In this case, the homeland is not pure or different; it is nothing but previous colonial strategies based on shaping nations according to their whims and projects. This idea leads readers to question what a national identity is as long as the nation, as an independent entity, is itself a colonial product. In fact, national identities related to native land are doomed to hybridity and dislocation which are the major ingredients of immigrant identities which straddle two cultures and affirm the fluidity and flexibility of cultural transformation.

The politics of location (be it geographical, a place with conventional borders, or ideological, the fluidity and inconstant process of re-fashioning identity) questions the notions of expatriate and immigrant. While the expatriate undergoes exile and renounces a national identity, the immigrant indicates the movement from one country to another to settle down and begin a new life, and therefore is obliged to adopt a certain 'national' identity. The special dislocation lies in the immigrant's acceptance of the new land as his "home". Eventually, location is not seen just from ideological, sociological, or geographical perspectives but from a personal standpoint as it embeds the accumulation of a certain culture and bases of values. In fact, it establishes people's experiences and their ways of recognizing the self through the identification of the Self in opposition to the Other. The negotiation of new relationships with identity and diaspora come on the hearts of the very space between home and western soci ety, Bhabha's the "Third Space", where the migrant locates himself where fixed cultural and national locations are re-conceived

into the fluidity of hybrid identities. It is also noteworthy to mention that the fluidity of ethnic cultures enrich and influence the western culture. This situation justifies the constant change in the representation of American culture(s).

Desai focuses on how experiences shape one's self and one's frame of references in order to comprehend the world. Her works generally portray the immigrants' experiences and how the notion of 'space' or location of immigrant women circumscribes her way of internalizing her position. She also probes the nature of interaction with the norms of society especially those of the host country. Desai, thus, seeks to explore the clash between the Indian and the American cultures and emphasizes the cultural difference rather than just being aware of its existence. Being conscious of such a difference allows the author to explore the cultural identity as an evident opponent of location. Desai's character are revolutionary ; their identity gets beyond geographical spaces since location is seen as an ideological space which results in reframing a "fluid" instead of a "fixed" identity.

Due to multicultural challenges of globalization, Desai outframes characters that celebrate and appreciate the fluid migrant experiences. The fact of existing in different communities and spaces enables immigrants to reflect on their national identities and problems of acculturation and racism that often pervade the relationship between South Asian immigrants and the western societies. The process of diaspora, by putting one's roots elsewhere, is applied to the question of post-colonial (anti-colonial) and post-national (away from nation) in re- shaping and re-situating one's cultural identity in a new space. This process is clearly experiences by Desai's immigrant characters' journeys of transformation from one identity to another to overcome the ongoing sense of dislocation. Henry Lindgren states that the identity formation operates in relation to the location of the subjects in society in proportion to the overall life conditions such as class, cultural background. He adds that the role the subject plays has an influence on the him to become

or constantly becoming though. He states that the role in society is more or less like a psychological garment that one puts on and takes off which helps localize the subject's position as an individual and as a citizen (226).

The shift from local to citizen via fluidity also echoes Bhabha's mimicry or imitation in the sense that colonized people were urged to reject essentialist national codes and follow the paradigm that the colonial systems establish in order to be accepted. Fanon also treats the idea of colonized mimicry and declares that "western imperialism has left a void in the soul of colonized in which the feeling of inferiority of the colonized through his assimilation by the colonizers imposes language and culture to take on the attributes of the white western colonizer" (*Black Skin* 45). Being convinced of his inferiority that he represents as the dark side of the Self, the colonized willingly accepts transformation into the Self; the same example is applied on Desai's character of the Indian judge who willingly embraces the British life and ends up becoming a British citizen. However, the transformation experienced by the immigrants transcends Fanon's definition of mimicry to a metamorphosis of selves, becoming a British citizen and not an Indian-British subject. This represents an acute shift not only to hybridity but to a severe rejection of a native nation and culture which results not merely in the postcolonial subject's instability and vulnerability but by denying the past.

Rejecting the problematic of alienation and social anxiety, Desai seeks to adopt the cultural diaspora in the west in an effort to establish a transformed identity of her own whose evolution is clearly reflected in her revolutionary characters. These characters reveal her intention to take part in the hegemonic notion of diasporic identity. Following this process, Desai's aim behind such a strife is to reframe a new image of selfhood by

participating in the process of decolonising the mind based on violence. This new identity is intertwined with a swirling notion of violence where the protagonist is put under difficult circumstances in which she acts as a resistant as a willingly receiving the dominant culture of the colonizer.

In *The Inheritance of Loss,* Desai portrays issues of ethnic discrimination, assimilation, multicultural conflicts, political struggles, and women's subalternity. It gives images of Indian characters' displacement in India and in the West. What attracts the readers' attention is the title. The inheritance connotes continuity and transmission. The heritage is usually something profitable and beneficial. However, in Desai's novel the characters inherit loss instead of profit. Loss is seen from different dimensions in the novel. Loss can be related to losing parents, orphanage, like in the case of the judge's grand-daughter Sai. Loss also covers the life of the judge Jemubhai Patel who is on the limbo between his intention to become English in all his life details and his roots in India. Loss is also found in the experience of Biju in the U.S. where he lost years of his life stupidly enduring difficult conditions. On the other hand, Desai intertwines loss with violence as a major ingredientin forming immigrants' identity through racial, radical, and ideological negotiations in the dominant culture.

In the novel, the characters seek to reframe their identities by discarding their ethnicity. They try to murder their past selves and claim allegiance to global multicultural ties and traditions. This concept of total erasure of the past tends to create a violent personal transcultural transformation which calls to mind the colonizing efforts to distance people from their traditions. The judge Jemubhai tries willingly to erase any relation to India. He sees that "the west means developed, industrialized, urbanized capitalist secular, and modern" (Lazarus 129). Upon his arrival to England, he decided to cut the umbilical cord that ties him to India and start a new life with new perspectives and traditions. What is

striking in the novel is that the judge tries hard to change even the color of his skin to look lighter-skinned. For this purpose, he puts powder to cover his dark skin. He tries to hide his roots, ethnicity, and culture because he thinks that staying Indian in Britain can heighten his deep feeling of otherness, shame, and alienation. Jemubhai is a postcolonial subject who still conforms to the patterns of colonial legacy and imperial superiority. So, he actively moves on towards new choices. It is through this diasporic process of uprooting and re-rooting the self elsewhere that Jemubhai confronts many challenges involving violence in each step of his journey in search for identity.

Desai tries to comment on post-colonial India and the challenges that Indians face after getting independence. Her narrative scheme depends on flashback events that help readers map out images of different Indian people of different ethnicities and sects. She also shows the ethnic and political struggles that India faced from 1943 over roughly four decades. She also comments on the effects of the British colonial system in instilling the sense of hostility and otherness amongst Indians, Nepalese, and Pakistani people. She also portrays facets of denial and refusal to accept the Other. Through the character of the judge, Desai tries to show the intensity of otherness that the colonial system left behind and the extent to which people try to imitate the West to be accepted and appreciated. Immigration and re-fashioning identities elsewhere, away from the motherland, is the central theme of Desai's novel.

Eventually, Desai focuses on giving a portrait of arrogance and pretention to Jemubhai, the Judge, who is strongly fascinated and affected by English traditions and language. From his childhood, Jemubhai develops a deep respect and admiration for English. He was an excellent student; a thing that makes his father spoil him a lot on the

expense of his sisters. At the age of twenty, he decided to realize his dream. He got a scholarship for the ICS Bishop's college in Cambridge. At this early age, he got married to Bela to benefit from her dowry then left her behind in favour of a new life and opportunities away from India's primitive beliefs and poverty. In terms of the Self and the Other conflict, the judge attributes positive connotations to the whites and considers them as inherently intelligent, polite, and intellectual.His first encounter with the whites in the airport made him realize that there are white persons working in cleaning and porting luggage. He could never imagine that the white man can be anyone but a rich businessman, an intellectual teacher, or a pious preacher. He could not realize that "a white person picks up a brown person's bags!" (Desai 38). The judge used to believe in the white superiority that the former colonial system used to leave intact to justify its occupation.

The diasporic experience that the judges passed through helped him understand the cultural shock and internalize the difference between the Self superiority and the Other's inferiority. His life in England makes him surprised and at the same time more fascinated by the English language and lifestyle. This fascination strays him away from his roots to which he shows resentment and contempt. However, his optimistic attitudes and excitement have not lasted longer to face reality. The judge finds himself in the street on his first day in England because no one accepted to rent him a room. It took him some days to find an acceptable accommodation. This clash with the whites' racist attitudes makes the judge disappointed and relegates him to the status of the unwanted outsider. For this reason, he decided to stay alienated and befriend no one. In order to escape racial tensions, he immersed himself in long hours of studies and work since his mind "had begun to warp; he grew stranger to himself than he was to those around him, found his own skin odd-colored, his own accent peculiar." (Desai 38). The judge's alienation and enstrangement grew more and more whenever he happened to meet his classmates' discussions.

The judge's identity re-location from a simple Indian student to a judge results in a struggle between destiny and free will which starts with his first shift from a village student to an enlightened judge. Desai depicts the judge's awareness of his change towards the independence he has longed for as a result of subverting Indian conventions and devalorizing traditions. During his stay in England, Jemubhai fails to befriend any white student. His inability to get access to the English life with English increases his alienation and strengthens a deep sense of otherness. Desai describes him as a shadow of a man: "he retreated into a solitude that grew in weight day by day. The solitude became a habit, the habit became the man, and it crushed him into a shadow (…) he felt barely human at all" (40). Jemubhai gets humiliated whenever he talks in English in front of an English man. The only person that he could befriend is Bose, a Bangali student who helped him a lot in bettering up his pronunciation.Accordingly, his attaint of Indian Civil Service (ICS) makes him an arrogant person who excessively valorises the English lifestyle and language; a thing that makes him a shadow of a man and mimic person.

In fact, the exaggerated assimilation that the judge shows is similar to Bhabha's concept of mimicry which is a way to step from the periphery of the Other to the centre of the Self. His migrant experience in the west was not that easy because it made him develop self-hatred, lose his self-worth, and internalize or rather tolerate the discrimination against him. Adrienne Rich suggests that, in the immigrants' quest of a 'middle-class standard life', non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants are conditioned to change their name, accent, [not to] make trouble, defer to white men, and be ashamed of what they are (qtd. in Grewal 191). This quotation clarifies why Jemubhai hated the fact that he descends from Indian origins and has a dark skin contrary to the conventional one, the white. He hated the fact of being different, being the odd of the conventional Self. For this reason, he shows a deep interest and admiration to his oppressor, the white, and tries to be a copy of him. His deep

love for his oppressor makes him adopt the English style deliberately and develop a new identity that holds just English components.

> He took revenge on his early confusions, his embarrassments gloved in something called 'keeping up standards', his accent behind a mask of quiet. He found he began to be mistaken for something he wasn't-a man of dignity. This accidental poise became more important than any other things. He envied the English. He loathed Indians. He worked at being English with the passion of hatred and of what he would become; he would be despised by absolutely everyone, English and Indians, both. (Desai 119)

No matter how he acts and talks as an English gentleman, he always remains an Indian village man who tries to reject his original identity to hide his shame and otherness. He remains a postcolonial ambitious Indian student who fails to find the right path towards a balanced identity. In his efforts to develop a diasporic identity, the judge finds himself fit nowhere, neither in India nor in England. The sense of belonging to neither spaces, India and England, is apparent when he gets back home and he was "a foreigner-*a foreigner*-every bit of him screams" (Desai 167). Seemingly, he needs to exit into new identities where the otherness of his previous identity would not cover his future.The judge refers to his Indian identity as ghosts or phantoms, moving between two worlds and never sticking to any.

The racial discrimination and alienation that the judge suffers from make him become arrogant and hypocritical. When he gets back to India after he obtains his ICS, he started behaving and talking as an English man. The judge was honoured upon his return because he was the first man in the village who obtained the ICS. He showed no hesitation to give remarks and revealed despise and resentment to the Indian traditional life. Though he was honoured by everybody in his village, he was also criticised and sometimes ridiculed for his exaggerated English manners. He came back home to apply or rather transmit the discrimination, humiliation, and alienation to all the people around him, especially to his uneducated relatives and his under-age wife, Bela.

Bela suffers a lot from the judge's remarks and insults. He wants to transfer to her his sense of inferiority and otherness. He considered Bela as an animal because she was not educated, unsophisticated, and very traditional due to her education. His behaviour with his wife calls to mind Freud's defence mechanisms. From a psychoanalytical point of view, Stuart Sutherland states that projection means that a person tries hard to unconsciously conceal a trait that is responsible for his humility and shame by falsely seeing its presence in others (365). Projection, revenge, and violence extension over the weak persons: from a father to his children or from a husband to his wife juxtaposes the judge's behaviour to maintain the sense of superiority he lacks in England.

Desai portrays the judge's wife, Bela, later named Nimi, as a young, naïve, and submissive under-age wife. This young woman was forced to marry Jemubhai upon a business contract between her father and Jemubhai's father. She is considered as a merchandise that fulfils a certain need in the market. Bela suffers from suppression of her personal female identity. She endures her husband's bad treatment, mockery, and physical abuse. As any young woman in Indian traditions, parents should marry their daughters off at an early age to assume responsibilities and carry on the traditions and the heritage of their female ancestors. In their traditions, married women should comply with marital duties, serve their husbands, and bring up children. The women's subalternity in the Indian society relegates women to the status of the subaltern who remains silent no matter how hard their life may be.

As a feminist writer, Desai conveys the reality of female subjugation and hardships that young Indian women endure under the patriarchal society. On a gendered basis, Bela Patel or Nimi, is an epitome of all helpless Indian women who are silenced by men and societal and traditional norms. Nimi symbolizes India which suffered a lot under the

tyranny of the British Empire. In a parallel perspective, Jemubhai becomes tyrant just like the former colonizers who seize the fact that the colonized people are not educated to extend their tyranny, power, and disgust. Through his abuse of his wife, Jemubhai revives again the colonial legacy and the stereotyped image of the white European authority over the submissive Third World countries. The judge wants to transfer his frustration and humiliation and he was "glad he could disguise his inexpertness, his crudity, with hatred and fury. He would teach her the same lessons of loneliness and shame he has learned himself" (Desai 170).

According to the Indian traditions, women are destined to live under the tyranny of men. They must accept the situation and live according to their husbands' whims. In "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak suggests that the "third world woman" is caught between tradition and modernization" (306). Here, Spivak points out that "shuttling" is a manifestation of a violent acculturation especially for a woman coming from India and looked upon as a third world woman whose lives are circumscribed by traditions, poverty, illiteracy, and weakness. The judge does not hesitate to insult and intimidate Nimi. Because he changed his name from Jemubhai Patel to James Peterson, he decided to change his wife's name from Bela to Nimi in order to change her identity. He tries hard to anglicise her in order to meet his social status' needs. For this reason, he decides to find a female teacher for Nimi to make her a westernized intellectual woman. Miss Enid tries to teach Nimi English to conform to her husband's plan; however, Nimi refuses to change her lifestyle because she has been brought up to maintain the traditional Indian lifestyle. Nimi tries to get agency to resist western lifestyle. She feels that she is wearing a mask whenever she takes off her sari and wears a skirt. She feels that she gets enstranged in her own country.

Subsequently, the judge's mistreatment of his wife continues and their marital

relationship starts to deteriorate. He moves from abusing her mentally to physically by beating Nimi up and depriving her of food whenever she fails to name things in English. He plays the role of the stubborn teacher. Nimi's silence strengthens her sense of inferiority and maintains her subalternity, Desai writes: "the quieter she was, the louder he shouted, and if she protested, it was worse. She soon realized that whatever she did or did not do; the outcome was much the same" (58). Nimi is pregnant and could no longer resist or accept her husband's abuse and bad treatment. She decided to get back to her family home. The judge's parents consider their son's separation as a shame and a scandal to the honor of the family.

What is striking in the novel is that after Nimi's delivery, the judge decides to kill her. He agrees with two murderers to burn her in the kitchen and make the murder appear as an accident. Evidently, Nimi was burnt in the kitchen leaving a baby behind. Desai describes the murder as silent as she used to be: "Ashes have no weight, they tell no secrets they raise, too lightly for gravity, they float upward and thankfully disappear (308). Due to his cynical hypocritical personality, the judge is reckless about what happens to his wife and shows no guilt. He did not even take care of his daughter left behind her late mother. He instead puts her in a convent and refuses any kind of bond with her. He puts her in a convent to learn English and follow the Christian faiths which are, for him, the best elements of the normal education.

Through the character of Nimi, Desai wants to convey a voice of dissent against patriarchal orders and attackstraditional female subalternity that puts women in a constant psychological and emotional dislocation and instils inherent weakness. She also reflects identity crisis in post-colonial India along with the problems of gender abuse. From the

depiction of Indian women's patriarchal abuse, we can discern the hidden idea of loss. All what women inherit is loss of their self-presentation and emancipation. Colonialism also inherits people loss which reaches the migratory experiences where the immigrant experiences loss of self-esteem in his journey towards transformation. The journey towards the west often involves encounter with attitudes of racism, rejection, and discrimination.

Speaking about the violence of cultural assimilation, Spivak denotes that the periphery can never be located in the centre except if he undergoes a "re-colonial" process where he has to shuttle between identities and mimic the role of an ideal immigrant to recast her identity (279). In his journey to reframe his cultural and linguistic identity, the judge's decision to let go his past may be revealed physically but deep inside his inner self he still maintains his Indian intrinsic traits. Jemubhai's experience in the diaspora elicits a massive identity crisis. He remains always an Indian in mentality, attitudes, and actions. This change in attitude by acting as an immigrant opens to him gates towards adopting the dominant western cultural systems in an effort to overcome the humility of bearing the label of the "Other". Thus, this facilitates the task towards becoming more accepted.

Refashioning identity between different spaces and through cultural clashes reflects a continuous process of loss and gain. Desai insists on the idea of immigration as a process of self-searching. Almost all the characters in the novels experience migration westward or eastward. All the characters experience the pain of assimilation and failure of reaching Bhabha's the Third Space. The novelist also wants to emphasize the importance of being outdoors in enabling immigrants to get a panoramic and objective view over some hidden and ambiguous patterns in political, economic and socio-cultural dimensions of the homeland. Being between distinct cultures makes the immigrant search for a kind of compromise, the Third Space, where cultures intersect, negotiate, and enrich each other. In diaspora, the immigrant develops a certain attitude towards the mother land. Sometimes the

hardships experienced in the diaspora leads to the empowerment and emancipation of the immigrant subjects. In this way, they keep ties with their motherland and adjust their culture to the host land's one. Nevertheless, the migrant's experience may destroy the immigrants' self-esteem and lead to developing the extent of otherness and shame. Therefore, the journey westward in favour of education or financial prosperity is perilous in the sense that it may be profitable as it can destroy the immigrants' dreams and prospects.

In *The Inheritance of Loss*, Desai introduces Biju : the son of the Judge's cook. Biju stands for a whole generation of disadvantageous Indian youth who feels that prosperity and success is related to the west. His father serves in reinforcing the idea of otherness from his childhood. Biju's father has a dim image of the future of Indian youth away from the west. He believes that the formerly colonized countries undergo a curse and that they can never prosper on their own away from the big industrial western countries. He keeps urging his son to migrate since India is "a sinking boat" (Desai 18). Biju's father believes that America is still a land of opportunities especially in the globalized world characterized by transnational fluidity and dynamic interactions. He thinks that inferiority and otherness are inherent in Third World subjects and is aware that race prejudices are still persistent in America. Though he knows in advance that the journey westward would involve oppression, dislocation, exile, and humiliation, he insists that migration is the only way to escape poverty and caste attitudes can help build a better future. The cook tries hard to secure a forged visa to the U.S. but in vain. Biju is not highly educated and descends from a poor caste, so he finds difficulty in getting a visa right from the U.S. embassy.

Biju's journey from the periphery to te center starts with submitting the visa file. Biju is shocked when he sees crowds of people queuing in order to submit their visa. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm gets frozen when he finds highly educated students

submitting their visa file to quit India. Desai describes Biju's efforts to push the crowd and secure the first place to rach the counter as "biggest pusher, first place; how self-contented and smiling he was; he dusted himself off, presenting himself with the exquisite manners of a cat. I'm civilized, sir, ready for the U.S., I'm civilized, man. Biju noticed that his eyes so alive to the foreigners and went dead." (Desai 35). Biju travels to New York because his father thinks that New York is the best destination for immigrants to find a job. However, Beju's enthusiasm and blind ambition have not stayed long. He faces the dull reality of illegal immigrants of different nationalities and ethnicities who suffer daily intimidation and ill-payment. He discoveres the new globalized face of imperialism. His life in America is limited to a long tiring ill-paid job and a restless accommodation of illegal immigrants. Biju finds difficulty to find a stable job. He keeps changing jobs and accommodation for fear he gets caught by the police and deported to India. His illegal secret life in India defines also his invisibility, "Nothing I can do, the manager said, pink from having to dole out humiliation to these men 'just disappear quietly this is my advice…' So they disappeared" (Desai 16). Biju reveals the way American job owners take advantages of the vulnerability of the illegal immigrants. The illegal immigrants work system resembles the feudal system. Workers should not complain about the work conditions and risks. They live without names, without identities. They should work without reclaiming their right or asking for raising wages. Biju realizes the cruel sense of being a shadow of man; he feel s the meaning of being alienated, the same feeling of shallowness and hollowness that Jemubhai felt when he lived in England.

One of the main motives behind Biju's immigration is escaping social hierarchies and caste unjust paradigms. His father thinks that sending his son to America may better up his socio- economic conditions. However, Biju is exposed to other hierarchical patterns in the U.S. which are as racist and cruel as that of India. The illegal immigrants' slums

encompass different immigrants from different parts of the world who create a certain hierarchy that excludes dark - skinned Third World immigrants. Though they share the same hardships, miserable living conditions, and hard work, they are not equal in terms of their ethnic hierarchy. Biju hi mself is racist against Pakistani immigrants since the whole Indian community establishes ethnic discrimination against the Pakistani in educating their kids. The proof of this is clearly manifested in Biju's father warning "Beware. Beware. Keep away from Pakistani. Distrust" (Desai 22). They share one ultimate dream or rather and obsession with obtaining the "United States Permanent Resident Card" that opens to them gates of success and dignity. Biju realizes that ethnic discrimination is everywhere even in America where Indian immigrants are excluded each time they apply for residence because of the high range of application.

In the midst of all the hardships from which Biju is suffering daily, he develops complex and ambivalent attitudes about India between nostalgia and discontentment. The more he is discriminated due to his ethnicity, the more he clings to and accepts his Indianness. Sometimes he blames his father for sending him to America where he endures exile, alienation, and intimidation. Yet, sometimes he thanks him for urging him to travel to America to secure his future. Biju is shattered like any diasporic subject wandering between spaces and cultures, making sense of his identity and existence. Biju's encounter with the west makes him discern the colonial legacy that establishes otherness in the colonized minds. He establishes in a way a postcolonial discourse where the Self/the Other or the colonizer/the colonized face each other; he shows "an awe of white people who arguably had done India great harm, and a lack of generosity regarding almost everyone else, who had never done a single harmful thing to India." (Desai 77).

The bad living conditions he passes through, the ethnic discriminatory system, and the inability to apply to a Green card project make him despise America in spite of his

efforts to adjust himself to the cultural and linguistic exigencies. For Biju, India remains the nostalgic homeland, the realm of the Semiotic and the peacefulness of his village. India represents the shattered images of desperate dreams to which he can never return before establishing a life in America. Ethnic discrimination and racial prejudices impede the immigrants' way towards assimilation and make him be part of the American society. Through the character of Biju, Desai wants to convey the hardship this category of immigrants endure and criticise the Indian traditional hierarchical society which pushes the Indian youth towards quitting the country. She wants to stress the idea that the journey westward, though painful is a site of tests to make the immigrants make sense of their identities and develop a certain understanding about their existence.

Double-Consciousness Identity (ies) : Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth*

Desai's migrant characters try to conform to the diasporic patterns of uprooting and re- rooting themselves elsewhere in new grounds out of their own choice in an attempt to escape the past and carve out a new life in a new land. Lahiri's characters portray the complexity of clinging to the mother land and living with the trauma of alienation shuttling between two different worlds India and U.S. As a notable young writer of Indian background, Jhumpa Lahiri, British by birth and American by immigration, belongs to the second generation. She narrates the dislocation and social instability to show what it means to straddle the line between two distinct cultures. Most of Lahiri's themes revolve around the generational gap, the uprooted diasporic identities, hybridity celebration, the immigrants' families' tensions, and the inclination towards Americanization. In her fiction, Lahiri tries to blend two cultures to create a new hybrid image of multicultural diasporic identities. She also probes the challenges that the immigrants face to achieve a balance between the East and the West. Lahiri sheds light on the meaning of identity for second generation immigrants who show difficulty in integration and show ambivalence

concerning cultural identity.

Contrary to Desai's characters, Lahiri's characters are usually examined as having a double vision of culture and assert their identity in a multicultural space. Therefore, they reflect the double bicultural vision of hybrid identities and Indian diasporic identities. Her literary works deal more with co-operation of culture instead of the uprooting of native belonging. Lahiri's characters are mostly descending from Bengali origins, mostly intellectual highly educated subjects. She considers Bengali immigrants as different from the other Indian immigrants in the sense that they travel to America for the sake of studying or achieving Academic success. In Lahiri's works, hybrid identities and Third Space situations are recurrent motifs in which issues of cultural identity in the diaspora are put under question culturally, ethnically and linguistically. In contrast to the first generation immigrants' national identity which often relates to geo-political perspectives, nationally known and fixed, the second generation immigrants are thrown in an ambiguous situation where notions of home and belonging are relative.

Lahiri examines the ever-increasing multiplicity of identities as well as the conditions of diasporic people in the U.S. She portrays the struggle of migrants' integration as well as the crisis of identity vested in spatial, emotional, and cultural displacements especially of those immigrants of the first generation who find difficulty in assimilating the culture of the alien world and assert their ethnic identity in the host country. Those immigrants keep tied to their homeland and find difficulty in reconciling with the imposed American culture.They try to understand and re-construct the floating image of home beyond the geographical sphere together with the emotional space via forging a new identity in diaspora.

In her novel, *Unaccustomed Earth*, readers can decipher the problematic of the

hyphenated identity, the cross-cultural conflicts, and the trauma of the Indian women immigrantstogether with the need to reconnect once again with origins. *Unaccustomed Earth* carries out questions and concerns of diasporic generational conflicts whereby the on-going crisis of dual identity is the major reason. In analysing the second and third generations, Lahiri is interested in the concept of diaspora as uprooting and re-rooting one's identity on an unaccustomed totally unfamiliar earth without feeling any remorse, betrayal, or nostalgia to native roots and cultures. The first generation's concern is limited to adaptation, assimilation, and adjustment to the new life being aware of the differences between their native culture and that of the host country. The fact of having already their national and cultural identity for the first generation immigrants facilitates the task to choose what helps in re-constructing a new identity that balances between the needs of the host land and the duty towards the homeland.

The second generation immigrants confront a complicated situation while being presented with totally contrastive versions of culture and belonging: the one learned at home and the other educated at school. Thus, they are trapped in a cultural otherness and left in a constant state of flux and in-betweenness having a double-version of reality where they feel rejected un- belonging to both cultures and roughly regarded as outsiders. The first generation immigrants are characterized by cultural hybridity, yet they are less lost in midst of cultures because they are aware of the difference between the native culture and the western one. Accordingly, they deliberately adopt the host culture through a gradual process of acculturation to be in tune with the requirement of the mainstream needs and codes.

The question of identity brings forth the immigrants' ambivalent situation between being unable to relate to any of these spaces i.e. being unable to live in India and searching for a better life in America, at the same time, feeling a sense of loss and nostalgia for Indian

traditions left behind. This in-between situation reminds of Bhabha's words: "neither the One…nor the Other…but something else besides which contests the terms and territories of both (*The Location of Culture* 57).Their situation is a process of gain and loss on the basis of the difficulty of belonging to a specific space; this situation of non-belonging and cultural dislocation is what characterizes diasporic experiences. Thus, though the novel is set in New York, Seattle, and Calcutta, diaspora and cultural dislocation are still hovering in the background.

Unaccustomed Earth is a eulogy to Indian women who still maintain their Indian culture and take the traditional role of devotion to their home and family. Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth* portrays the generational cross-cultural conflicts in Chatterjee family between an expatriate first generation immigrant couple who stick, notably the wife, to their Indian traditions and resist becoming Americanized and refuse to give up their cultural roots even away from India. In fact, they find difficulty in reconciling their native culture with the American identity,a thing that results in a cultural and individual isolation. Their offspring Ruma and Romi who belong to the second generation, born to a Bengali couple and raised on the American soil, regard themselves as part of the American nation and reject the native culture imposed by their parents.

Lahiri weaves the story of Ruma, a successful hard working graduate in law working in New York. Professionally and conjugally speaking, Ruma is a bright person and a loving caring wife and mother. However, her mother's death marks a breakthrough event that makes her life take another direction. Ruma faces difficulties of uprootedness and belonging in the course of her diasporic identity construction. Her parents are Bengali immigrants who decided to settle down in Pennsylvania. This alludes to the "professional Indians" who, in the waves of the early sixties, went to the U.S as part of the brain drain (Spivak 61). Ruma's father is one of the ambitious Indian students who also leaves his

homeland and reaches America in pursuit of higher studies to prepare a research in the field of “biochemistry to work in a pharmaceutical company with a prospect of settling down with security and respect” (Lahiri 61). The Bengali couple tries to create a new Calcutta in Pennsylvania by exercising rituals and maintaining strong ties with the Indian immigrants in America. Ruma’s mother plays an important role in transferring the ethnic heritage and Bengali culture though her children, especially Ruma, turn a deaf ear to her instructions. Ruma’s mother acts like the umbilical cord that connects her husband and children to India. Lahiri focuses on the period of her death’s aftermath to focus on the characters’ change of attitudes towards both cultures: Indian and American.

Death and birth are intertwined in the novel in the sense that the characters are empowered and capable of deciding their path of life just after the death of Ruma’s mother. Here, we can understand that immigration is a sequential process of death and re-birth to overcome loneliness, not only accepting but also celebrating diasporic identities: or rather celebrate being uprooted to be planted and flourished again in an unaccustomed ground. *Unaccustomed Earth* shows the psychological trauma those results from the identity negotiation to cultural displacement, alienation, and nostalgia for the homeland.

Unaccustomed Earth opens with a sense of trauma, emotional, and spatial alienation. Lahiri portrays Ruma’s deep sense of guilt for not being the girl her mother wants her to be. Ruma’s mother is omnipresent in the novel to symbolize the Indian component in the characters’ hybrid identities. She thinks of her past with nostalgia and she is an example of the traditi onal Indian woman who tries to preserve her customs and recreate the Indian lifestyle in the host country. Ruma’s mother is like most of the Indian women who get married under age and should show obedience and allegiance to their husbands. She represents a whole generation of Immigrant women who were obliged to accompany their husbands to alien spaces.metaphorically speaking, young Indian wives are like uprooted

plants which will soon be transplanted in an unaccustomed earth. Radhakrishnan summarizes the stages immigrants pass through in order to adjust themselves in the American society:“during the initial phase, immigrants supresses their ethnicity in the name of pragmatism and opportunism. To be successful in the New World, they must actively assimilate and therefore hide their distinct ethnicity” (121). When facing the host culture, they feel reluctant to adopt it; Ruma’s mother wants to set the ground for Calcutta with all its different paradigms of cultures, rites, religious ceremonies, and Bengali food on the American soil. Ruma’s mother tries to keep her relation to India and Bengali culture intact by preserving and practising traditional rituals and ceremonies, using Bengali dialect which renounces her strong ties to the native land. Her attachment to the mother land is also manifested through cultural performances by going back to Indian songs, food, costume act, ceremonies, literature, poetry, and cinema. These are means by which she tries to re-create and re-assert her Indian identity.

The identity that Ruma’s parents strive to preserve is often regarded as the “Other” since everyone around her treats her as a stranger in America. So, Ruma considers herself American and finds it difficult to face the social, cultural, religious, and ideological challenges of America, her country, being fundamentally haunted by a sense of loss, agony over the land left behind. Ruma often quarrels with her mother over cultural tensions. Lahiri mentions: “you are ashamed of yourself, of being Indian that is the bottom line” (26). Ruma’s mother focuses on bringing Ruma up, as being a future woman and a bearer of Indian heritage, to become a good Indian woman in order to safeguard and transfer their ethnic cultural codes. Ruma refuses to conform to any of the imposed codes since she sees them as points that highlight her otherness and Indian cultural hostility from American lenses. However, Ruma’s mother thinks that her children’s rejection of Bengali belonging would bring along hostility and rejection by her family back in Calcutta. Having fully

Americanized children connote betrayal to her Bengali culture to which she has long been faithful.

Between assimilation and fear of change, the Chatterjees resist the fact of being on the margin of the western society living in an ethnic Bengali atmosphere set inside an alien entourage. This sense of alienation enhances diasporic feelings and nostalgia to the mother land. Therefore, the degree of diaspora depends on the experiences and the level of nostalgia as well as the manner of acculturation, whether it is partial or complete, in the mainstream society. In *Unaccustomed Earth*, Lahiri brings to recognition issues of Indian in diaspora especially those related to displacement, the generation gap, and the clash between cultures. It talks about the journey of an Indian woman who was urged, out of duty, to accompany her husband to the land of opportunities. Going there against her will make things difficult to adapt as the couple suffers a lot from alienation ; besides, misses her country and relatives in India.

Ruma's mother stands for all the challenges that may confront a postcolonial female subject in diaspora. She insists on the fact that America can never be her new home under any circumstance and confirms that India is her only "home" and only site of belonging that reflects her Indian moral and cultural dogmas. Brah suggests that home is not only a physical concrete entity but a "mystic place of desire" in the immigrants' imagination (192). Ruma's parents try to stay connected to their Indian roots via remaining connected with Bengali immigrants in America. Their visits, ceremonies, rituals, and parties where they prepare Bengali food and speak in their native tongue and dress in their traditional costumes reinforce their sense of

belonging. Thus, they try to create their own Bengali community that contributes to alleviate the pressure of alienation. Cohen comments on the immigrants' meetings in diaspora as a way to revive their native culture and states: "a member's adherence to a

diasporic community is demonstrated by an acceptance of an inescapable link with their past migration history" (15). They try to give an appealing image of their cultural identity to their children. They try to transfer and inculcate in their children Indian values to resist Americanization and preserve their culture from one generation to another.

Lahiri explains that for immigrants, the constant sense of alienation and loneliness as well as the knowledge of and longing for the land left behind are more explicit and distressing for them than for their children (15). It is clear here that nostalgia and ties to the native land and culture are thoroughly internalized and preserved by the first generation than by their children. Lahiri points out that the problem for the children of immigrants, those with ties to the host land which is their country of origins, is that they feel neither one thing nor the other (15). She describes the difficulty to straddle two cultures and belong simultaneously to the cultural tenets of two distinct countries whereby they find themselves fit nowhere. They are regarded as strangers and belonging to both sides; in India they represent the American identity and in America they represent their ethnic identity.

Lahiri recounts some incidents that reflect tensions between Ruma and her mother concerning appearance. Ruma's mother wants her daughter to dress in sari in ceremonies while Ruma finds that sari does not represent her identity. In this respect, Lahiri pointd out: "she had remembered the many times her mother had predicted this very moment, lamenting the fact that her daughter preferred pants and skirts to the clothing she wore, that there would be no one to whom to pass on her things."(17). This incident reflects the second generation's uneasiness with their parents' native culture which shows the difficulty of being aware of one single cultural identity tied to one specific culture. Hall describes cultural identity as "a matter of "becoming" as well as "being", and asserts that "cultural identity is featured by fluidity and never complete, always in process, always constituted within, not outside, representation" (*Cultural Identity* 394). Therefore, cultural

identity cannot exclude one culture from the other and is the outcome of a past native cultural accumulation together with a present culture put in a continuous process and characterized by transformation and transnational shifts.

The mother/daughter tension reaches its peak when Ruma decides to marry Adam, an American man. Ruma's mother feels that her daughter's bond with a non-Indian man causes shame and betrayal to the whole family. Ruma's mother believes in the credibility of Indian arranged marriage and deems that her daughter's marriage project is nothing but a mirage or an illusion; she asserts "that he would divorce her, that in the end he would want an American girl" (Lahiri 26). For Ruma's mother, Adam represents the colonizer and the dominant mainstream culture. She considers him the white Self. On the one hand, Adam comes in contact with the exotic Other. On the other hand, Ruma needs to assert her individuality and agency. She makes it clear that she is an American and that it is quite natural to get married to a man of her choice. By marrying an American man, Ruma cuts any potential tie with her parents' native culture. This bond is an evidence of her American acculturation; she fosters her difference to Indian immigrants.

After her mother's death, Ruma finds out that her life misses a touch of her mother's native codes. Her mother's death represents a shock for Ruma and her father and makes her think about making sense of her self. Lahiri states: death too, had the power to awe, she knew this now- that a human being could be alive for years and years (…) full of a million worries and feelings, and thoughts, taking up space in the world, and in an instant, becomes absent, invisible (46). She loses interest in her work and seems reluctant to attain higher ranks. She lives in a self-imposed isolation in an effort to get immersed in the realm of her mother. She rejects her modern life thinking that the outside world belongs to the men. She tries to enjoy the femininity and experiences women's subaltern position in the patriarchal society. She wants to recreate a copy of her mother by being a wife and

mother. Things started to be traumatic after her pregnancy. This period is a hard time; she is going to experience motherhood for the second time without her mother. Pregnancy can also be seen metaphorically to denote her situation. For the first time, Ruma feels the hostility her mother once felt when she reached America. Through flashbacks, Lahiri presents readers with the unbiased images of alienation and estrangement that Ruma's mother passed through in her journey westward.

Lahiri intensifies the atmosphere of alienation by portraying Ruma's interaction with her new neighbours upon her arrival to Seattle. In fact, Ruma chooses to be alone in a new space to reconnect with her mother's experiences in the diaspora. It is out of guilt and remorse that Ruma is haunted with a strong feeling of grief and loss. This is why, she wants to step back to the past in order to re-live her mother's experiences in the United States. She rather wants to re-implant herself on an unaccustomed ground. She marks a split with her previous life, with the familiar life that she has already chosen. She rather needs to hark back to the origins to the realm of the mother figure. After some time, Ruma shows a certain departure in her interaction with Bengali culture and started to get independent from her westernized culture through a transition to more domestic suburban life. Her escape towards a new environment where she experiences loneliness and displacement is understood as an act of mourning. The more she misses her mother, the closer she gets to Bengali traditions.

The linguistic component of identity is a point of departure towards the identity negotiation and moving beyond a total devotion to the native cultures. Instead of denying the Indian side of her identity, Ruma inclines to develop a hyphenated identity where she appears a s an India- American citizen, a new identity which comprises both ethnic Indian identity and American national citizenship. Ruma reaches the Third space and re-fashions her identity that mediates and negotiates between the needs of both cultures to smash any

borders and any limits. This is an example of the process of "the Third Space" introduced by Bhabha which guarantees the interrelation of both cultures.

Bhabha wonders how the first generation immigrants overcome their cultural dilemmas and sense of displacement and bring change by refashioning and mobilizing the received idea from their "home culture" and "host culture" and how through this act of performance of new "hybrid identities" are negotiated (15). In this respect, Ruma decides to be go back to origins and be in her mother's shoes to create an intimate atmosphere that resembles the one she was brought up in. When she accepted to accompany her husband in Seattle, she tried to identify with her mother. In fact, she followed the same path through which her mother passed. She wants to experience the devotion that her mother used to reveal. Lahiri mentions that "all what Ruma wanted was to stay home with Akash not just Thursday and Friday but everyday. It is the house that was her work now (6). Mixing native traditions with the host culture's reiterates Aschroft et al's concept of reterritorialization/ deterritorialization and can apply to Ruma's attempt to re-territorialize their own traditions and dogmas into settings of hostility and de- terretorialization. Ruma's move to Seattle means the process of uprooting and re-rooting one's culture elsewhere which is a purely diasporic idea. The critics argue that "a migrant lives a "complex existence" that forces them to confront and rework different hegemonic constructions of identity developed in their home into new nations and re-territorialize their practices as well as their identities" (15).

Ruma used to reject what is not compatible with the general conventional ideas in the mainstream culture. In spite of her origins' denial, she grows up to be bicultural as well as bilingual. She tries to teach her son some terms she once learnt from her mother to celebrate hybridity. The readers witness the drastic transformation of Ruma, from a modern successful lawyer who enjoys free will and independence to a caring mother and house-

wife who lives deliberately confined into the houses' walls. It seems that Ruma is not stable and is uncomfortable in both spaces: her work and her house. Hence, she represents a status of in- betweenness. In Bhabha's *The Location of Culture*, he believes that new subjectivities are born and fixed borders are 'crossed' imaginatively. From the 'in-between' marginal status, the migrants go beyond 'binary fixities' of native/migrants and carve new 'routes' instead of lamenting over the lost roots (45). Ruma cherishes memories of her mother's forcing her to behave, think, talk, and react according to the Bengali ethnic ethics. She wants to experience a metamorphosis to revive againtraditions and cultures to which she used to feel disconnected.

Likewise, Ruma maintains "the Third Space" unites two distinct cultures. While culture can be fluid and mobile like immigrants' identities, it does not impede their 'route' towards multiculturalism via taking part in the mainstream American culture. Besides, the immigrants are free to choose and appropriate elements of the American culture that are convenient to them. This is called "Interstices" in Bhabha's terms, which means permitting the immigrant to determine a space of their own in the U.S., a boundless space where there are no borders : neither physical, to overcome displacement, nor cultural, to overcome the anxiety of alienation, or imposed by any particular national identity. In this case, home, as a place of comfort and belonging is mainly conceived as a microcosm of the homeland and has become a potential transnational multicultural space which denotes the immigrants' fluid identity.

In his essay "Culture's in Between", Bhabha argues that in the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible. He elaborates here that home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is a paradigm of post-colonial experience. It represents the shock of recognition of the world in the-home, the home-in-the-world (141). What can be

retained from Bhabha use of 'unhomely' experience is that it does not alleviate the pressure of being geographically and culturally displaced, which is the case of Ruma and her mother, but it embodies the efficiency of this dislocation in negotiating spaces. It is this human ability to forge ties across cultures and continents via representing a conscious effort that gets the native culture preserved. Ruma's mother translates her domestic roles to inhabit the transnational borderland. She negotiates between American and Bengali cultures.

The Universality of Diasporic Identities

Transnationalism is another eminent process by which immigrants create fields that cross national boundaries and deny any unique fixed identity attached to a certain territory. In spite of the opennes of transnational diasporic identities, immigrantsstill live "a complex existence" that forces them to confront and rework their different hegemonic constructions of identity developed in their homelands. Following a transnational diasporic identity re-formation make immigrants "re-territorialize" their identities and cultures anywhere in the world (Said*Culture and Imperialism* 181-2). Consequently, in their attempt to comply with the new social norms, immigrants seek to change the way they live, talk, and conceive ideas; such immigrants manage to live, at some level, in two worlds simultaneously. Sociologists usually regard immigrants as "transnationals" because they increasingly attempt to define their identities in terms of both their point of origin and their destination. They are prepared to participate in the social, political, and cultural life in both the host society and the sendi ng state (Krivisto 39). *The Inheritance of Loss* and *Unaccustomed Earth* celebrate the globalized cultural hybridity. Both Desai and Lahiri record and rethink the immigrants' diasporic experiences. They are aware of the cultural complexity in the multicultural America and both suggest that retaining a transnational identity has become a need to be accepted in the host land.

Being born and brought up in the mother land, the first generation immigrants feel proud of their cultural heritage.Lahiri thinks that the second generation expresses its aberrations and deviations. Lahiri emphasizes the universality of diasporic identities living without borders or a fixed "home". Diasporic identities belong to everywhere and nowhere.In almost all her novels, Lahiri focuses on images of dislocation, instability, and emotional distance regarding the first generation immigrants' relationship with their children. In fact, Lahiri wants to emphasize that the second generation diaspora can only re-set their roots after undergoing a cultural dislocation. Though Ruma and Romi regard themselves as purely American citizens, they remain in a status of in-between of two distinct cultures. Yet, they consider India as a foreign country far away from home both physically and psychologically. From their early age, Ruma and her brother found difficulty to live according to the Indian cultural codes. They struggle to reconcile the dual culture, torn between their sense of fascination towards the American lifestyle, freedom and their obligation towards their parents. As mentioned above, Ruma chooses to live and bring up her son according to Indian traditions willingly. However, she always faces a constant chain of shortcomings, confusions, and contradiction.

After her mother's death, according to Indian traditions, Ruma is obliged to take care of her father till his death. Nevertheless, this idea confuses Ruma thinking that she can never stand the presence of her father in her life especially after her marriage. Deep inside, Ruma feels tha t her father's presence in her life represents a burden; she "feared that her father would become a responsibility, an added demand, continuously present in a way she was no longer used to" (Lahiri 7). Here lies the paradox: Ruma wants to live as a dutiful obedient Indian mother and wife but can never accomplish all the Indian duties allotted to a woman. Ruma's cliniging to one aspect of identity over the other opposes the diasporic endeavour to carve out a multiplicity of identities in a process of cultural formation. She is

discovering and trying to internalize unaccustomed feelings and codes when embracing the Indian culture. This new cultural identity includes pieces of cultural inheritance to get incorporated into their lives as Americans. This situation foreshadows Hall's idea of 'being' and 'becoming' of a cultural identity since redefining the homeland necessitates a redefinition of one's identity.

Lahiri portrays the character of Ruma's father to reflect the difficulty of being torn between two cultures, past and present and the burden of duty towards family and native culture and the fascination of American liberating lifestyle. For Ruma's father, his wife's death is no longer a sad event. In fact, he feels liberated from his duties to the native land and culture that his wife insisted to maintain. After retirement from his work, Ruma's father decides to live freely without any responsibility or duty to family or a specific culture. One acute instance of his intention to cut relations with the past is selling his house in Pennsylvania. He sells the house that used to contain the memories and elements that bond him to India. In contrast with Ruma, her father celebrates hybridized identities and feels that getting away from native cultures is no more a loss but a gain.

Ruma's father rejects old Bengali customs, this is why he refuses to stay with his daughter for fear he disturbs the normal western harmony of the American family. Lahiri reflects: "he knew that it was not for his sake that his daughter was asking him to live here. It was for hers… he didn't want to be a part of another family…he didn't want to live in the margin of his daughter's life, in the shadow of her marriage." (53). In an attempt to cast aside his past, Ruma's father respects the sense of privacy and individual liberty that the western societies maintain. Contrary to what is expected, he grows more and more American than his children in mentality, clothes, and lifestyle.When Ruma's father visited her in Seattle, she got surprised at his Americanized appearance. Their meeting is a shock for both Ruma and her father. Ruma is surprised at the extent of assimilation and

acculturation her father has achieved. On the other hand, her father is surprised how much his daughter has changed to the extent that she resembles her mother more than ever. He also stunned to the way she addresses her son in Bengali. He witnesses a drastic change rather a transformation from an inobedient revolutionary girl to a dutiful mother; he notices "something about his daughter's appearance has changed; she now resembled her mother so strongly that he couldn't bear to look at her directly." (Lahiri 28).

Through Re-fashioning a diasporic identity, Ruma's father steps away from the "Otherness" label that stems from his inability to reconcile both cultures into one identity. The superiority of the Self as opposed to the inferiority of the Other. The Indian traditions that his wife used to impose filled his children with a sense of humility and reinforced their otherness when meeting American people. In short, Ruma's father is just like Jemubhai; both want to belong to western ideologies and way of life and reject any other culture. He is eager to blend into the American society as long as the Bengali culture disappears with the disappeance of his wife.

Thinking as an American, studying with American students, addressing his childrenat home in English, instead of Bengali, reinforces the transformation of Ruma's father from a Bengali-bred immigrant at home to an American independent student. In the course of the cultural formation, for Ruma's father, identity is a matter of choice; he tries to map out pieces of multiple cultural identities into one entity, into transnational identity, that reflects the spirit of contemporary multicultural America. Ruma's father is regarded as a diasporic character, par excellence. He characterizes the notion of uprooting and getting re-rooted and flourishes on an unaccustomed unfamiliar earth. Ruma's father understands well Ruma's sense of hostility when moving away from New York; however, he disapproves the fact of letting go her job and her former successful life. In addition to that, Ruma marks a drastic move in the lifestyle by shifting from an independent successful lawyer to a self-

imposed housewife. He feels the resemblance between his wife and Ruma in living alone in a hostile unaccustomed space.

The diasporic identity is clearly omnipresent in the image of the garden. The uncultivated garden connotes Ruma's loneliness and hostility. Upon his arrival, he notices that there is a small uncultivated parcel of land just in the entrance of the house. He shows no hesitation to cultivate it and plant some plants and flowers, that his wife used to like, in the new garden of his daughter. By cultivating the garden, he makes the space more accustomed to his daughter. By planting the garden, Ruma's father tries to make her daughter's place more familiar and intimate. Spivak comments on the diasporic transnational identities that Ruma's father embodies saying: "this new transnationality, the new diaspora, is the new scattering seeds of developing nations so that they can take roots on developed ground" (305). Ruma's father wants to transfer his transnational experience to his daughter and her third-generation son to follow his path and move away from home to strike their roots in unaccustomed soils.

Ruma has long had a complex paradoxical relationship with her parents especially with her father. Their relationship is characterised by tension, restriction, and coldness. These elements justify Ruma's big confusion of her father's visit and the possibility of staying with her. Between Bengali traditions and American codes, Ruma is lost and confused; she transfers this confusion to her son Akash. Ruma teaches Akash a few Bengali words that she learnt from her mother; however, she finds out that she cannot manage the situation further since she i s not an Indian subject. She refers to some limited elements in Bengali as "it was slipping from her" (Lahiri 12). It also marks the incessant expatriate insight of cultural imbalance that urges them to go in a quest for a stabilizing identity. Ruma is already hybrid, both Indian and American swaying between gains and losses, between multiplicity and nothingness. Second generation immigrants sometimes

feel belonging and un-belonging to two nations or no nation, having two names but left with no specific name ; so they are unable, especially under their parents' pressure, to prefer on culture over the other according to their own choice. Ruma represents the instability andchaos of identities, cultural constraints, and clashes that epitomize a whole generation with lost psyche and social expectations.

When analysing Ruma's father transnational identity, we find out that he reaches Bhabha's the Third Space. After his wife's death, he starts roaming the world to break away from anything tying him to familial links and former identity. He is no longer interested in traveling to India. He feels a stranger there just as he feels hostility in Europe. He is travelling the world and has no fixed space to celebrate his transcultural identity by being unattached to one single fixed space, culture or identity. When he travels to Seattle, he feels as any American who moves westward. He ceases to feel the unfamiliarity of the the American spaces. On the contrary, America is his country now and ceases to be an unaccustomed earth. Lahiri comments:

> Studying a map, he was surprised by how far he was from the Pacific Ocean, not realizing until now that the mountains stand in the way. Though he had travelled such a distance, his surroundings did not feel foreign to him as they had when he went to Europe. There he was reminded of his early days in America, understanding only a word or two of what people said, handling different coins. Here, as on a summer night in Pennsylvania, moths fluttered against the window screen. (28)

The quotation above suggests a kind of reconciliation and acceptance of the host countr y's culture. Ruma's father reaches a balanced stage in the process of his identity refashioning. No matter how hard he makes efforts to deny and reject his Indian roots, he still feels nostalgia. It is quite ironical that he gets involved in an affair with an Indian woman and not an American one. Though he considers himself a part of the multicultural American society, he feels more comfortable with the Indian-American subjects.

In the course of studying *The Inheritance of Loss*and *Unaccustomed Earth*, I notice that Desai and Lahiri focus on the tension between the past and the present which reflects

Hall's idea of "being" and "becoming". Though Jemubhai changes his name and tries his best to wipe out his past by denouncing his cultural roots, he finds himself unconsciously connected to his roots. Indeed, he is uncomfortable with his past, history, and skin color. Desai focuses on the first generation immigrants to the U.K and the U.S and gives a dim view of racism, otherness, and humiliation when approaching the west. On the other hand, given the mobility of human nature and culture across nations, Lahiri seeks to bring about a diasporic transnational image of hybrid identities in multicultural societies.

By focusing on the second and third generation subjects, Lahiri explains the process of "de-territorializing" the fixed national and cultural identities of India and "re-territorializing" them again on an alien unaccustomed soil. Through Ruma and her father, Lahiri suggests that individuals are not able to stay confined within the narrow concepts of national and cultural norms in the age of globalization which is a characterized notion of hybridity, transnationality along with transculturalism. Accordingly, multiculturalism comes to the fore to reflect Man's return to his roots as he can never forego his past in his constantidentity. His expatriate sensibility goes on a continuous pace till he fulfils his search.

The fluidity of diasporic identities helps immigrants transcend the geographical and ideological boundaries in an effort to reconcile with the past, accept the present, and project towards the future. Lahiri makes it clear that Indians are not the only ethnic community which experiences diaspora or feels dislocated, but the trauma of cultural dislocation touches upon all the American ethnic communities such as those of Hispanic and Chinese immigrants (75).

It is well understood that the processes of multiculturalism and transnationality serve in self-fashioning in its most dynamic form. It has become an on-going mechanism

that the Third Space marks toleration and acceptance for those immigrants to recognize that acculturation is an effective way to avoid any cultural clash between cultures. Diaspora has created various possibilities of understanding different histories which have given definition to identity, self, and culture.

In the final stage, immigrants realize the real meaning of "hybrid existence" ; that culture gets richer through overlapping and interacting with other cultures and not through isolation. Therefore, cultural multiplicity becomes eminent to globalization and multiculturalism. The hybrid subjects narrated in the texts by Desai and Lahiri represent multi - facets of personified inter-culturation. Such intermingling identities and self-fashioning become relatively manageable and hybrid identity more accepted. Defining selves in a dislocated existence is an ever-changing process. This mechanism starts up with one's preliminary definition of self to adopted definition, the one that paves the way towards hyphenated identities. Only through undergoing the trauma of cultural dislocation and hybridity, immigrants may reconcile with their past; thus, the individual can arrive at a new awareness of identity and existence in a certain ethnic community. This situation of increasing hybridity of the Indian diaspora is internalized through the self-definition which encapsulates the characters' attempt to achieve such a status.

Both Desai and Lahiri write about immigration as a journey in a search of one's self. In fact, immigration is a process of loss and gain, of destruction and establishment, of approaching and distancing. Both pairs crystallize the different experiences of Indians in the diaspora. Reaching the Third Space and overcoming the colonized otherness is a proof of cross-cultural mutations to refashion their identities on an alien land. Desai's migrant characters instinctively understand that self-assertion does not necessarily imply a confidence in a stable, fixed self. Their struggle to maintain multiple selves through violent situations helps in creating a continual articulation of their precarious individuality in the

world. On the other hand, in Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth*, Ruma first rejects but later accepts her parents' native culture and succeeds in merging and enriching her actual identities; while her father is an American by virtue of his assimilation yet he cannot break away from his Indian roots. The characters analysed represent well diasporic subjects having many roots and belonging to many cultures, a cluster of selves defined by an ever-changing process of identity formation. The authors also emphasize the inescapable excess of cultural interaction and the borderland set for multiple postcolonial subjectivities. In the present time, globalization, immigration, diaspora and multiculturalism are cross-cultural elements which help understand the hybridity of identities as well as the politics of location.

CONCLUSION

The study demonstrates the role of hybridity in forging identities in the diaspora for both the first and second generation immigrants. Young second-generation immigrants who themselves display the status of hybridity (Jhumpa Lahiri, Laila Halaby, and Diana Abu-Jaber) give their interpretation of the constant diasporic consciousness that haunts immigrants in an alien environment. As it has been mentioned in the introduction, these postcolonial novels are well selected to trace the images of otherness especially in depicting Third World women generally regarded as double-othered subjects. The writers want to probe tropes of racism, class hierarchies, colonial legacies, and gender relations in the present-time. They give a contemporary reading of those tropes away from the traditional readings practised on the ground of historical conflicts of indigenous people and colonial powers before WWII. This study instead aimed to incorporate the past and the present in hope to understand the dynamicity of the contemporary postcolonial novel produced mainly by immigrants.

Through the analysis of the selected novels, we explored the mechanisms of resistance to racism and sexism alongside the effect of mother land memories in diaspora. This thesis has located the ways in which the characters of this study have navigated spaces and cultural boundaries for the sake of reaching a coherent self-understanding of identity within racialized, class, and gender limitations. As it has been analysed throughout the four chapters, immigrants' identity formation is established through the juxtaposition of their personal identities in relation to their perceived or externally realized identities. Besides, this study has examined the facets of hostility and cultural rejection of immigrants that is still inherent in Western societies. It also probes the western insistence on dualism in treating and categorizing immigrants in order to install the traditional paradigms of

Self/Other or Western superiority/Eastern inferiority. The result is crystal clear and well confirmed in the novels especially those produced by American and British born writers.

As witnessed throughout the study, the hierarchical realities are still intact. Class struggle, racialized ideas, and gender roles determine the diasporic consciousness of immigrants.It seems that the politics of location serves in an identity determined by the continual negotiation between the centre and periphery or Self and Other. At the core of these novels lies a deep sense of disappointment with the artificial Western celebration of liberties, multiplicity of races, and cultures. In reality, there is a significant clash between antagonistic cultures, and therefore, the rejection of what is "in-between" or hybridized has become inevitable. Beyond the appealing calls for equality and toleration lie exclusion, rejection, and discrimination. The novels treated depict the gap between what is propagated for and reality; they display a vivid picture of the breach happening to the promising calls for accepting and appreciating differences usually marketed by globalization. When drawing upon the views articulated by Arab-American or Indian-American female writers living in America, we find out that non-western subjects are far from being accepted or integrated. Conversely, hybridity is no more acceptable since it does not represent a "lightened version" of complete otherness. Western societies deny hybridized identities and turn a blind eye towards their partial belonging and participation. They are altogether relegated to the borders of culture inflicted by duality, confusion, and ambiguity determined by power discourses.

Besides, it is noticed that immigrants' identities are fluid and ambivalent always wondering whether they belong or not belong to their societies. The characters' perpetual negotiation suggests that their identities will always change; in short, they stay static, still influencing and getting influenced by their socio-cultural surroundings. However, this is

not due to their indecisiveness, they rather maintain an identity that is flexible and unyielding. Seemingly, immigrants' dual engagement directly overlaps with strategies and patterns of identity formation on the ground of race, gender, and class. Immigration for some characters such as Sara, Hyacinth, Nimi, Jehumbai, and Ruma's father represent the universality of diasporic identities. Through immigrations, the novels' characters disclose their difference and involvement in multiple realities and representations. Immigration is the "mirror stage", to borrow Lacan's term, through which the immigrant subjects break away from the realm of the mother figure towards self-discovery. Immigration is the space where the Self and the Other encounter: where the colonizer and the formerly colonized meet. Between empowerment, liberation, marginalization and historically imposed patterns of otherizing the colonized, non-western female protagonists stand face to face with their current self-image that the diaspora stipulates.

During a long history of slavery and oppression, Black female writers question their positions in the diaspora. They realize that the long history of colonialism and imperialism that their ancestors endured has never been erased by independence, and eventually, the label of the "Other" is still persistent. In fact, they discover their otherness in the diaspora where they internalize marginalization, the “western gaze”, and oppression applied on their ancestors beforehand.Therefore, these female protagonists of Caribbean novels are caught between the duality of the local/global or the individual/communal in forging their new identity. When examining the diasporic characters through the individual dimension of identity formation, a fluid understanding of individual identity emerges. Immigrants start to understand that they do not carry out one cultural identity but a mixture of cultural identities. Yet, a constant sense of ambiguity and displacement still prevails. On the other hand, when analysed through the experimental patterns of intergenerational subjects, a distinct hybrid identity emerges. It is merely the case of the second generation immigrants

who are left with hyphenated identities and eventually torn between two cultures and two worlds.

Bhabha wants to show a kind of negotiation, toleration and acceptance of the "Other" through suggesting the concept of"hybridity". In fact, he gives an optimistic view of hybridity which offers the possibility of integration due to its partial engagement with the West. However, what is found out from the analysis of the novels in this thesis reveals a challenging result. This situation makes readers question the limits and the validity of hybridity in alleviating the pressure of being the "Other". The Self can never accept any negotiation with the Other on common grounds but it insists on its superiority even when the Other imitates the Self or gains self-determination. The example of this situation is found in the novels where the female protagonists develop a transnational identity and assert their ability to survive and succeed beyond violence and the discouraging Western attitudes. Nevertheless, they are never well recognized or valued in relation to Western standards. They are still imprisoned in the boundaries of victimization and otherness.

The ambivalence or in-betweenness which accompanies hybridity does not facilitate the immigrants' integration but intensifies his sense of indecisiveness and potential marginality in the diaspora or in the native land. The Western hierarchical levels of culture and class are far from embracing the immigrants' hybridity often identified through their inherited otherness. Therefore, studying these novels helps comprehend postcolonialism and its aim to defy globalizing views and projects generally advocating Western codes. It also offers a space to question the Western fixed cultural, historical, and political conditions that establish representations and still maintain the same patterns of othering. By understanding postcolonialism, readers may conceive the cultural and political changes of the colonial discourse. It helps mapping out the shifting senses of othering

conceptualization, cultural differences, identity negotiation, and representations.

As regards experiences and perceptions of racial prejudices and cultural alienation, the female protagonists develop an individual sense of their female identity which cannot be achieved in the boundaries of patriarchal and traditional authorities. Therefore, immigration helps these female protagonists understand their position to comprehend the ways or possibilities of expressing their communal/national identity in the diaspora. Immigration, thus, is a space of self-questioning and re-evaluating one's extent of belonging to two distinct cultures.It is also a space that permits an understanding of the gender roles beyond patriarchal norms.In fact, the politics of location changes when theimmigrants' cultural or physical locations change. These novels reveal the frustration and continual struggle to be integrated in multicultural societies. The female immigrants' experiences of racial prejudices are different; they mediate between racial intensity and cultural rejection. They recognize their otherness on racial grounds.

The aim of this thesis was also to examinre the multiplicity of postcolonial female experiences in the diaspora. In fact, the attitudes to racial representations vary. For instance, the way the Arab immigrant women are seen and treated does not always correspond to the way Black women are treated. Immigrant experiences are often intertwined with cultural differences, otherness, and hostility. The postcolonial feminist reading of the novels reveals that immigration represents a space of self-actualization along with being a site of massive experiences of oppression. It transforms the immigrants' views of themselves and their homeland in a way that helps re-inventing a new identity.

Immigration and diasporic identities challenge fixity and advocate fluidity. Diasporic identities do not correspond to one culture. The current change of the on-going globalized identities reveals the multiple conditions and experiences that immigrants pass

through. Amid the intersection between contemporary postcolonial writings produced by Arab, South Asian, and Caribbean female authors readers understand the position of the subaltern or the doubly othered females in the diaspora. Besides, shedding light on multiculturalism and hybridity in the course of this study reflects the persistent binarism. that pushes almost all the selected writers to choose an open ending for their novels. The ambiguity that these writers use leads open gates for speculation and different interpretations. The interpretation of the open ending is due to the lack of solutions for racial prejudices and class conflicts in the diaspora.

Studying otherness as a source of empowerment in postcolonial context will be among the future studies. We can consider otherness as an empowerement and celebration of difference. In this thesis as in all postcolonial works, the notion of otherness is treated as the reason social marginalization. However, we need other contemporary literary works where the characters come to understand their difference and eventually accept and appreciate it. We expect the emergence of postcolonial novels in the future where the subaltern can speak, make his voice heard, and be appreciated. Beyond the hybrid dimension of identities, accepting otherness might lead to a new level of categorization and elicit more authenticity in the process of identity re-fashioning.

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