PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS & ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
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ROUTES RATHER THAN ROOTS: HOME AND BELONGING IN LAILA LALAMI'S *THE OTHER AMERICANS* (2019)

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree

Submitted by
Ms. Siham RAMLI

Supervised by
Mr. Bachir SAHED

2021-2022

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2021-2022

DEDICATION

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To my dearest mother, Sakina

Affable, honourable, amiable: You represent for me the symbol of kindness par excellence, the source of tenderness and the example of the devotion that has never ceased to encourage me and pray for me. Your prayer and your blessing have been of great help to me in carrying out my studies.

To my dear Father, Houcine

No dedication can express the love, esteem, dedication and respect I have always had for you. Nothing in the world is worth the efforts made day and night for my education and my well-being. This work is the fruit of your sacrifices that you made for my education and training.

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A special and sincere thank you for all your efforts. You have always been present.

To my sisters Dalal, Iman, Chahrazad, Khaoula, Fairouz and brothers, Brahim** and **Ali

You have always been there for good advice. Your affection and support have been of great help to me throughout my professional and personal life. Please find in this modest work my gratitude for all your efforts.

To my little nephews Houcine, Mohamed, Youcef Wassim, Ahmed, Adem and my niece Yassmine Amina my love.

SIHAM

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ABSTRACT

The present research examines the issues of identity, displacement, otherness, unhomeliness and belonging in Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans* (2019). The novel dramatizes the overshadowed and silenced stories of the displaced migrant people in the life of the characters (nine characters) through the story of a Moroccan migrant family whose hope of an American dream comes to break on the shores of a reality of being othered after the father's Driss death; relegated to a lower status by the white-dominated society. Throughout the novel, Driss and his wife Maryam, their daughters Nora and Selma, Jeremy, The detective Coleman and Efrain are described as being torn between the two worlds of their origins homeland and their host country. Hence, the study aims at highlighting migrants struggle to find a new home and belonging far from their countries of origin. Lalami scrutinises the anxiety of belonging in *The Other Americans* stressing ideas of displacement, alienation, and otherness. Lalami endeavours to investigate characters alienation and quest for identity in the light of Homi Bhabha's ideas and theories of hybridity. The study analyses the impact of the displacement, unhomeliness, otherness and belonging on the protagonist Driss and his family also the other characters in the novel. The present study is divided into a general introduction, two chapters, the first chapter has supplied the socio–historical context and theoretical framework of this research, the second chapter has explored the dilemma of belonging in the novel and a general conclusion. In the end, the research concludes that changing the home and land is linked to the affiliation dilemma, and its impact is clear on immigrants who are experiencing a dilemma of belonging and diaspora.

Keywords: displacement; hybridity; unhomeliness; disillusionment; othering; belonging; third space

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INTRODUCTION

Displacement and dislocation made unprecedented changes in the history of human development. The globalization and capitalism ensued in the extensive migration which brought economic and social developments in the nook and corners of the world. Besides, physical as well as cultural dislocation of the 'home' and relocation of the same in the 'host' made sometimes unfavourable effect. It caused uncertainty of identity and the creation of a 'third space'.

The identity discourse in the postcolonial studies is much debatable and, in that context, theories of displacement supported it as well. Once the migrant leaves home, the transformation in the very notion of identity is visibly operating. Apart from the identity issues, the displacement results in other diasporic matters also like longing and belonging, cultural conflict, otherness, national feeling and alienation, can be seen physically and psychologically in the displaced people (Jaleel 331-32).

Laila Lalami is considered to be a unique and confident voice in the conversations about race and immigration that increasingly occupy national attention. Lalami also deals with issues about immigration and borders, the Middle East and North Africa, contemporary Islam, and Muslim women. She also discusses race and citizenship in the United States, as well as forgotten histories and historical fiction.

The Moroccan born American author, Lalami, published her novel *The Other Americans* in (2019), to shed light on the suspicious death of a Moroccan immigrant in California, which sets off a chain of events that reveals a family's secrets, a small town's hypocrisies, and the ties that bind people together. Hence, Lalami tries to give voice to the immigrants in which they were born and raised. They go to another place

and it is usually the foreign land for job, trade, visit and studies, to live there for a long time or settle down for their long life period, who feel displaced from their originalities such as home, families, relatives, language, cultures that they have left behind.

Lalami's novel recounted through different points of view, can trip up even the most seasoned authors, but all of the characters in the book are rendered beautifully, with dialogue that's both natural and compelling. Lalami switches effortlessly between characters like Driss, a Muslim-raised atheist, who wants nothing more than to lead a good life for his family, and Anderson, an elderly bowling alley owner, who resents Driss and his family. Lalami treats all of her characters with compassion, never condescending to them or treating them like simple archetypes, and writes about them with the gorgeous prose that has marked all of her previous books. *The Other Americans* is a beautiful, compassionate novel with keen insight into the human condition and a rare gift for crafting perfect prose.

Lalami's novel tackles heavy themes such as gender, equality, racism, identity, otherness, displacement, immigration as a social system, and many other profound subject matters. Lalami's novel, centred on both immigrants and Americans, is able to create a world in which the struggles that immigrants face are very much similar to those that Americans face in their own home country. She essentially lowers the wall of separation that has grown increasingly *status quo* in America between immigrants and Americans. In the case of Nora, Lalami provides details about the feeling of being alienated and alone as she grew up as the child of immigrants, being ridiculed for her differences and not really feeling as if she had a place where she grew up.

Jeremy experienced much of the same things growing up as his father's abandonment in his life following the sudden death of his mother forced him into a life that he did not want. The loneliness and alienation that Nora felt because of how she came to be in America, Jeremy felt a lot of the same emotion but for a different reason. In her novel, Lalami depicts the loneliness and alienation experienced by Jeremy and Nora. Lalamiis able to use the emotional connectedness of characters in completely different situations. Despite the fact that we may come from different places in the world and speak different languages, we all share the same experience as human beings.

The question of "How to become an American citizen?" is a question that has been asked and answered many times before, but since the early days of this country, there have always been people who consider themselves more American than their neighbours. According to some, real Americans have certain common traits: native-born, white, English-speaking, and Christian. Everyone else is different, an American of less Americanness. These rising divisions lie at the heart of *The Other Americans*, author Leila Lalami's latest novel. Lalami's novel is a stunning and necessary look at a country grappling with racism, resentment, and the consequences of war.

Therefore, this study investigates how Laila Lalami depicts Americans of different races and uses as an example Guerraoui's family, a Moroccan immigrant to escape the political persecution suffered by the protagonist, Idriss Guerraoui. Through her novel, Lalami discusses the problems of immigrants and their sense of alienation and their division between their country of origin and their roots and between integration in their host country, their exposure to racism and the difficulties of integration through many of the characters in the novel.

For this reason, examining these elements will not only reveal the facts about the plight of alienation and belonging among immigrants in America, but also to scrutinize immigration and its effects on Americans of Arab, Mexican and African descent, who suffer from crises of belonging, lack of acceptance and disappointment. Furthermore, this research examines the elements of stereotyped images related to the identity crisis and belonging that Americans of other origins suffer from, and how they face many problems in an American society that considers them to be others.

Three days after the killing of African-American George Floyd by suffocation under the feet of a white American officer, the dismissed officer was arrested, who was charged with manslaughter. The policeman accused of killing George Floyd, the 46-year-old black man who died during his arrest in Minneapolis, was arrested in the northern United States, as announced by local authorities. This incident is similar to the incident that led to the killing of Idris, in *The Other Americans*, as both characters are of different race and colour. This incident is engraved in the memory of every American of an African, Arab or Mexican origin and brought to mind the bad behaviour against immigrants and a stereotypical image that portrays them as others who do not live up to the description of real Americans.

One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory is hybridity. It commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, hybrid species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, and racial.

Central to Bhabha's notion of hybridity is the concept of unhomeliness. According to Bhabha 'home' is perceived to be a place of stable identity where one has been and

is understood. Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural ‘exchange’.

Many researchers and critics have shown interest in this topic, and in Laila Lalami’s fiction. However, very few have approached *The Other Americans* given its recent publication (2019). Thus, critics have praised her profound treatment of the issues of identity and belonging, displacement, and immigration in her novel *The Other Americans* (2019). Among the writers who have attempted to investigate Lalami’s treatment of identity is Bethanne Patrick (2019) in his article entitled “We Are All ‘The Other Americans’”. He focused on Lalami’s analysis of contemporary life in America.

In her article entitled, “Dear dad: an Homage to Laila Lalami and Her Moroccan American Dream” (2020), Jocelyn A. Frelier examined Lalami’s transformation of transnational Moroccan literature. She also analyses the waves of Mediterranean crossings pursuing the Moroccan American dream.

In their article entitled, “The Weather as a Storyteller in Lalami’s *The Other Americans*” (2021), Amal Al-Khayyat and Yousef Awad disscuss the role of the weather in revealing the protagonist’s story. They stress the fact that the weather conditions reflect Nora’s deep emotions and her inner thoughts.

What brings out our curiosity and motivation to undertake this research is to give a voice to the voiceless immigrants and minorities who suffer from racism and disillusionment and alienation from their homelands in America, the country of freedoms that some of its people still describe who are different from them Ethnicity, colour, or religion as other Americans.

Therefore, this research seeks to provide answers to the following major question: Will America one day fulfil the dream it sells to potential immigrants around the world? In order to answer this question, the research will attempt to answer to the following sub-questions: What are the main stereotypes inflicted to immigrants especially Arabs in the novel? What are the kinds of race discrimination faced by the characters in the novel? How do the concepts of home and belonging affect the characters in *The Other Americans*?

The aim of this study is to develop an understanding about the different aspects of otherness and stereotyping in the American society and to inspect the plight of immigrants in their new homeland as they struggle to challenge those stereotypical roles. It is intended that the research findings will provide an insight into the realities of identity both immigrants and Americans, is able to show a world in which the struggles that immigrants face are very much similar to those that Americans face in their own home country.

In order to attain the above mentioned aims, a set of objectives should be achieved, and the central objective of this research is to employ Homi Bhabha's theory of hybridity to unveil the different stereotypes in the novel. Thus, it is of great significance to illustrate the different stereotypes inflicted to immigrants in the American society as depicted in the novel.

The present research examines the notion of displacement which has turned into one of the burning issues because of its intensive and prolonged psychological, physical, and cultural impacts on human beings, as well as fictional characters. The research analyses how postcolonial writers from various corners of the world are vividly representing this issue of displacement in their writing. It discusses how

displacement affects human beings through the novel in the light of Bhabha's theory of hybridity. It also scrutinizes the interaction between the novel's characters using Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness. This study discusses and examines how the Diaspora Literature involves an idea of a homeland and the notion of othering through the novel's characters. Thus, our research addresses the issue of hybridity its nature by defining it and its impact on humans, especially immigrants.

Therefore, the current study is divided into two chapters: The first chapter is entitled Socio-historical Context and Theoretical Framework, and it puts *The Other Americans* into its social, cultural, political, and historical context. It also presents the theoretical framework, explaining the notion of displacement and hybridity in order to analyse the novel and to show the feelings of unhomeliness and alienation. It also presents Homi Bhabha's concept of unhomeliness and hybridity to show how displacement affects the characters.

The second chapter is entitled: The Dilemma of Belonging in *The Other Americans* and it mainly sheds light on the notion of stereotyping the other to identify and explore instances of othering in the narrative. This chapter attempts to analyse the language of the novel and to focuses on the use of code-switching. It also discusses the notion of disillusionment, and explores how characters experience alienation and disillusionment in this polyphonic novel. Each character's micro-story and, hence, understanding how they contribute in weaving the macro-story which is needled by the threads of race, xenophobia, and belonging.

CHAPTER ONE: SOCIO HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Laila Lalami was born in Rabat and educated in Morocco, Great Britain, and the United States, a novelist, short story writer, and essayist, Lalami is a unique and confident voice in the conversations about race and immigration that increasingly occupy our national attention. She is a regular contributor to publications including *The Nation, The Los Angeles Times,* and *The New York Times Magazine,* weighing in on contemporary issues in the Arab world and North Africa. Her fiction deals with the questions of race, displacement.

1. Laila Lalami: Formative Years

Lalami's first novel, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005), was inspired by a brief article buried deep within a French newspaper. It mentioned, in just a few lines, that fifteen would-be immigrants from Morocco had drowned crossing the Straits of Gibraltar. *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* is a collection of intimate character portraits of a group of immigrants trying to escape Morocco for a better life in Europe.

Lalami explores the overlaps between her own experiences and those of her characters, while offering up a lens through which to view today's immigration issues. As hundreds of migrants continue to cross the Mediterranean for safer shores many of them perishing along the way—*Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* remains devastatingly timely.

Her second novel *Secret Son* (2009) revisits questions of identity and class. The main character is Youssef El Mekki, a shy, bookish young man living in a slum in

Casablanca who discovers that his father is a wealthy businessman. When Youssef's father welcomes him into a sophisticated, highly corrupt world, Youssef must renegotiate complex issues of family, ideology, and society. In this novel, Lalami depicted contemporary Moroccan life in an illuminating way.

The Moor's Account (2014) portrays the life of the first non-native person of colour to explore America, a voice entirely absent from our history books. In 1527, a Spanish expedition to Florida met with disaster, leaving only four survivors, among them a Moroccan slave. Years later, the Spaniards wrote and spoke about their ordeal, but the slave, Mustafa al-Zamori, always called Estevanico, never shared his story. Finally, Lalami gives Estevanico a voice in *The Moor's Account*.

The Other Americans (2019), is about the suspicious death of a Moroccan immigrant in a small California town. The repercussions of his death bring together a diverse cast of characters whose invisible connections—even while they remain deeply divided by race, religion, or class—are slowly revealed. It is at once a family saga, a murder mystery, and a love story, infused with questions about America's treacherous legacy of violent discrimination. *The Other Americans* "confirms Lalami's reputation as one of the country's most sensitive interrogators, probing at the fault lines in family, and the wider world" (Financial Times). Hailed as "*A powerful novel of intolerance and compassion, resilience and weakness, love and loss*" by The Economist,

Lalami started writing *The Other Americans* two years before Donald Trump was elected president. She is a vocal critic of him now, but when she first started writing the book, she didn't even really know who he was. Still, the story feels particularly relevant as America is experiencing a surge of harmful nativist rhetoric and violence,

with Trump's election widely seen as a flashpoint in the United States for issues of migration and identity.

The Other Americans also gives the point of view of a character who hates immigrants. Lalami had to switch voices, as each short chapter is told from the point of view of a different character, at times taking the reader through the uncomfortable experience of looking at the world through the eyes of a character whose views may disturb them.

Lalami's latest work is Conditional Citizens (2020), a nonfiction book about belonging in America as an immigrant, a woman, an Arab, and a Muslim. Using her own journey from Moroccan immigrant to U.S. citizen as a starting point she explores the rights, liberties, and protections that are traditionally associated with American citizenship. Tapping into history, politics, and literature, she elucidates how accidents of birth, such as national origin, race, or gender that once determined the boundaries of Americanness still cast their shadows today.

Throughout the book, she poignantly illustrates how white supremacy survives through adaptation and legislation, maintaining a caste system that keeps the modern equivalent of white male landowners at the top of the social hierarchy. *Conditional citizens*, she argues, are all the people whom America embraces with one arm, and pushes away with the other.

A major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special crisis of identity comes into being: the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place.

A valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Orit may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model. (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin, 9)

2. Displacement and Diasporic Experiences

The term 'displacement' has a strong connection with diaspora literature that studies the experiences of pain and pleasure of the people in the diaspora. People in the diaspora do not have comfortable life. Since they are away from their homeland, it is not easy for them to get integrated into the new mainstream society. Because of several variations such as language, culture, custom, religion, belief, they are to face difficulties in the host-land. They come across the feeling of displacement through alienation, homelessness, identity crisis that are interconnected in the diaspora (Rai 27).

Displacement is a vibrant issue in the realm of postcolonial literature for its vast range of consequences on the human psyche and their societies. Although the postcolonial subjects are struggling to deal with this displacement in reality, it also provides advantages to elevate the position. Displacement occurs into two stages. One is physical and another is psychological. The postcolonial writers focus on both stages in their writings to portray the struggle of postcolonial subjects. The physical or territorial displacement forces the people to move to the alien land and it results psychological alienation or displacement (Saha 2).

As displacement is the direct opposite of place, the Cambridge dictionary defines it as “the situations in which people are forced to leave the place where they normally live displacement. Though the force in the earlier time was natural or political, the present day, with the advent of modernity and globalization, witnesses the psychological force to have growth in life. While interpreting displacement, sociological guide corroborates with this idea that ‘people get uprooted from their traditional moorings due to various reasons’ and its mode may change as per the time and situation. According to Angelika Bammer displacement is “the separation of people from their native culture either through physical dislocation (as refugees, immigrants, migrants, exiles or expatriates) or the colonizing imposition of a foreign culture” (Bammer xi).

Besides, the term displacement in general means a state of being out of one’s own place. It is a situation when someone or something is displaced in new places away from his/her or its original place. The state of displacement is obviously not comfortable for immigrants as McLeod states, “they can be deemed not to belong there and disqualified from thinking of the new land as their home” (Mcleod 212). The displaced subject loses his/her native language, culture, beliefs, religion.

In this modern era, people’s movement from one place to another, from one country to another or from one continent to another has been a popular activity in the world. People do not want to remain in their own native land for a long time which is in perception. It is the fact that “millions of people do not live in the countries in which they were born and raised” (Safran 39). They go to another place and it is usually the foreign land for job, trade, visit, further studies, but if they live there for a long time or settle down for their life long period, they feel displaced from their

originalities such as home, families, relatives, language, cultures, etc. that they have left behind. Language is one of the basic elements that make up the place. As such, the spirit of the place and its people are stored in the language. Accordingly, displacement affects even the language spoken by immigrants in the countries to which they immigrate (Rai 25).

The phenomenon may be a result of transportation from one country to another by slavery or imprisonment, by invasion and settlement, a consequence of willing or unwilling movement from a known to an unknown location (Rai73). It is not easy for them to assimilate into the new situations over there. They create a diaspora and their experiences are diasporic (Rai 26). In the first category of displacement, is those emigrants who are physically dislocated either "voluntary" or who are "forced"; that is not due to colonizing imposition of a foreign culture" but rather by the country's own internal socioeconomic and political factors. The second is those who are physically dislocated by the "colonizing imposition of a foreign culture," which results in either their displacement from their native land/culture or their displacement within their native land/culture (Jaleel 332).

Displacement in the twenty-first century is identified in four forms: physical/spatial displacement, cultural displacement, psychological/affective displacement, and intellectual displacement of the immigrant, the refugee, the exile, the expatriate (Anderson 11). Diaspora theorists like William Safron, Robin Cohen, Avtar Brah keep the opinion that migration, diaspora and displacement are closely related constructions because they signal a sense of dislocation, exile, translation and transfiguration. In the postcolonial literature, displacement, which is also known as

migration, has turned into one of the burning issues because of its intensive and prolonged psychological, physical and cultural impacts on human beings.

Postcolonial writers are vividly representing this issue of displacement in their writings. Although this displacement issue is noticed as a recent phenomenon, it has deep-rooted history with various layers of complex relation among power, position and human psyche. Displacement flourished at the time of European colonialism specially British colonialism. The colonial mechanism speeded up the displacement issue in massive scale. The two continents, Caribbean and Africa were largely affected by this displacement which was entitled as a process of slavery at that time.

The colonized African people, who were captured from different territories, were forcefully transported as slaves or workers for plantations and other enterprises in Caribbean Islands, North American and South American countries. This physical displacement made African people suffer a lot and the consequences of this displacement were horrific in construction of deformed psyche.

As a result in the Caribbean Islands, the Africans were transformed as the native Caribbeans. For being displaced both physically and psychologically, the Caribbeans were changed completely adopting the colonizers' language, religion, literature and law. Along with this intercontinental displacement, African people also faced displacement in their homelands and culture. The colonial power destroyed the African indigenous histories, literatures, clans, societal norms, languages, religions and African subjectivities.

As such, the colonial power displaced every aspect of African subjectivity using the colonial weapons like education, language, religion as well as literature and administrative power. This colonial system created a hybrid African subject who was

black in his ideas but white in his way of life. These two-way displacements constructed a hybrid human being. Simultaneously, colonized Indian Subcontinent, which was a part of the British Empire, was also affected by this issue of displacement or migration. The cultural displacement was strongly evident and that was done by education, literature and administration. Indians were displaced more in psychology comparing to physical displacement.

Still, by constructing the cities, education at institutions and administrative centre or offices, British colonizers influenced the natives to migrate from one place to another which also provoked enormous change in constructing a self and position of an Indian human being. This psychological displacement created colonized hybrid human being who was colonized in mind but colonizer in physic or in other word, primitive in mind but modern in physic. So the colonial era promoted this displacement in both physical and psychological spheres of the Indians (Saha 317).

The physical and psychological displacements and their consequences have been carried on still in the post-colonial time and the post-colonial writers are representing the experiences, struggles and future through their writings from both the individual perspective and the national perspective (Saha 318).

3. Narrating Displacement

Considering the background of colonial era, the postcolonial writers are struggling with an uncomfortable situation to tackle the issue of displacement in reality, writers have addressed and analysed this issue of displacement from critical aspects and predicted its controversial consequences in their writings like novels, stories, poems, essays etc. If we observe Indian origin Caribbean writer V. S. Naipaul's *The Enigma*

of Arrival (1987), will find how the locations and their people are encountering the issue of displacement in the post-colonial societies (Saha 318).

Postcolonial people ignore their own culture. As a result, they gradually become detached from their native culture. Ultimately, they lose their own identity while running after the glittering power and superior position showed by the former colonizers. They want to take a new identity which rejects their inherited identity. This is how the postcolonial people are continuously dislocated. Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write in *The Empire Writes Back* that asserting that a major feature of post-colonial literatures is the concern with place and Displacement.

Therefore, amidst the post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being. The concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place a valid and active sense of self may have been eroded by dislocation, resulting from migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour. Or it may have been destroyed by cultural denigration, the conscious and unconscious oppression of the indigenous personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model".

It is important to look at what Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin point out about the 'relationship between self and place'. Self and place are intermingled. The human subjectivity is constructed on the basis of its surrounding environment and place. If one is displaced, one's subjectivity becomes fragmented. It happens because the psychological development is linked with his lived place. A peaceful relation grows between individual and place. But displacement interrupts that peace. It creates psychological disturbance that leads the human being into a violent world where violence produces the wars, killings, blood sheds, rapes and madness.

Although displacement brings many disruptions in human psychologically as well physically, it has some positive aspects which are detected by the Indian origin Caribbean writer V. S. Naipaul. He shows the opportunities created for displacement in his autobiographical novel *The Enigma of Arrival:*

> The migration, within the British Empire, from India to Trinidad had given me the English language as my own, and a particular kind of education. This had partly seeded my wish to be a writer in a particular mode, and had committed me to the literary career I had been following in England for twenty years (Naipaul 55).

There are two essential elements – centre and periphery of the postcolonial world. As we all know that there is constant conflict between centre and periphery because of intense desire to earn and possess power and position. The peripheral individuals and countries always want to take over the power and position of the centre. At the same time, centre also tries to keep its superior status intact. This conflictual situation has started from the British colonization where England was considered as the centre and its colonies were the periphery.

Unfortunately, the ideology and perspective about the centre and periphery do not change in the postcolonial time. Those are continued and gradually the ideology spreads intensively among the postcolonial and other countries. Still now USA and Europe are thought to be the centre. The distinction between the centre and the periphery in the present day world is widened by the inequality of economy knowledge and technology. As a result, the cultural division emerges in the relation between the two sides. A non-stop battle is going on where Western culture (culture of the centre) dominates the non-Western cultures (cultures of periphery) (Saha 327).

4. Arab Writers' Displacement

Going back in history, we encounter a group of Arab writers living in the United States for over one hundred years. The first generation of writers was called the Mahjar group, a movement in Arab literature that refers to the body of work produced by diasporic writers in North and South America at the begin-ning of the twentieth century. The two major figures of Mahjar were Mikhail Naimy and Khalil Gibran who wrote in Arabic and English. In their works, we can see the first steps towards liberation from the conservative constrains of Arabic literary tradition. In fact, their literary works straddle the big divide between the East and the West.

The second generation of Arab-American writers consists of Vance Bourjaily, William Peter Blatty, and Eugene Paul Nassar. They were integrated into the American society in part because they didn't speak Arabic nor did they know much about the Arab cultural heritage. The defining moment in the history of Arab-American literature comes with the publication of two anthologies: Gregory Orfalea's Wrapping the Grape Leaves: A Sheaf of Contemporary Arab American Poetry and Gregory Orfalea and Sharif Elmousa's Grape Leaves: A Century of Arab-American Poetry.

Toward the mid-1990s, Arab-American literature started to flourish with established writers such as Jordanian-American novelist Diana Abu-Jaber, Palestinian poet Suheir Hammad, and Libyan novelists Khaled Mottawa and Hisham Matar. These authors have presented themselves as literary figures whose literature is taught in university curricula in the United States and in many Arab universities. In the twenty-first century, Pauline Kaldas and Khaled Mottawa's Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction, a diverse collection of eighteen

short stories, emphasizes the difficulties of the host country and, likewise, the rich and complicated cultural inheritance of people who suddenly found themselves an object of public debate in the wake of 9/11.

Two major factors have contributed to the development of Arab-American literature. First, these writers search for voices outside the traditional canon of Anglo-American literature. The second factor is mainly political. These writers attempt to expose the socio-political malaise in their home countries. Therefore, they started diagnosing, negotiating, and questioning political, social, and cultural issues concerning the experiences of migration and diaspora. Discussing Arab-American literature, Steven Salaita argues that "Anglophone Arabs are no less Arabs than anybody else, they merely carry different cultural values as a result of their different social circumstances". Salaita maintains that Arab-American writers "build a heritage identifiably linked to the Arab world but that is nonetheless their own" (Salaita 32).

As the body of Arab-American literature continues to grow, Salaita asserts, "critics and scholars need a specific critical matrix that uses Arab artistic traditions as well as American, and is articulated from within the Arab-American community" (Ricci 199). One way to fulfill that aim is to resort to the genre of the journey back to the past, so as to restore it for the assertion of a distinctive ethnic self. Diana Abu-Jaber, for instance, investigates the interconnectedness of the past and the present and tries to create a space of self-invention for the Arab-American female. Like many Arab-American female authors, including Laila Lalami, Diana Abu-Jaber struggles to "define a mode of agency capable of responding to the historical and political exigencies of the identity 'Arab American' which resonates though contemporary Arab American literature" (Majaj 280).

The story of Arab Americans in the United States is a very vivid one. Many came to the U.S. as sojourners planning on going back to their homelands. With time most assimilated and became an invisible population. For the last few decades, and especially after 9/11, the status of Arab Americans has changed: they have become a singled out and stigmatized group that is politically marginalized.

The Arab American Institute and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, agree that there are approximately 3.5 million Arabs living in the United States. American Arabs come from all of the nearly two-dozen Arab countries, but the majority is Lebanese, Syrian, Palestinian, Egyptian, and Iraqi. Approximately 82% of the Arabs living in the United States are citizens and the majority of U.S. Arabs are native born (Samhan 201).

Arab immigrants came to the United States in multiple waves. According to (Suleiman 99), there were two major waves. The first wave took place beginning in the 1870s and continued until the onset of World War II. The second immigration wave occurred during World War II and continues today. Other researchers characterize the immigration as happening in several waves (Ajrouch, 20; Erickson and Al-Timimi, 201).

Because of faulty records it is difficult to separate the waves into distinct periods. Arabs were sometimes counted as Ottoman subjects, or they were not counted as Arabs because they entered the United States through Canada and Mexico. Many Arabs did not disclose their ethnicity to immigration officials for fear of repercussion and Palestinians often arrived with Israeli passports and thus were not counted as being Arabic (Ajrouch 97).

Notable characteristics define the immigrations. The earliest wave consisted of primarily Christian Arabs who came from the Greater Syria region part of the former Ottoman Empire (modern day Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Palestine). The immigrants from Greater Syria were primarily seeking economic gain and social status. There is evidence that the Homestead Act of 1862 drew the first Arab persons of record to 23. At the early stage of immigration, records did not distinguish between the different ethnicities of the immigrants coming from the Ottoman Empire and other areas around the Mediterranean, consequently Greeks, Arabs and Armenians were all combined into one category. America in 1862 and then, in 1876 Arabs coming to Philadelphia‘s Centennial Exposition remained in the United States (Al-Hazza 152).

This particular group was uneducated, illiterate, and poor and thus, found work in factories and mines. As unskilled labourers in a labour market already filled by other ethnic groups, many of the Arab immigrants became peddlers. Both women and men carried a stock of goods consisting mainly of items for personal use that were difficult for farming families to make themselves or to procure in nearby stores. They carried on their backs products such as dry goods, lotions, combs, and handcrafted goods (mainly fine linens made by Lebanese women). A handful of families established a network of peddling, setting the routes and supply sources for next families to come.

No other immigrant group, with the exception of German Jews, was so completely identified with peddling (Naff 96). By 1920s many of the peddling families were able to establish stores. Subsequently, they became wholesalers and retailers of groceries and produce (Faires 78). In two decades, the Arabs established themselves as a middle-class, entrepreneurial group. They fended for themselves, created and sustained religious, social, and service organizations but were not vocal in politics.

Many Arabs from the earlier waves created tight-knit colonies primarily in Boston and New York as well as other north-eastern United States cities including Detroit, Chicago and Cleveland (Cainkar 103 and Suleiman 179). The second major wave of Arab immigration to the United States followed World War II and consisted of many Palestinians displaced by Israel‘s creation (Haboush 207). Others came from all over the Arab world. The second wave of immigrants, while also seeking personal advancement and wealth, sought to escape oppressive governments and war-torn countries (Suleiman 100).

This wave was much smaller than the previous or subsequent immigration waves due to the 1924 Immigration Act, which allowed the minimum quota of 100 immigrants from Arab countries per year. Asians were the only ones given less immigration privilege, as they were totally banned from immigrating to the United States (Cainkar 78). Beginning in the 1960s, and including a large influx during the 1975 Lebanese Civil War, a third wave of Arab immigrants came to the United States. These Arabs were highly educated professionals. They were primarily Christian or Sunni Muslim, although many Shi‘a, or Shiite Muslims joined the influx (Haboush 208). The most recent influx of Arabs to the United States began with the Gulf War in 1990 and has continued through the current Iraq War.

Therefore, many of these immigrants were motivated by the desire to find a “democratic haven” (Suleiman 15) where they would enjoy freedom without political or economic harassment. In 1999, Suleiman asserted that Arab Americans in the U.S. are doing well on the economic, professional and educational level. He pointed out, however, that too many of them have to hide or de-emphasize their origin because of racism, asserting that their full integration and assimilation will not be achieved until

Arab Americans can stop "struggling to be accepted in the American society" (Suleiman 16). This historical perspective about the immigration process of Arabs in the U.K and the U.S. showed that the factors that had an impact on the formation of their cultural identities in their new home away from home; it showed that they were not disconnected from the events taking place in their original homeland and that these events played a major role in their life.

In *The Other Americans*, Lalami portrays two generations of Moroccan immigrants with uprooting experiences, who are different from the later generation of Moroccan-Americans who are born and rooted in the United States. For migrants, their identity and interpretation of home are constantly shaped, modified, challenged and switched. Based on the overlap of different cultures, the migration of human beings as well as their cultures, then results in the cultural globalism, in which any given association of homeland, culture, and identity with one's nationality, residence and language is not enough to explain the new dimension. When Lalami is considering the sense of dwelling in modern diaspora, to a certain extent, she is thinking as much about it as she is about her own personal experience.

5. Diasporic Women Writings

The term 'diaspora' is from Greek language and it means 'dispersion' as Galvan it linked to the idea of dispersion, scattering derived from the Greek language "dia" 'through' and speirein 'to scatter', However, in the present era, the old definition of 'diaspora' has been expanded "to accommodate a wide range of fluid spatial, cultural and political locations" (Walsh 302) because of the mass movement of people either voluntarily or involuntarily into other countries. So, various diasporas such as African Diaspora, Armenian Diaspora, Indian Diaspora, etc. have been established by now.

While introducing diaspora, theorists and writers like Avtar Brah, Benedict Anderson and Salman Rushdie asserted that diasporic people keep nostalgic feeling, and to describe it in a proper sense, they coined this feeling like 'homing desire' and 'imaginary homeland'. Describing the narrative production of 'Home', Dorinne Kondo paraphrased (Spivak 98) in the book *Displacement, Diaspora and Geographies of Identity* "Home" as "that which one cannot not want, It stands for a safe place, where there is no need to explain oneself to outsiders; it stands for community; more problematically, it can elicit a nostalgia for a past golden age that never was, a nostalgia that elides exclusion, power relations, and difference" (Kondo 97).

Home for migrants is ever nostalgic and identity marker. Though migrants are displaced or dislocated from 'home' physically, they feel imaginary and mythical homeland in 'host' countries. Karen Leonard opined that diasporic people create identity and home in host countries with 'linking their evocations of familiar landscapes and resemblances to their "old homes"' (Jaleel 333). From the memories and imaginations, they ascribe meaning to places as philosopher Martin Heidegger said that people hold a "lived relationship with places and assign meanings to them" Heidegger, Lavie and Swedenburg write,

> The phenomenon of diasporas calls for reimagining the areas of area studies and developing units of analysis that enable us to understand the dynamics of transnational cultural and economic processes, as well as to challenge the conceptual limits imposed by national and ethnic/racial boundaries (Jaleel 333).

Safran has written a defining model of diaspora, in which he lists six key features. These include a history of dispersal, memories of a place of origins, alienation in the new country, a desire to return to the homeland, ongoing support of the homeland,

and a sense of collective identity as a group. Within the confines of this somewhat restrictive definition, he identifies just seven contemporary diasporic populations. For many contemporary theorists, this approach is far too narrow, and prescriptively limits both the epistemological potential of the term, as well as the possibilities of differently framed "diasporas" such as those of the black Atlantic, so persuasively described by Gilroy (Rai 29).

Diaspora Literature involves an idea of a homeland, a place from where the displacement occurs and narratives of harsh journeys undertaken on account of economic compulsions. Basically Diaspora is a minority community living in exile. The Oxford English Dictionary 1989 Edition (second) traces the etymology of the word 'Diaspora' back to its Greek root and to its appearance in the Old Testament as such it references (Shai 34-41). The dispersal (initially) signifies the location of a fluid human autonomous space involving a complex set of negotiation and exchange between the nostalgia and desire for the Homeland and the making of a new home, adapting to the power, relationships between the minority and majority. Being spokes persons for minority rights, their people back home, and significantly transacting the Contact Zone - a space changed with the possibility of multiple challenges.

The theoretical innovations of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, Gayatri Spivak, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy, James Clifford and others have in recent years vitalized postcolonial and diaspora studies, challenging ways in which we understand 'culture' and developing new ways of thinking beyond the confines of the nation state. The notion of diaspora in particular has been productive in its attention to the real-life movement of peoples throughout the world, whether these migrations have been through choice or compulsion. But perhaps of even greater significance to

postcolonial theory has been the consideration of the epistemological implications of the term – diaspora as theory. Such studies see migration in terms of adaptation and construction – adaptation to changes, dislocations and transformations, and the construction of new forms of knowledge and ways of seeing the world.

The first American diaspora set into motion by the African slave trade. Twentieth century, post-colonial African emigration prompted by civil war, famine, economic failure and political instability can be thought of as generating a 'second' incipient, set of 'new' African diasporas. The horror of the slave trade to Asia and the Middle East was enormous—perhaps as many as four million were involved, but it was the forcible trans-shipment of ten million people across the Atlantic for mass slavery and coerced plantation about in the Americas that provided the defining misfortune that constituted the African diaspora (Pokharel 90).

Each genre tends to possess some specificities of their own kind in their own light, so does diaspora in the arena of its literature. Hanif Kureishi, British Asian author who said, "the only way I could make sense of my confused world was to write" Kureishi ,makes a point that the diasporic literature is founded on the diasporic subjects or themes. The relationship between cultural loss effected through the diasporic displacement of peoples and subsequent cultural production, particularly seen in the realm of creative writing diaspora offers, makes visible and urgent the multiplicity and persistence of diasporic experiences and how those experiences are committed to memory and demoralization in literature (Pokharel 94).

The diasporic subject, conscious always of a slippage between origin, belonging and location, seems best placed to respond to the questions that have vivified modern

literature. Diasporic literature in these ways is replete with its producer's personal as well as collective diasporic un/consciousness (Pokharel 95).

Uma Parameswaran in "What Price Expatriation" excavates and explicates a set of diasporic characteristics that prevail in diasporic literature. They can be listed as follows: Expatriate sensibility, Social and cultural disorientation, Rootlessness, Expatriate dilemma, Search for identity, Dichotomy among values, norms and ways of life, Inner-alienation, A failure, both to 'repatriate' as well as 'impatriate' oneself Colloquialism and regionalism, Lack of first-hand knowledge of economics, political and social changes, Tensions of impatriatrion and, Compromise and co-existence.

Seen in light of the specifications above, the state of being a diaspora seems the most heart-rending psychological experience of perennial dichotomy between a choice or an obligation to expatriate and or a will but inability to effectively impatriate. There are also some literary creations which celebrate the newness, material affluence and hybridity, making of a myth of a new homeland in memory of the old, so creation of a third home-land. However, to be perceptive of these two possibilities one needs to possess the consciousness; the diaspora consciousness. Hence, Parameswaran articulates the diasporic literature is expected to depict, consciously or unconsciously, one or two of the above mentioned characteristics (Pokharel 95).

Advocating for the recognition of the positive virtues of retaining a diasporic identity, Cohen asserts that ''the tension between an ethnic, a national and a transnational identity is often a creative, enriching one". Illustrating the paradigmatic case of the diasporic Jews (in Babylon. the Islamic world and in early modern Spain) Cohen says, "they were responsible for many advances, in medicine, theology, art,

music, philosophy, literature, science, industry anxiety in the diaspora", Cohen argues that this is precisely what motivates the need for achievement. "If life is too comfortable, Neusner convincingly argues, creativity may dry up" (Cohen 7). The virtues rather than the dangers and traumas, of a diasporic existence are also emphasized by Werbner who alludes to "the positive dimensions of transnational existence and cosmopolitan consciousness" (Cohen 7).

The literature which is produced by diasporas and characteristically represents their feelings and experiences is called diasporic literature. It depicts the diasporas psychological, social, economic, cultural state of being inscribed amply in the text they create. It buries the themes like, the crisis of identity, the "rootlessness", the perennial mental "ambivalence" a deep-rooted "sense of belonging" and a latent permanent "will to connect" as well as "return" to the home land. Creation of literature of their own kind is one of the ways to vent the above-mentioned agitations out.

Therefore, diasporic literature is explored and studied as a testimony of their unique existence. Regarding the diasporic literature, there are debates afloat. Whether literature like travel abroad memoirs and diaries be included in this category or not? Likewise, some writers may write about a place without going there or a short-term visitor may also produce literature about a particular place of stay. The scholars and the critics assert these kinds of literature do not fall under this category. Instead diasporic literature is the piece or body of literature produced by a diasporic individual living in a diasporic community for long. However, of late the debate seem to be taking in the new definition of diasporic literature for good, that is— a piece of

literature that shows some of the diasporic sensibilities, irrespective of its creator's state of being or geography of being, can be called diasporic literature (Pokharel 94).

Diasporic Literature is a very vast concept and an umbrella term that includes in it all those literary works written by the authors outside their native country, but these works are associated with native culture and background. In this wide context, all those writers can be regarded as diasporic writers, who write outside their country but remained related to their homeland through their works. Diasporic literature has its roots in the sense of loss and alienation, which emerged as a result of migration and expatriation. Generally, diasporic literature deals with alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest of identity. It also addresses issues related to amalgamation or disintegration of cultures (Bartleby 1).

This results in the creation of a fractured identity. As they torn between the two places and two cultures and often languages; the expatriate writer navigates a new literary space. The diasporic literature arises under these circumstances. The broken psyche of the immigrants sheds off its psychosis into writing. Therefore, the migrant writer feels a forceful need to write and with their multicultural ethos and a profound understanding of socio-cultural and economic realities around them, they have been successful in transforming their experiences into writings. Another important reason for writing by the creative talent in the diasporic community is to make their existence recognized. The very act of creation is a purposeful effort to form a cultural identity. Diasporic writing unfolds these experiences of unsettlement and dislocation, at some or the other level. A diasporic text can be investigated in terms of location, dislocation and relocation. The chief characteristic features of the diasporic writings are the quest

for identity, uprooting and re-rooting, insider and outsider syndrome, nostalgia, nagging sense of guilt (Bartleby 2).

Generally, diasporic literature deals with alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, quest of identity .It also addresses issues related to amalgamation or disintegration of cultures .It reflects the immigrants' experience that comes out of the immigrants' settlement. The Diaspora is a process of people migrating frequently from one place to another for various reasons. Migrations have resulted in building up a diasporic community which shares a common sense of rootlessness, pain and agony of homelessness in a new land. Cultural interactions paved the way to establish multi-cultural societies. The policy of multi culturalist is often contrasted with the concept of assimilation and social integration. All diasporic discourses are shaded by the ideology of post-colonialism.

In the present global scenario, many people migrate in search of employment, business and trade. All diasporic communities established outside All diasporic communities established outside their birth territories concede that their own native land always has some claim on their loyalty and emotion. This occurs through language, religion and custom. The diasporic people often find themselves managing across cultural identities. They have to create various cultural, ethnic and political identities to meet the challenges from their native lands and their adopted homelands. The way in which the diasporic people manage their identities is determined by political, social, professional and class factors.

The diasporic communities might choose adoption, accommodation, acculturation, and assimilation. Identity crisis arises if one migrates from one territory to another place. Diasporic identities are manifold, heterogeneous and subject to persistent

metamorphosis. While they attempt to adopt themselves to their various experiences, they simultaneously endeavour to find their identity. The compromise among these multiple, mobile and altering identities can be sorted out by the formation of a transcultural identity.

Diasporic discourse compels us to contemplate about fundamentals of nation and nationalism, while determining the affinities of citizens and nation state. Diasporic discourse mirrors awareness that living is a part of transnational network that involves a homeland. Diaspora discourse speaks about people who reside in one place but passionate for another place. Another aspect of diasporic discourse is the search for selfhood in the world between two cultures that of homeland and embraced land. The notion of 'home' often plays a cardinal function in Diaspora communities. In migrating from one nation to another, the migrant quests for setting up home in a new land. But they are unable to identify the new place as their home. Instead they find their home elsewhere, back across the boundary and they always wish to come back. The expatriate has to start his next beginning wherever he goes to settle (Rani 253, 255).

Diasporic literature is a very vast concept and an umbrella term, which includes in it all those literary works written by the authors outside their native country, but related to the native culture and background. In this wide context all those writers can be considered as diasporic writers, who write outside their country but remain related to their homeland through their works. Diasporic literature has its root in the sense of loss and alienation, which emerged as a result of that immigration and expatriation. It won't be out of the way, if we say that diasporic literature is a kind of psychological attempt to regain that which the writer has lost at the level of reality.

The driving force for this kind of literature may be to derive solace or to experience affinity with the homeland or a strong longing to regain the lost paradise - homeland. This Literature is divided into two distinctive types of writing. The first of these is more autobiographical with references to the narration of self. The second is more scholarly dealing with studies on diaspora. Töllöyan makes a distinction between these two types of writing by explaining that there are two discourses, named the emic diaspora and the etic diaspora (Ouhiba 48, 50).

The emic diaspora refers to the diaspora that talks about themselves, while the etic refers to scholarly works on diaspora. He further states that, "[t]he self-study of diasporas produced representations and various forms of self-knowledge, some embodied in quotidian practices, some in public performances and others in oral and written archives and the thriving native language press of groups such as the Armenians and the Chinese" (Töllöyan 654). He is of the opinion that diasporas in the emic discourse generally keep making self-representations by referring to their selves in English.

The other matter that is significant in diaspora studies, according to Töllöyan, is the aspect of representation: "Who represents diasporas—the community itself or scholars— matters. As the works of Louis Althusser and Pierre Macherey imply, the diasporic social domain that exists when only emic study and self-representation is going on takes a different shape when it is constituted as the object of knowledge of diasporic studies" (Töllöyan 654). Furthermore, "theoretical conceptions, specialized terminologies, acknowledged and unacknowledged disciplinary interests and intentions, a will to knowledge, and a variety of methodologies combine to reformulate diasporas" (Töllöyan 654).

Thus diasporians become objects of knowledge and co-subjects. Töllöyan finally hints at an additional factor in this aspect: A corollary of this point is that the object of knowledge in area studies is also always in some sense a given and always, in another sense, created. For example, the territory and populations of the Middle East existed as socio-political domains before orientalism, and then Middle Eastern studies, represented and transformed them into disciplinary objects. They continue to exist, but in subtle ways how they think of themselves, how they act, what they are, is altered by the dialectic between self-study and the disciplinary and area studies emanating from powerful quarters (Töllöyan 654). In spite of these kinds of differences most diasporic writings reveal certain features that are similar.

Many of the works discuss the individual/communities attachment to the homeland and the urge to belong in the settled land and as a result of this they reveal a hybrid existence because they are people who are as multi-cultural as they are multi-lingual. They do not regard themselves as fully belonging in either culture, and have practically evolved a sub-culture peculiar to themselves. They try to take the best from both worlds, but suffer the sense of hybridity and cultural entanglement (Lau 241).

Although the diasporic life portrayed to some extent is realistic, yet it is also fictionalized due to the type of imagination that is indulged in diasporic writings. Emphasizing this point, Jasbir Jain refers to it as a split narrative. She further discusses the past and the present of diasporic literature as being different -the past has a different history, tradition, regional and colonial memories and 'political equations and the present has different kinds of 'loneliness, isolation, social ghettoisation, success, affluence and recognition'. Even though they live in the

present they co-exist in the past too. Yet another point of interest is that of Ramraj in his article *"Diaspora and Multiculturalism*" wherein he discusses the difference among immigrant, exile and expatriate writing. According to him "exile and expatriate writing is more immersed in the situation at home and the circumstance that prolong the individual's exile or expatriation" more than with "the émigré's or emigre's community's relationship with the dominant society" (Ramraj 229).

Therefore, Ramraj thinks that diasporic writing is often about "people who are linked by common histories of uprooting and dispersal, common homelands, and common cultural heritages", but due to the political and cultural particularities of the society, on the other hand it develops different cultural and historical identities (Ramraj 229).

Thus, one of the key problems that a diasporic community faces is the predicament with regard to identity. Thereby identity is one of the most common themes in their literature, and in many cases the search for self-identity is portrayed as confusing painful and only occasionally rewarding. Lau points out that some of them write semi-autobiographical novels, delving into personal pasts in order to either discover or re-examine their motivations and affinities. And others use fictional characters and situations to question traditional norms, testing, trying, and occasionally reinforcing (whether internally or otherwise) notions of race and culture (Lau 252). The second and later generations of the diasporic community generally display a dual identity.

Although the second and later generations of the diasporic community consider the country in which they are born as the home country, the society still perceives them as outsiders and therefore they are caught in a hyphenated identity. Kwame

Dawes' words as quoted in Weedon's article "Migration, Identity, and Belonging in British Black and South Asian Women's Writing" substantiates this issue, "'They were born there or have grown up there all their life. They are uncomfortable with the notion of a home elsewhere for they have no sense of exile. Their sole exile is the exile within their own home country" (Weedon 28).

Middle Eastern women's literatures that represent Arab immigrants of differing gender, backgrounds and professions within the global space becomes very important to diasporic Arab discourse because they disrupt the stereotypical and popular beliefs that usually define the Arab immigrant experience under one monolithic umbrella. The monolithic constructions of Middle Eastern people continue to pervade popular imagination in the West, and in this new context of immigration, the attributes of terrorism, Harem, backwoods people among others usually associated with the image of the Arab world , seem to follow the Arab immigrant.

Some contemporary Arab immigrant narratives, particularly women's narratives, are keen on reflecting this diversity in the Arab diasporic experience in terms of class, cultural, and gender differences. More than just immigration narratives that present a diversity of Middle Eastern immigrant experience that is usually overlooked and seen as collective in the West, these new contemporary Arab female writers also present different cultures in dialogue in their works by exploring a wider worldview through women's individual experiences both in their home countries and in the West.

In order to achieve a diasporic identity that reflects subjectivity, that is, an identity that they have created for themselves and that has not been imposed on them nor is defined solely in nationalistic or geographical terms, the characters created by these writers have to learn to reconstruct their identities by continuously negotiating and

overcoming the conundrums created by the intersection of race, class, and ethnicity in the West, but more importantly through their renegotiation of gender dynamics within the Middle Eastern context. Even though many female authors have produced remarkable narratives portraying the Arab female immigrant experience in the West, they have not delved as such into the phenomenon of return which enables a much wider global perspective on the diasporic woman's transcultural experience.

Diaspora is therefore a scattering of the seed in the wind, the fruits of which are a new creation and a fight to survive. Every diasporic movement holds a historical significance, as it carries within itself the kernel of the nation's history. Diaspora is a journey towards self-realization, self-recognition, self-knowledge and self-definition. There is an element of creativity present in the diasporic writings and this creation stands as a compensation for the many losses suffered (Ouhiba 55).

6. Homi Bhabha's Theory of Hybridity

One of the most widely employed and most disputed terms in postcolonial theory, hybridity commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. As used in horticulture, the term refers to the cross-breeding of two species by grafting or cross-pollination to form a third, hybrid species. Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial, etc. Linguistic examples include pidgin and creole languages, and these echo the foundational use of the term by the linguist and cultural theorist Bakhtin, who used it to suggest the disruptive and transfiguring power of multivocal language situations and, by extension, of multivocal narratives.

Bhabha, an influential thinker of the 21st century, has coined a conceptual vocabulary for the reading of postcolonial texts. He was born into a small Parsi community from Mumbai, India. He received his B. A. from Bombay University and his M. A. and D. Phil. in English Literature from Christ Church, Oxford University. He was presented the Padma Bhushan award by the Government of India in 2012. In addition to the bulk of articles he has presented, his notable works include *Nation and Narration* in1990, *The Location of Culture* in 1994, *Cosmopolitanisms in Public Culture* in 2000 and Edward Said: *Continuing the Conversation* in 2005. His prominent theories are expounded in his book, *The Location of Culture* in 1994.

Bhabha chiefly looks at the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized psychoanalytically and from a different angle; in other words, Bhabha‟s theory merely shifts our focus. Unlike Said‟ focus on the colonizer and Fanon's focus on the colonized, Bhabha takes a new perspective and shifts the emphasis toward both the colonizer and the colonized simultaneously (Farahbakhsh and Ranjbar 105).

The term 'hybridity' has been most recently associated with the work of Homi K. Bhabha, whose analysis of colonizer/colonized relations stresses their interdependence and the mutual construction of their subjectivities (see mimicry and ambivalence). Bhabha contends that all cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space that he calls the 'Third Space of enunciation'. Cultural identity always emerges in this contradictory and ambivalent space, which for Bhabha makes the claim to a hierarchical 'purity' of cultures untenable. For him, the recognition of this ambivalent space of cultural identity may help us to overcome the exoticism of cultural diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate.

It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha 1994) It is the 'in-between' space that carries the burden and meaning of culture, and this is what makes the notion of hybridity so important.

Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural 'exchange'. This use of the term has been widely criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impacts on both the colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or 'whitewashing' cultural differences (Mambrol 13).

The idea of hybridity also underlies other attempts to stress the mutuality of cultures in the colonial and post-colonial process in expressions of syncretism, cultural synergy and transculturation. The criticism of the term referred to above stems from the perception that theories that stress mutuality necessarily downplay oppositionality, and increase continuing post-colonial dependence. There is,however,nothing in the idea of hybridity as such that suggests that mutuality negates the hierarchical nature of the imperial process or that it involves the idea of an equal exchange.

This is, however, the way in which some proponents of decolonization and anti-colonialism have interpreted its current usage in colonial discourse theory. It has also

been subject to critique as part of a general dissatisfaction with colonial discourse theory on the part of critics such as Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Benita Parry and Aijaz Ahmad. These critiques stress the textualist and idealist basis of such analysis and point to the fact that they neglect specific local differences.

The assertion of a shared post-colonial condition such as hybridity has been seen as part of the tendency of discourse analysis to de-historicize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic contexts, and to lead to an abstract, globalized concept of the textual that obscures the specificities of particular cultural situations (Mambrol 13). Pointing out that the investigation of the discursive construction of colonialism does not seek to replace or exclude other forms such as historical, geographical, economic, military or political, Robert Young suggests that the contribution of colonial discourse analysis, in which concepts such as hybridity are couched, provides a significant framework for that other work by emphasising that all perspectives on colonialism share and have to deal with a common discursive medium which was also that of colonialism itself (Mambrol 13).

Colonial discourse analysis can therefore look at the wide variety of texts of colonialism as something more than mere documentation or 'evidence' (Young 163). However, Young himself offers a number of objections to the indiscriminate use of the term. He notes how influential the term 'hybridity' was in imperial and colonial discourse in negative accounts of the union of disparate races – accounts that implied that unless actively and persistently cultivated, such hybrids would inevitably revert to their 'primitive' stock. Hybridity thus became, particularly at the turn of the century, part of a colonialist discourse of racism. Young draws our attention to the dangers of employing a term so rooted in a previous set of racist assumptions, but he also notes

that there is a difference between unconscious processes of hybrid mixture, or creolization, and a conscious and politically motivated concern with the deliberate disruption of homogeneity (Young 163).

He notes that for Bakhtin, for example, hybridity is politicized, and made contestatory, so that it embraces the subversion and challenge of division and separation. Bakhtin's hybridity 'sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure, which retains "a certain elemental, organic energy and openendedness"' (Young 21, 22). It is this potential of hybridity to reverse 'the structures of domination in the colonial situation' (Young 23), which Young recognizes, that Bhabha also articulates. 'Bakhtin's intentional hybrid has been transformed by Bhabha into an active moment of challenge and resistance against a dominant colonial power depriving the imposed imperialist culture, not only of the authority that it has for so long imposed politically, often through violence, but even of its own claims to authenticity' .

Young does, however, warn of the unconscious process of repetition involved in the contemporary use of the term. According to him, when talking about hybridity, contemporary cultural discourse cannot escape the connection with the racial categories of the past in which hybridity had such a clear racial meaning. Therefore 'deconstructing such essentialist notions of race today we may rather be repeating the [fixation on race in the] past than distancing ourselves from it, or providing a critique of it. This is a subtle and persuasive objection to the concept. However, more positively, Young also notes that the term indicates a broader insistence in many twentieth-century disciplines, from physics to genetics, upon 'a double logic, which goes against the convention of rational either/or choices, but which is repeated in

science in the split between the incompatible coexisting logics of classical and quantum physics'. In this sense, as in much else in the structuralist and poststructuralist legacy, the concept of hybridity emphasizes a typically twentieth-century concern with relations within a field rather than with an analysis of discrete objects, seeing meaning as the produce of such relations rather than as intrinsic to specific events or objects.

Whilst assertions of national culture and of pre-colonial traditions have played an important role in creating anti-colonial discourse and in arguing for an active decolonizing project, theories of the hybrid nature of post-colonial culture assert a different model for resistance, locating this in the subversive counter-discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence itself and so undermining the very basis on which imperialist and colonialist discourse raises its claims of superiority (Mambrol 13).

7. Unhomeliness and Unhomely Characters

Bhabha defines hybridity as what is "new, neither the one nor the other." Central to Bhabha's notion of hybridity is the concept of unhomeliness. According to Bhabha 'home' is perceived to be a place of stable identity where one has been and is understood. In nation and cultures that are experiencing oppression , home is linked to positive version of the past .It means a life before oppression .In other words, 'home' is tied to freedom. Bhabha develops the notion of unhomely by referring to some work of postcolonial literature that problematize the idea of the real and stable 'home'. Bhabha emphasizes on instability of home and of the past (Parvaneh 157).

The word ‘unhomely’ is the translation of ‘unheimlich’ which is the opposite of ‘heimlich’. Bhabha argues that the place between the ‘heimlich’ (homely) and ‘unheimlich’ (unhomely) is a postcolonial place, a space in which one can see how a person’s identity is a mixture of what is unfamiliar or foreign and what is familiar. This idea echoes the work of Sigmund Freud. To Freud as the subconscious creeps and moves into the conscious, it creates an uncanny moment. It is the same when the world creeps into the home and shakes an identity that was thought to be stable and secure. This shock of recognition is commonly considered to be negative.

Alienation is a very painful experience which one thinks to be familiar, but it is not. Bhabha suggests that the alienation which a person experiences in the ‘unhomely’ moment, may also present an opportunity to reevaluate one’s identity. Bhabha talks about his own origins and does not claim a stable and fixed identity. He suggests that Parsis have transformational experiences, and hybrid identity. We should know that homelessness is real as well as metaphorical (Parvaneh157).

Bhabha suggests the uncanny concept as the unhomely, too. He evokes the uncanniness of migrant experience through a series of familiar ideas like- half-life, (the partial presence of colonial identity), repeats the life lived in the country of origin. However, the repetition is not identical. It introduces transformation and difference. He also says further that this repetition is a way of reviving that past life and keeping it alive in the present. All the uncertainties, hesitations and ambivalences which colonial authority and its figures are imbued with, are characterized in terms of the uncanny. In other word, the split in political subject can be described as uncanny. Sigmund Freud and Julia Kristeva use the idea of the uncanny. This influenced Bhabha and his sense of the hybrid, post-colonial perspective (Parvaneh 157).

According to Bhabha culture has dual identity. On the one hand, it is homely or realistic, asserting its stability and coherence; on the other hand, it is unhomely because it is always changing; it is always made meaningful by others. Culture, to Bhabha, is never coherent and self-sufficient .Though its narratives seem confidence and stable, they are always drawn into displaced relationship. They are in relationship with other cultures, texts, or disciplines. He says migrants can be a good example of this dual nature of culture; they are always situated in relation to both an original culture and a new place and location.

Bhabha argues that the uncanny possibly has more power when it is applied to the homeliness of the colonizer, when it is used to explore the foreignness that is central to original and self-sufficient source of colonization. Bhabha points out that the relationship between self and other is always an uncanny one. He says uncanniness is not only a question of place, but also of time, since our sense of national identity is open and static. We don't 'own' our nation, as it is something that is our own and at the same time it is not ours, because its identity is always changing or coming from future.

Bhabha adds, like culture, Western knowledge is homely and unhomely or canny and uncanny. Bhabha believes in Western and non-Western identities. Because the concept of 'uncanny' undermines the stability of all concepts in general, it seems to be a slippery concept. Bhabha is supposed to be an expert in transforming concepts as his theoretical strategies. The slippery means it tends to elude definite theorization. By usingcanny and uncanny, Bhabha focuses the colonial relationship –as the simple division of self and other (Parvaneh 158).

CHAPTER TWO: THE DILEMMA OF BELONGING IN *THE OTHER AMERICANS*

The Other Americans is set entirely in one small California town and its neighbourhoods. It is concerned with the intimacies of relationships between classmates and family members. However, it is also concerned with the effects of violence on the human psyche. The Novel begins with a late-night hit-and-run. The victim is Driss Guerraoui, a Moroccan immigrant and restaurant owner. There are no witnesses, or so it seems at first. In fact there is one: Efrain Aceves, whose undocumented status and consequent fear of deportation stop him coming forward and make him resist the urgings of his wife to do the right thing.

1. Othering and Otherness in *The Other Americans*

The Other Americans is told from multiple viewpoints Nora, Driss's composer daughter; Jeremy Gorecki, an Iraq war veteran and Nora's former classmate; Erica Coleman, the newly arrived police detective investigating the killing; Anderson Baker, a bowling alley proprietor who owns the property adjacent to the family's diner; the widowed Maryam Guerraoui; and even the deceased Driss himself.

The multiple voices are handled with restrained mastery by Lalami, who eschews drama to focus on nuance and detail, offering an ever-shifting perspective on events. The many strands of the novel are held together by the unfolding murder investigation. There are sufficient tensions to offer possibilities but nothing that quite looks a motive. Lalami brilliantly underplays the rising pressure in this simmering desert town as Nora's questioning reveals a history of resentment between her father and his neighbour, who had wanted to buy the Guerraoui property, as well as secrets

her father hid from his own family, Nora's increasing frustration with the pace of the police inquiry is set against the methodical and unhurried approach of Detective Coleman, an African American woman. In the hands of another writer, these details would be foregrounded, but Lalami resists the obvious. Coleman is worried about her son's ability to make friends in their new home.

Who gets to be an American? It's a question that's been asked and answered countless times before, but from the earliest days of this country, there have always been people who consider themselves more American than their neighbors. Under their definition, real. Americans have certain traits in common: native-born, white, English-speaking, Christian. Everyone else is suspect: different. Less than Other, These simmering divisions are at the heart of *The Other Americans*, the latest novel from Los Angeles author Laila Lalami, Lalami's novel is a stunning and necessary look at a country struggling with racism, resentment and the aftermath of war.

The novel opens with Nora, a composer living in Oakland, learning of the death of her father, Driss, who immigrated to the U.S. from Morocco years ago with his wife. Driss was leaving the diner he owned in Yucca Valley, California, when he was hit by a car that immediately sped away, and Nora tortures herself with questions about her father's last minutes: "Had he suffered?" "Had he called out for help?", "How long had he lain on the asphalt before his breath ran out?". Lalami's Novel alternates points of views among several characters, including Efraín, an undocumented immigrant who witnessed the hit-and-run but is afraid of going to the police; Jeremy, a sheriff's deputy and Iraq war veteran who finds himself falling in love with Nora, his old high school classmate; and Coleman, the hard-nosed police detective investigating Driss' death.

Determined to find her father's killer, Nora finds herself learning more than she'd bargained for about her late father, all the while navigating tense relationships with her mother and sister, and trying to reconcile her long-held beliefs with Jeremy's military past:

> "He wasn't the sweet kid I knew in high school; he had fought in a brutal war, a war I hated". "Hearing about the terrible things he had seen or done in Iraq made me feel implicated ... I didn't know how to navigate back to my state of ignorance" (Lalami 271).

The Other Americans manages to be many books at once: a gripping literary thriller, a complex love story and a sharp critique of an America wracked by war and hatred, divided against itself, constantly near a breaking point. And Lalami succeeds admirably on all fronts: The novel is intricately plotted, up to its shocking but unforced end. There are no unnecessary plot twists; Lalami is an intelligent author who's not in love with her own cleverness, Crafting a novel told through different points of view can trip up even the most seasoned authors. (Schaub)

The deconstruction and analysis of the notions of otherness and disillusionment in Lalami's *The Other Americans* that this chapter seeks to address. Through *The Other Americans,* Lalami goes beyond the enchantment of integration, assimilation and hybridity.

If hybridization is the product of migration, the sense of alterity that comes with political, economic or job-related migration is central in Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans*. While not being migrants, the other main characters in this polyphonic novel also show otherness: they are either unable to fit in in a society that still has racial conflicts, unable to overcome the violence of the Iraqi war they have

experienced or unable to live up to the American dream. In this close reading, we will be looking for elements of otherness in the novel **(**Vezzaro 147-152).

Lalami's works challenge the essentialist and reductionist discourse(s) of a Western master narrative which is premised upon a homogenizing and totalizing asymmetry of power relations. Indeed, from deconstructing the notions of home and hope in her *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* and making the voice of a slave heard in *The Moor's Account* to speaking for Othered diasporians in *The Other Americans*, Lalami has cast light on the processes of change and becoming brought about by the rite of passage of border crossing.

Lalami attempts to represent migrants who are stuck in untethered liminal space, reterritorialized and rootless and whose identities are constantly floating, reshaped and, hence, redefined. Thus, Lalami's conception of 'home' transcends the traditional nationalist and territorial homefulnesss to a more flexible self-centred 'homelessness' where the migrant belongs within rather than without. This belonging is problematized and destabilized due to the processes of Othering and disillusionment the diasporic subject is deemed to undergo throughout the diasporic journey (Edouihri 1).

The urge to speak for the marginalized people stuck in the crucible of a white monophonic American society is what guides Laila Lalami's diasporic investigation in *The Other Americans*. She, actually, seeks to demystify the claim of a centralized American identity through an emancipating process of identities/characters which have been relegated to a subordinate second class citizenship. Through the fabric of the plot, the writer tries to disentangle displaced identities from being enmeshed in the colonial legacy of inferiority, racism, denigration and otherness (Edouihri 1).

The latter notion is central to Lalami's narrative which seeks to present a counter discourse to the colonial and neocolonial master narrative. According to Volkmann and Grimm, othering refers to

> a process by which the empire can define itself against those it colonizes, excludes and marginalizes the business of creating the enemy in order that the empire might define itself by its geographical and racial others (152).

Hence, the creation of the other has been an existential need for the perpetuation of Orientalist/colonial discourse, in Saidian contention. It is through this juxtaposition between the self and other that the Eurocentric identity comes into being. In clear words, Lister maintains that othering is "a process of differentiation and demarcation, by which the line is drawn between "us" and "them"-between the more and the less powerful- and through which social distance is established and maintained" (101).

Put differently, this us and them polarity defines in and out groups of not only belongingness, but also power asymmetry and domination in which in-group members tend to delegitimize their out-group counterparts. Interestingly, the process of othering is best activated when the other is moved from homeland and displaced in the host space of ex/neocolonial self. That is exactly what Lalami underlines in constructing her narrative around the displacement of the protagonist Driss Guerraoui and his family who choose forced exile in America fleeing political persecution in then politically unstable Morocco. In a nut shell, the plot opens with what it seems a late-night hit-and-run accident. The Moroccan migrant Driss Guerraoui, who fled political crackdown back in the 1980s in Morocco, is the victim. The accident takes place in front of the latter's restaurant where the only eyewitness Efrian Aceves, a Mexican undocumented migrant, is standing (Edouihri 2).

Fearing deportation and its consequences on his family, Efrian hesitates to step forward despite his wife's constant urging to do the right thing. Meanwhile, Nora, Driss's daughter, a jazz composer, returns home to help investigate her father's case which is supervised by the Afro-American detective Erica Coleman. Suspicion hovers around the bowling alley proprietor Anderson Baker and his son Anderson Junior. Through distributing the main events of the plot on nine different characters, Lalami provides the reader with in-depth understanding and analysis of each character and their crossing paths (Edouihri 3).

Right from the outset, Lalami straight forwardly starts her exposition of the issue of othering from the opening the novel. The title of the novel show us to a narrative on Americans who are living on the margin; Americans whose being seems not to be imperative as opposed to that of 'real' first class citizens. In the same vein, to emphasize this choice, the author opts for a deliberate decapitalization of the initial letters of the title to stress on the lower and weak position in which some other Americans are relegated into. Hence, delving into the story fabric, this relegation emerges due to a centralized white identity which forces other peripheral identities to live on the margin. Obviously, the writer presents the characters, Anderson and Anderson Junior as the leaders of the process of othering since they believe to be the 'legitimate' owners of the space (America); and the rest are subordinates or unwanted. Anderson bitterly argues that:

> "Some people say I should be grateful for the business that the newcomers are bringing to the town, but the way I see it, they're changing this place and wanting me to be grateful for it. They didn't ask if we wanted them there, they just came" (Lalami 68).

For Anderson, he is not ready to share the space or appreciate the change induced by who he sees as ‘newcomers’; or perhaps ‘intruders’ who are unwelcomed. Lalami tries to reflect the challenges the Self undergoes in its encounter with an ‘other’ who seeks perhaps the impurity and tarnishing of its space. In this way, the pure state of America is at stake and the classic profile of a real American, being native-born, Christian, white and English speaking, is threatened.

That is why the Self, represented here in white Christian Anderson and Anderson Junior who stand for real Americans, resorts to othering alienated newcomers in various instances unravelling the other face of a country of immigrants cracked by religion, race suspicion and bigotry. Anderson Baker and his family epitomize the small American family struggling with capitalist competition, a non-traditional marriage of a much older man to a woman, financial disagreements, and the frustrations of immigrant influence on American tradition.

At the religious level, the compartmentalization of Arabs and non-Arab Muslims in a threatening minority has made them an easy target for racism, discrimination and even violent assaults. Nora, Driss’ daughter, tells:

> Growing up in this town, I had long ago learned that the savagery of a man named Mohammed was rarely questioned, but his humanity always had to be proven (Lalami 23).

Such statement denotes that Muslims are in a defensive position where they have to defend their religious convictions or prove the stereotypical views about them and their religion to be fault through acts which are considered right by the hosts. Another instance in which Nora is Othered is stuck in her childhood memories when she had to endure racist comments as “Raghead. Talibans”. Sometimes, “Raghead Talibans” (Lalami 32).

Being born in America does not spare Nora discriminatory comments and negotiating recognition in the society is a constant process for her. That mentioned, the author culminates this religious confrontation between the Christian Self and Muslim Other in Islamophobic violent acts committed in the aftermaths of 9/11.According to (Cheng 13) Islamophobia does not simply entail feelings of anxiety or perception of fear and hatred, towards Muslims and Islam, but also includes discriminatory attitudes and hostile practices through which it is manifested and expressed, like harassment, discrimination, verbal and physical abuse, and hate crimes. A revelatory case of hate crimes is plainly manifested in the arson attack on the Guerraoui's first project after 9/11. Nora recounts the event and says:

> We turned onto Kickapoo Trail to find Aladdin Donuts burning like a stack of hay. In a single motion, my father jumped out of the station wagon and pulled out his cell phone, just as Mr. Melendez at the 7-Eleven across the street came running toward us. "I called 911," he said. "He told us he'd been changing the paper in his cash register when he heard the sound of screeching tires. He'd thought nothing of it until the smell of smoke came drifting in through the doorway, a mix of gasoline, ash, melting plastic, and caramelizing syrup (Lalami 78).

Such xenophobic acts make the process of integration and assimilation much more impeded. In this regard, Steinhardt argues that 'exposure to xenophobic violence has a negative impact on several dimensions of social and economic integration. It not only reduces subjective well-being of immigrants, but also strengthens intentions to return to their country of origin'. Interestingly, the idea of homecoming is not an option to Driss, unlike his nostalgic wife, who exhibits more resistive decisions as in setting up another project, a diner. Yet, Driss always has the feeling of estrangement and adaptation to the new location turns into an obsession. Nora, again, informs us that :

> he put up a huge flag outside his restaurant, like he had to prove he was one of the good ones I told him over and over that he should sell. But he refused, he loved it here. God only knows why (Lalami 56).

The persisting choices Driss makes to prove himself and his family as good ones or not strangers would do him no good and Lalami presents him as tragic hero who has fallen due to his own deeds.

Further othering instances are embodied in the cases of Efrian and Coleman who represent two minorities, Mexican/Latinos and afro-Americans, respectively. The illegal situation of Efrian exemplifies the status of many undocumented immigrants who are obliged to live in the shadows fearing deportation. Witnessing the hit-and-run crime,and being unable to step forward to testify, strangles Efrian in a conscience-eating crisis. His fear of drawing attention to his family by telling the truth is amplified when he finds out that a friend of his is deported because she called the police to complain about a violent neighbour.

Obviously, the state of helplessness and powerlessness does extend to surround the detective Coleman, though differently. She typifies the long entrenched struggle of the blacks and Afro-Americans which has been burdening the American collective consciousness. Despite the brave attempts to rid itself from a legacy of injustice and discrimination, the American society has not been able to mend this rift. As Nokes puts it:

> For African Americans, the road to freedom and equality was long and difficult. The Thirteenth Amendment freed slaves. African Americans became citizens under the 14th Amendment. The 15th Amendment gave them the right to vote. All three amendments were ratified shortly after the Civil War. Still, Black Americans faced public discrimination and openly unfair treatment through most of the 20th century (Nokes 63).

Though holding a respectful and power exercising position as a detective, Coleman fails to escape underestimating looks, and sometimes comments, about her gender and race which are obviously fed by historical legacy. She downheartedly comments that 'The present could never be untethered from the past; you couldn't understand one without the other'. Such historical background casts its shadows on many immigrants who are trapped in the colonial binary and discriminatory repercussions. This results in an identity crisis, or what Bhabha terms nervous ambivalence, which pushes the diasporian subject into an unenviable process of identity negotiation and (re)construction.

Mirelle Lozano in her online article about otherness in Lalami's *The Other Americans* states,

> "The majority of the novels I have read are structured around a single character's point of view. Readers witness the experiences and thoughts of that one character and are left to speculate about those of the other characters involved. I feel this is similar to how people live their lives; focused on their own story they easily lose sight of the tales of other people. Conversely, Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans* is structured around the points of view of nine very different Americans (Lozano).

She adds,

> Currently, in 2021, America still struggles with problems concerning race, whether they be about an African American man getting shot by a white police officer or a Pakistani man not being allowed into the country for looking like a terrorist. Many Americans, believe that real Americans, the Americans that are allowed to live freely, have white skin, speak perfect English, and have big houses. But when someone looks different, or stumbles with pronunciation, they are singled out by their friends and neighbors, ultimately leading them to become others. Lalami's book goes through the insights of those other Americans and how their experiences differ. Lalami's characters each experience the feeling of otherness, as a result of

> racism, xenophobia, mental illness, sexism, and other issues"(Lozano).

Driss, an immigrant from Morocco and a restaurant owner, is hit by a speeding vehicle. As the mystery of this hit and run plays itself out the reader is introduced to Lalami's large cast of characters. This includes Driss's daughter Nora, Anderson the bowling alley owner next to his restaurant, Nora's old friend Jeremy, Coleman the Investigating detective, and Efraín who witnessed the hit and run.

Lalami distinguishes these characters by writing their personal experiences which allows the readers to learn about each character's lives. For example, Nora was born in the US and speaks perfect English, yet because she has darker skin than those around her it leads to racism from her classmate. Nora recalls her experience on 9/11, "Then in September of our sophomore year, two planes were flown into World Trade Center and strangely that distinction seemed to matter less, not more (Lozano).

We were both called the same names, Ragheads. Talibans. Sometimes, raghead, talibans". Nora suffered under the stereotype perpetrated by American media that Muslims are all terrorists. Efraín faces a similar struggle due to his status as an undocumented immigrant. He is trying to give his family a better life in the States, but he doesn't speak English. Many white supremacists isolate people of colour by physically and mentally hurting them, either by using racial slurs or beating them because these supremacists believe that humans that are not white don't deserve to be in their perfect America, if someone looks Latino, they are poor and part of drug dealer gangs; if they are Middle Eastern, they are suicide bombers that only want to watch the US burn (Lozano).

On the other hand, Jeremy Gorecki is the Hispanic war veteran with a dead mother and alcoholic father, adopting the role of family leader at just 14 years old and

as an adult, after serving in the army, still struggling to determine who he is, Jeremy seems like a normal white American man, the one that seems to believe in the perfect, unproblematic American. However, he has insomnia as a result of his experiences serving on active duty in the military. This leads Jeremy to fear the otherness that is built from the poisonous structure of the perfect white supremacy if he truthfully talks about his internal battles. Jeremy fears what his peers will think of him when they find out about his mental trauma (Lozano).

Lalami's book lays bare the ways in which Jeremy excludes himself from close relationships ,othering himself because he fears he won't be accepted so he rejects himself first .Jeremy explains:

> There was something false about it, though .Even when I managed to hold on to them for more than a couple of months, the look in their eyes that said I was a hero would drive me away (Lalami 213).

He feels that truly opening up about his deployment would disconnect him from other people. Many of the characters here cannot cope with opening up about themselves .For instance, Anderson may not have insomnia but he struggles with anger towards his wife and son which ultimately tears his family apart just like how it tears up Jeremy's relationships.

The otherness in Lalami's novel explores is not only that of race and gender and class and the intersections of those identities, but also the otherness that exists within each of these people, the paths that could have been taken, the choices that are constantly being made. In taking us through their journeys, Lalami invites us to reflect on the reasons for why those journeys turned out as they have, to consider the sum of these lives in their complex humanity (Lozano).

2. Sexism and Feminism: Nora as the Other

Sexism is another cultural issue explored in *The Other Americans*. The detective Coleman experiences this because she is a black woman working as a detective in a world where men are generally viewed as the best detectives. She often suffers from snide comments about her race and sex. Coleman feels pressured to work harder because she is not seen as equal to her male co-workers. Coleman reflects on the inequity, "I didn't have to prove myself to someone like him, not with my record at Metro, and yet that's exactly what I found myself doing" (Lalami 61).

Coleman struggles with the fact that even though she is good at her job, some of the men still don't value her work. Laila Lalami has created a single multi lensed story through which the reader witnesses the very different experiences of her characters all joined together by the murder of Driss. Coleman is the black mother (step mother, actually) discovering her young son's secrets of being gay while trying to balance a busy work schedule as a successful police detective – enduring both racial and sexist discrimination, inevitably.

Another instance in which Nora as feminist character is Othered is stuck in her childhood memories when she had to endure racist comments as 'Raghead. Talibans. Sometimes, Raghead Talibans'. Being born in America does not spare Nora discriminatory comments and negotiating recognition in the society is a constant process for her, also rejected by her mother Because she refused to be a copy of her sister, who studied pharmacy and became a musician, and this upset her religiously committed mother which she always called her your head in the cloud.

> These are not unreasonable questions. Not all of us can be like you, with your head in the clouds." "Your head

> in the clouds The idiom rang like an echo in my life. It had started when I was nine or ten, so absorbed in reading my books that I didn't hear my name when I was called to the dinner table. "You have your head in the clouds," my mother would say, often with affection. A few years later, when I helped out at the restaurant after school, the remark turned into a bitter reprimand. "You gave out the wrong change. You have your head in the clouds," my mother complained. And later yet, when I decided against medical school, it became an accusation. "You're going to ruin your life, benti. You have your head in the clouds! (Lalami 18-19).

Nora as female immigrant character was exposed to the experience of racial and sexual discrimination and suffered even in her childhood from her name and being immigrant says:

> On my first day at Yucca Mesa Elementary, when Mrs. Nielsen cheerfully read the children's names on the roster, but could not bring herself to say Nora Zhor Guerraoui. Twice she started on the middle name and stopped, frowning at the consonant cluster. The class grew silent, united in its curiosity about the word that had made the teacher falter. Then Mrs. Nielsen lowered her reading glasses over her nose and peered at me. "What an unusual name. Where are you from?" (Lalami 19).

Nora's classmates were even mocking the quality of her food says:

> At recess, the kids fanned out and gathered again in small groups—military kids, church kids, trailer-park kids, hippie kids—groups in which I knew no one and no one knew me. I stayed behind by the blue wall that bordered the swings, and watched from a distance. In the cafeteria, I ate the zaalouk my motherhad put in my lunchbox, while the other girls at my table whispered among themselves. Then Brittany Cutler, a pretty blonde with plaited hair and a toothy smile, turned to me and asked, What are you eating? I looked up, immensely grateful for a chance to finally talk to someone. Eggplant!. It looks like poop" (Lalami 19).

They rejected her because she is different from them and because of the colour of her dark skin and nobody wanted to sit next her she suffered from being othered Nora says:

> The other girls tittered, and for the rest of the day they called me a poop-eater. At story time, we all gathered around Mrs. Nielsen to hear her read from Rapunzel, but nobody wanted to sit next to me. Later, Mrs. Nielsen started playing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" on the xylophone and asked us if we recognized the tune. I said, "It's the purple and green song! to which Mrs. Nielsen replied, "No, sweetie, the star twinkles, it's not purple or green. You really need to learn your colors. I didn't know how to tell her that I already knew my colors, that I was talking about how the music looked, the shapes and shades the notes made" (Lalami 19).

She also suffered from speech problems and only found support from her father. She says,

> But the next day I still had to go to school. I learned the alphabet, learned the pledge of allegiance, learned to stay out of the way of bullies. In class, I was quiet. At lunch, I sat alone. The silence cloaked me with safety, but it betrayed me a few months later, when Mrs. Nielsen became convinced I had a learning disability. She called my mother into the classroom one sunny morning in May and used words like severe mutism, social anxiety, and oppositional behavior. The terms failed to elicit a flicker of recognition from my mother (Lalami 19).

After a moment, Mrs. Nielsen's voice dropped to a whisper.

> There's something wrong with your daughter," she said. I sat on a yellow mat in the corner, playing, listening, waiting for my mother to say, There's nothing wrong with my daughter. But she only nodded slowly, as if she agreed with the teacher. When my father came home that night and found out what had happened, he said the teacher was a fool. "Hmara," he called her, a word he reserved for the television anchors with whom he argued during the eight 'clock news. Then he reached into the fridge for a beer and started sorting

> through the bills on the kitchen counter. I watched my mother's face for a reaction. It was immediate. And you know more than the teacher? I know more about my daughter. There is no problem, Maryam If she doesn't speak, she has to repeat the year. That's what the teacher said No, she doesn't. He ruffled my hair Noreini, try to speak in class, okay?" (Lalami 20).

Also Nora's mother Maryam often sides with the patriarchy (IMAM) telling her daughter to dress more conservatively at the mosque, Which shows her conservative Muslim and feminine side, she struggled adapting to America depending on her first daughter to translate. Nora relationship with her sister Selma is very strained after receiving most of father's will , instead of having a sisterhood between sisters Nora and Salma, it's the complete opposite and they do not support one another at all after she received little of father's will also because Salma more liked by her mother and often seen as the most successful of the two sisters.

The threat of political violence that drove Nora's parents to leave Morocco is given expression in Maryam's quiet melancholy, her regret at losing her homeland, and her elder daughter's duty–bound frustration. Turning the other into scapegoats for personal failure gives rise in turn to new acts of violence. The present can never be separated from the past, you couldn't understand one without the other, observes Coleman as she comes to comprehend the interplay between the town's residents. *The Other Americans* demonstrates brilliantly, in ways foreseen and unforeseen, as often denied as acknowledged how the personal and political enmesh in all our lives.

3. Hybridity and Hybrid Characters

One of the most important features that characterize U.S. contemporary ethnic fiction is hybridity. It is rather queer to talk about diaspora without invoking the term hybridity which, in fact, breeds and nourishes from the politico-cultural pathos of diaspora. If diasporas are continuously engaged in developing complex "third spaces" interacting with both home and host countries, their diasporic identities are perpetually recreating themselves anew, through transformation and difference. It is no surprise, however, that their experiences would be reflected in their narratives as the logical creative outlets of hybrid existence in-between cultures ,It should be remarked that the personal cultural hybridity of Lalami's characters in her novel How Guerraoui's family Lost their Accent are the logical outcome of long years of exile (Benadla 10).

Where Lalami really succeeds is in her treatment of the titular issue - what it means to be an hybrid" American: non-white, an immigrant, undocumented, or a first generation son or daughter of immigrants. She also produces a subtle portrait of Arab-Americans which is all too difficult to find elsewhere. To be an "Other" American is to be forever in conflict; it is the never ending sense of non-belonging; it is the confusion of not knowing where home is Nora says, "I had long ago learned that the savagery of a man named Mohammed was rarely questioned, but his humanity always had to be proven" (Lalami 56).

This conflict is vividly articulated through the story of Nora and her relationship with her parents, a classic story of a first generation American diverging from the traditions of her parents' homeland and struggling to please parents who expected something altogether different from their lives in a country which demands financial

struggle and total assimilation. When her father dies, Nora is hit with the full force of the fragility of the immigrant experience.

Remembering the arson of her father's diner days after 9/11, she wonders if the death of an Arab Muslim immigrant could ever really be an accident in America. Lalami delicately traces the scars of 9/11 and the Iraq war on Muslim and Arab American life, events which forever changed the lives of the Guerraoui's and thousands of others. She manages to take a well-worn issue and treat it with the elegance and love which resonates throughout the novel, Laila Lalami as a writer discussed the issue of identity for immigrants in the United States of America through her characters in *The Other Americans* and through the Guerraoui's immigrant family whose members suffered from alienation in the country in which they live Including the parents, Idris and Mariam, who immigrated from Morocco to the United States of America in search of a better life to reach the American dream (Plant).

Another aspect of diasporic discourse is the search for selfhood in the world between two cultures that of homeland and embraced land. The notion of Hybridity often plays a cardinal function in Diaspora communities. In migrating from one nation to another, the migrant quests for setting up home in a new land. But they are unable to identify the new the relation between mother culture and alien cultures produced through the strategy of disavowal, the reference of discrimination is always to the process of splitting as the condition of subjection: a discrimination between the mother culture and its bastards, the self and its doubles, where the trace of what is discovered is not repeated but respected as something different a mutation, a hybrid. Bhabha's contention is that there is an amalgamation of cultural forms as a

consequence of two processes of colonialism and post-colonialism. His notion of hybridity is one of the universal experiences of the colonized.

Lalami's novel starts off with the death in a hit and run of a Moroccan immigrant, and basically is told from the perspective of nine different characters, who, while they are all tied to this man in one way or another, also have the shared experience of feeling as though they are on the outside, and hybrid either because they are immigrants, whether they are documented or undocumented or naturalized, or have moved from one part of this country to another. So, for example, the detective who's investigating the hit and run has moved from Washington, D.C., to this small desert town where the action takes place. And so all of the characters really share this experience of feeling as though they are other, in some sense, and that's what tied the novel together.

The Other Americans novel is more about the private experience of immigration, speak a foreign language, and especially when Meryam first arrive to the country, and she mispronounce something, and somebody laughs, or she didn't quite know the culture or some of the jokes that people are laughing about.

In her novel *The Other Americans*, Lalami shed light on hybrid immigrants and gave examples through Jeremy, whose mother was Spanish and his father was American, and how he found difficulties to integrate after his return from the Iraq war, in addition to Detective Coleman and her problems with integration because she is a hybrid and because he is a black woman and Efrain, who was Mexican, was suffering because Afraid of deportation, also Idris, the Moroccan, was trying to expand his business to prove that he was not just a hybrid but an American who wanted to reach the American dream with his family specially his daughter Nora,

Through the perspectives of nine alternating narrators, including Driss himself, Lalami threads together an account of the slain man's journey to America and the life he toiled to build after his arrival. After the donut-shop arson, Driss had worked to establish a sense of rhythm and safety for his family that the political upheaval of Casablanca denied them. He labored to establish his new diner as a friendly, all-American outpost.

The Other Americans on its face, a novel that traces the story of one immigrant family and the seemingly inexplicable tragedy that ruptures it. But through her many characters' specific and overlapping perspectives, Lalami also questions the feasibility of any centralized American identity. None of the novel's narrators, even those who are citizens, ever quite measures up to the expectations they feel their immediate community, or their country, has of them. They are too loud or too brown or too soft. Too different. Nobody is ever enough.

4. Displacement and Unhomeliness

"To be unhomed" is not to be homeless, nor can the "Unhomely" be easily accommodated .in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow (...) the recesses of the domestic space become sites for history's most intricate invasions. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as is disorienting (Bhabha 9).

Another aspect of diasporic discourse is the search for selfhood in the world between two cultures that of homeland and embraced land. The notion of home often

plays a cardinal function in Diaspora communities. In migrating from one nation to another, the migrant quests for setting up home in a new land. But they are unable to identify the new place as their home. Instead they find their home elsewhere, back across the boundary and they always wish to come back. Laila Lalami, in her novel *The Other Americans*, sheds light on the Guerraoui's family as a realistic example of immigrants who left their country, Morocco, as Idris and Maryam, the couple wanted to live far away in search of the American dream, and how Maryam suffered from loneliness and lack of integration and suffered from unhomeliness even in her relationship with her husband because She was fighting to obtain a new identity in America despite the difficulties she had encountered in learning the English language , she seems to lose perhaps a warmest familial and social life style which is dominated by alienation. She maintains that:

> As the years passed, I spent most of my time alone, while my husband was at work, one daughter at practice, the other with her music. We were like a thrift-store tea set, there was always one piece missing (Lalami 64).

More than that, Nora reveals her mother's failure to integrate and construct an alternative environment due to the rootedness of the self in homeland. She explains that: "her mother had to leave many traditions behind and the more time passed, the more they mattered to her" (Lalami 44).

Interestingly, unlike her husband and daughters, Maryam's cumulative feelings of loss, alienation and nostalgia make up a deep crack in living the new life. She even states that bluntly when she says: "the hardest thing about living in America was being so far away, it was like being orphaned" (Lalami 58).

Maryam has suffered because of her being away from her mother country, its customs and traditions, and her failure to integrate into the new country, and this affected her relationship with her family. The idea of homecoming is not an option to Driss, unlike his nostalgic wife, who exhibits more resistive decisions as in setting up another project, a diner. Yet, Driss always has the feeling of estrangement and adaptation to the new location turns into an obsession. Nora, again, informs us that:

> "He put up a huge flag outside his restaurant, like he had to prove he was one of the good ones told him over and over that he should sell. But he refused, he loved it here. God only knows why (Lalami 56).

Lalami as an immigrant writer in *The Other Americans* showed the problem of belonging and unhomeliness that each of the nine characters in the novel suffers from, further unhomeliness manifested in the case of Efrain and Coleman who each represent two minorities, Mexican/Latinos and Afro-Americans; Those who represent minorities who suffer from unhomeliness The illegal situation of Efrian exemplifies the status of many undocumented immigrants who are obliged to live in the shadows fearing deportation and The detective Coleman which struggle the discrimination and injustice from her colleagues and , she fails to escape from comments about her gender and race as black woman ,Even the protagonist of *The Other Americans* Nora suffered from unhomeliness in her childhood and because of her name ,skin, and language.

5. Code-switching as a Marker of Identity

The Other Americans is composed of dozens of short chapters, each told in the first person by someone connected to the case, including Maryam, Salma, and Nora, as well the African-American police detective, a white high school friend of Nora's who has recently returned from fighting in the war in Iraq and has fallen in love with Nora, the elderly white man who owns the bowling alley next door to Driss's diner, the bowling alley owner's grown son, and an illegal and terrified Latino immigrant who witnessed the hit-and-run.

In the postcolonial context, language represents one of the crucial tools of cultural communication and is therefore often a subject of heated discussion. Since language constitutes the framework of cultural interaction, postcolonial authors often challenge the privileged position of Standard English within their writing by modifying and substituting it with new forms and varieties.

The discourse on language, its usage and implications, both for the writers and readers of postcolonial literature, forms the backbone of postcolonial literary theory. Language, "the medium through which a hierarchical structure of power is perpetuated", was seen as the main tool of imperial oppression (Ashcroft et al 7). From Achebe who, in his essay "The African Writer and the English Language", advocated the use of a different English "which is at once universal and able to carry his peculiar experience" to the Kenyan writer Ngugi wa Thiong'o who rejected the language of the former empire "as a suitable vehicle for local expression, asserting the incompatibility of local thought and English words, English syntax, English style", postcolonial authors have taken various stances towards this matter.

Language itself is often a central theme in postcolonial and migrant literature – one that helps authors to explore issues such as cultural loss and the emergence of hybrid linguistic identities, which are also topics of interest to sociolinguists (Albakry and Hancock (Weston and chloros 196, 198).

Even though most postcolonial writers from the Anglophone sphere take English as the main medium of communication and literary representation, the rejection of its privileged position as a standard linguistic norm is a common practice. Utilizing various linguistic strategies, such as code-switching, syntactic fusion, appropriation, vernacular transcription, use of neologisms etc., enables them to adapt the language to such an extent that it can "express widely differing cultural experiences" (Ashcroft et al. 38). These modifications are then instrumental in capturing specific cultural sensibilities and in articulating the voices of the stated communities. More often than not, they are also regarded as statements of the writer's ideological position. One of this various linguistic strategies used in the novel *The Other Americans* is: In societies where more than one language exists, variation of languages in one's speech can be observed in many forms. Speakers may alternate between languages or varieties of the same language in order to make more effective and meaningful communication (Parveen and Aslam 213).

This phenomenon is referred to as code-switching and is now acknowledged as a widespread phenomenon in bilingual speech that gives speakers, with linguistic competence in two or more languages, the advantage to alternate between two different languages or two forms of a language in a single conversation (Fromkin Rodman & Hyams 207). Code-switching is not only observed in spoken language but extends to include written and sign languages (Soliman 205).

According to Myers-Scotton as cited in (Bailey 211), code-switching often takes one of two forms, being the inter-sentential form and the intra-sentential form. In the case of inter-sentential code-switching, speakers alternate from one language to the other just in-between sentences. This way, they allow themselves enough space to generate a sentence or even entire sentences before switching back to the initial language. This form is observed to be the most recurrent form of code-switching among fluent bilinguals.

Code-switching is "the alternate use of two languages or linguistic varieties within the same utterance or during the same conversation" (Hoffman15, 16). It is a natural way of speaking in a bilingual community because participants usually switch from one code to another code. In sociolinguistics, code means a system of communication, spoken or written, such as language, dialect or variety. According to Wardhaugh "people then are usually required to select from one code to another or to mix code" (103). It means switching between languages is common and takes many forms.

Code-switching was defined later as ''the juxtaposition within the same speech exchange of passages of speech belonging to two different grammatical systems or subsystems'' (Gumperz 59). Myers-Scotton offered a definition for code-switching in which she claimed that speakers alternate not only between different languages, but also between different varieties of the same language within a single conversation (93). Myers-Scotton also defined code-switching as the 'juxtaposition' of codes of two or more languages or dialects.ngual speakers as individuals with the ability to switch from one language to the other without breaking (99).

Code-switching includes, but is not limited to, situational and metaphorical forms. The situational Code Switching occurs when speakers switch from one code or

language to another according to the situation or the setting. In contrast, metaphorical CS takes place whenever there is a change, specifically in the topic (Gumperz, 1982). It is triggered by the individuals and how they want to be perceived by their interlocutors. However, Gumperz developed the term conversational code-switching (CCS) after being criticized about the distinction made between situational and metaphorical CS.

From the analysis, the writer finds that inter-sentential switching is most frequently used in the conversation; it occurs many times. Intra-sentential switching appears many times in the conversations. The last type of code-switching that occurs is emblematic switching. It occurs many times because the characters employ more exclamations in their utterances They are quotation and reiterations. They do not occur because the characters never quote other people's speech and they do not repeat the utterance from one language to another. Here are the examples.

The primary focus of our analysis will be on the discourses between the characters in the novel specially Driss's family, between sisters Nora and Selma, between mother Meryam and her daughters , between Jeremy and Nora, the characters they used the English language to communicate between each other instead of their mother language the Arabic Moroccan dialect ,lalami tried to showed how the displacement affected the mother tongue of the character and clarify how the Gerraoui's family lived the hybridity and obliged to use the English language in order to reach the American dream despite the feelings of alienation . Characters may even switch from one code to another to show solidarity with other social groups present in the community.

Characters can also code-switch when there is a certain topic to be discussed or when they need to express specific emotions. Investigated the functions of Code Switching, where their findings revealed that Code-Switching occurred when the speaker was angry or tired. Furthermore, suggested that identity is one of three social arenas that play a role in code choice. According to their addressees' identity as well as their own, speakers switch from one form to another.

Analysis of Code Switching in the novel *The Other Americans* showed that switching to English when characters talking to each other are often seen to reflect superiority or a need to belonging to the American community and to avoid the rejection as immigrants. The use of Code Switching in *The Other Americans* depicts a postcolonial society in search of a common identity, which is also the novel's major theme.

Lalami used English as the language of dialogue and communication between her characters in the novel in order to send a message to Americans of all stripes that differences in religion, skin or nationality do not affect being an American and that America is the country of all these. We find some few examples of the switch in the novel. Lalami used it only to convey an example, even a small one, about the culture of others: -(Hmara) Idiot / RoshdyAbadha / Poems of al-Khanssa and al-Mutanabbi /Oasis Boudenib / She pointed toward the Boulevard Hassan I -Moroccan king/ We renamed Aladdin Donuts- the name from arab tale/ Anissa –Salma - Maryam -Nora Guerraoui -DrissGuerraoui an arab names in english sentences-Efrain – Marisela Spanish names in English sentences.

6. Disillusioned Characters and (De)formed Identities

Disillusionment is a phenomenon which occurs for any individual who is not able to accept the realities of life as they are. It is a painful and long process of introspection and self-realization and is never utterly eradicated because as soon as one got disillusioned, one rushes into building up another illusion.

The main characters in the novel experience the process of displacement differently; yet, they are all torn apart between the hope of assimilation and nostalgia of home coming. Such experience aggressively drags them under the wheel of disillusionment. Lalami presents Nora as a symbol of assimilative diasporians who are ready to fully dissolve in the host culture's identity either due to fascination or concealment. According to Manathunga, assimilation refers to a uni-dimentional, one-way process by which outsiders relinquish their own culture in favour of that of the dominant society (84). To gain her Americanness Nora drinks wine, goes to discos and even 'gets rid of' her virginity. This mimicry, as Bhabha contends, is not a guaranteed process whose result is not a satisfactory reproduction of the colonized Self. Put plainly by (Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin 155).

When colonial discourse encourages the colonial subject to mimic the colonizer, by adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values, the result is never a simple reproduction of those traits. Rather, the result is a 'blurred copy' of the colonizer that can be quite threatening.

Similarly, Driss' dislocation can be seen as a disintegration and rupture with the 'threatening' homeland toward an integration and embrace of a supposedly safer and welcoming American dream. He also invests in assimilating, not only financially

in setting up a second business, after the first one was arsoned, but also emotionally when he indulges in an affair with another woman. Dirss' attempts to be identified among the good one by the mean stream society and his disavowing any connections with any bad party are obsessional. Nora exemplifies this when she says:

> he put up a huge flag outside his restaurant, like he had to prove he was one of the good ones. I told him over and over that he should sell. But he refused, he loved it here. God only knows why (Lalami 56).

This clinging to and deep belief in reaping the fruits of the American dream is shaken especially when personal safety is at risk. Probing into her father's head, Nora reveals some of his concerns and points out that: "I think he was just realizing that he had moved six thousand miles for safety, only to realize that he was not safe at all" (Lalami 36).

Thus, the culminating peak of Driss' disillusionment costs him his life; a moment when rejection blends with dejection. Differently, Maryam's illusions about the displacement experience are more bound with the family. Negotiating a new identity is immensely crippled by nostalgic constructs and the haunting memories. She seems to lose perhaps a familial and social life style to colder American life style which is dominated by alienation and individualism. She maintains that, "As the years passed, I spent most of my time alone, while my husband was at work, one daughter at practice, the other with her music. We were like a thrift-store tea set, there was always one piece missing" (Lalami 64).

More than that, Nora reveals her mother's failure to integrate and construct an alternative environment due to the rootedness of the self in homeland. She explains that her "mother had to leave many traditions behind and the more time passed, the more they mattered to her" (Lalami 44). Interestingly, unlike her husband and

daughters, Maryam's cumulative feelings of loss, alienation and nostalgia make up a deep crack in living the new life. She even states that bluntly when she says "the hardest thing about living in America [was] being so far away, it was like being orphaned". According to 9th Seminar of the European Network of Training Organizations for Local and Regional Authorities in 1996 :

Immigrants pass through distinct stages during the process of integration. Short, they begin with euphoria, enthusiasm for the exciting move they have made and expectations based on what they have heard prior to their immigration. Depression follows soon after, accompanied by disappointment, critical attitudes towards the host culture, frustration, and in extreme cases, drug use, drinking, and a variety of anti-social behaviour (Esfidvajani 54).

Ostensibly, the spell of disillusionment is not cast merely on diasporic characters in Lalami's view; rather it also engulfs 'host' characters whose experiences with the 'new comers' is untethering. The situation of the old war veteran, Jeremy, is a case in point.His view toward what he used to see as heroic job in Iraq war collapses upon coming back home where he endures the conscience-eating images of the killing of women and children. Jeremy's war atrocities hinder his social-civil life reintegration and complicate his reunion with Nora.

Plainly put, Nora states: "I didn't know why I was spending so much time with him. He wasn't the sweet kid I knew in high school; he had fought in a brutal war, a war I hated" (Lalami 75).

Jeremy constantly tries to rid himself of the war haunting memories and regrets and moves toward adopting a more 'tamed' and 'pacific' identity which is reflected in his new job as a detective and how he deals with the town residents. Obviously,

Jeremy's identity transformation through the process of disillusionment culminates in winning Nora's heart and ultimately marrying her.

In the same vein, Lalami drags Anderson and his son Anderson Junior under the wheel of disillusionment. In fact, they epitomize the American white middle-class identity's demystification toward accepting the new reality of sharing the space with hosted diasporic identities. The recurrent comments on the changing place, the 'new comers' and the competing businesses reflect the intensity of their identity trauma. Indeed, the writer problematizes their disillusionment experience through the futility of Driss' homicide act and the condemnation of Anderson Junior at the end of the narrative. This way, the writer leaves the white host character with one plausible choice which is to indulge in the process of space negotiation and identity reconstruction with the diasporian 'Other' instead of opting for confrontation and rejection.

The novel attempts to establish this sense of isolation that many Americans feel throughout their lives, the presence of so many conflicts weaken the ones set before it. Because there are so many characters, the themes of the story are stretched thin; Lalami attempts to cover many topics through her characters the female and minority identity, explored through Nora and Coleman, the immigrant identity, explored through Efrain and Driss and each of their respective families.

Lalami's novel is centred around both immigrants and Americans, is able to create a world in which the struggles that immigrants face are very much similar to those that Americans face in their own home country. She essentially lowers the wall of separation that has grown increasingly status quo in America between immigrants and "natives." In the case of Nora, Lalami provides details about the feeling of being

alienated and alone as she grew up as the child of immigrants, being ridiculed for her differences and not really feeling as if she had a place in the places where she grew up.

Jeremy experienced much of the same things growing up as his father's abandonment in his life following the sudden death of his mother forced him into a life that he did not want. Of the loneliness and alienation that Nora felt because of how she came to be in America, Jeremy felt a lot of the same emotion but for a different reason. Ignoring the romance that blooms between these two, the most important take away is that Lalami, be the brilliant writer that she be, is able to use the emotional connectedness of characters in completely different situations to steer the claim that the human experience, while different for everyone, has similarities that cannot be ignored. Despite the fact that we may come from different places around the world, speak different languages, we all share the same experience has human beings.

There lies at the heart of *The Other Americans* a cautionary tale for those who claim politics has no place in their lives, and includes a great many Americans. Acts of brutality, even those distant in time and geography, cast a shadow over the relationship between the town's inhabitants. Nora's growing intimacy with Iraq war veteran Jeremy is clouded by his memories of war atrocities in addition to the presence of Fierro, his friend in the Marines, who suffers from anxiety and needs help.

CONCLUSION

This study discussed some of the main features of post-colonial literature, particularly the concern for place and displacement. The identity crisis experienced by all immigrants and displaced persons from their countries of origin, crossing to the countries in which they live ,Where displacement is a vital issue in the world of post-colonial literature because of its negative consequences on the human psyche and societies.

Displacement occurs in two ways, one physical and the other psychological, which made post-colonial writers focus on both stages in their writings to depict the conflict of post-colonial themes. Physical or territorial displacement forces people to move to a foreign land and results in psychological alienation or displacement. The displacement appears as a reaction from the immigrants, whose political stances and restrictions on freedoms in their mother country forced them to leave.

It emerges clearly that the state of displacement is not comfortable for immigrants, as (MacLeod) states: “They can be considered as not belonging there and excluded from thinking of the new land as their home” (212). The displaced lose their mother tongue, culture, beliefs and religion. This is evident in the novel of the other and Guerraoui’s family as an example of that who lost all the language, culture and belief that ties them to their identity as Moroccans in their new homeland. In the modern era, displacement from one country to another and from one continent to another is for many reasons, namely work and improving the standard of living, as stated by Safran “millions of people do not live in the countries in which they were born and raised” (39). Rather, they go somewhere else, usually foreign land, in order to work. Or trade, visit or further studies, but if they live there for a long time or settle

for a long time in their lives, they feel displaced from their original origins such as the home, families, relatives, language, cultures, that they left behind .

Language is the basic element that makes up the place. As such, the spirit of the place and its people are stored in the language. The action to offset will also be codified into the language, and we find examples of this in the novel of the other American through the difficulties that Maryam faced in abandoning her mother tongue and learning English language to communicate with others.

There is also an example of the displacement of Africans in their countries and culture. Colonization destroyed the history, literature, clans, social mores, languages, religions, and sects of African indigenous peoples. It also displaced every aspect of African subjectivity by using education, language, religion as well as literature and administrative power. This resulted in a hybrid African subject who was black in his thoughts but white in his way of life. In addition to that, these two-way displacements constituted a hybrid person.

All of this is exemplified in the novel *The Other Americans*, where Lalami mentioned hybrid characters resulting from immigration to the United States of America as the Guerraoui's family, The greatest example is the girl Nora, who had Moroccan Arab and Amazigh roots, but spoke English language, and act like an American .displaced people ignore their own culture. As a result, they gradually become detached from their native culture.

This research has shown that Immigration and displacement had an impact on literature and writing, as we find a group of Arab writers living in the United States for more than a hundred years. The first generation of writers was called Group Al Mahjar, a movement in Arabic literature that refers to the body of works produced by

diaspora writers in North and South America at the beginning of the twentieth century. The two main characters of Mahjar are Michael Naimi and Khalil Gibran who write in both Arabic and English. We can see in their works the liberation from the conservative constraints of the Arab literary tradition. In fact, their literary works span across the great divide between East and West. The second generation of Arab-American writers consisted of Vance Bergili, William Peter Blatty, and Eugene Paul Nassar. They are assimilated into American society in part because they do not speak Arabic and do not know much about Arab cultural heritage.

As a result The Arab American literature began with the publication of anthologies: Gregory Orfali's The Grape Leaves Rolls: A Bunch of Contemporary Arab American Poetry in 1982 and Gregory Orfali's Grape Leaves by Sherif El Moussa: A Century. Arab American Poetry in1988.And started to flourish with established writers such as Jordanian-American novelist Diana Abu-Jaber, Palestinian poet Suheir Hammad, and Libyan novelists Khaled Mottawa and Hisham Matar. These authors have presented themselves as literary figures their writings emphasizes the difficulties of the host country and, likewise, the rich and complicated cultural inheritance of people who suddenly found themselves an object of public debate in the wake of 9/11. Two factors have contributed to the development of Arab-American literature. First, these writers search for voices outside the traditional canon of Anglo-American literature. The second one is mainly political.

These writers attempt to expose the socio-political malaise in their home countries. Therefore, they started diagnosing, negotiating, and questioning political, social, and cultural issues concerning the experiences and diaspora. This research also discussed the idea of diaspora, showing that diasporas retain a sense of nostalgia,

feeling like the desire to return and home to immigrants is an ever nostalgic and a sign of identity. The research also shows that although migrants are physically displaced or expelled from their homeland, they feel an imaginary and mythical home in host countries. Expatriates create identity and home in host countries by associating their evocations of familiar landscapes and analogies with their old homes.

From Memories And fantasies, they attribute meaning to places, also touched upon what Safran wrote, a specific model of the diaspora, which listed six main features. They include a history of dispersal, memories of the place of origin, alienation in the new country, desire to return home, continued support for one's homeland, and a sense of collective identity as a group.

This research has also discussed the literature produced by the diaspora and distinctively representing their feelings and experiences, called diaspora literature. It depicts the psychological, social, economic and cultural condition of the diaspora to include them at length in the text they create. It buries themes such as, identity crisis, rootless, permanent mental duplication, rooted sense of belonging and always latent will to connect as well as return to one's homeland create literature Of its kind is one way to vent the agitation mentioned above.

This study has considered diaspora literature to include all literary works written by authors outside their country of origin, and all of these writers can be considered diaspora writers writing outside their country, but they remained connected to their homeland through their works due to the feeling of loss and alienation that emerged as a result of immigration and alienation. Diaspora literature deals with alienation, displacement, existential rootlessness, nostalgia, and the search for identity. It also addresses issues related to the integration or disintegration of cultures. The result is a

torn identity and people torn between two places, two cultures, and often between languages. Also touched on the feminist diaspora literature and how it played an effective role in conveying the suffering of immigrants and their feeling of alienation and displacement.

This work has shown that people migrate in search of work, business and commerce. But expatriates often find themselves managing cultural identities. They have to create different cultural, ethnic and political identities to meet challenges from their original lands and adopted homelands. An identity crisis arises if one migrates from one region to another while trying to adopt themselves for their different experiences, at the same time they seek to find their identity. The idea of home often plays a fundamental role in diaspora communities. The migrant quests for setting up home in a new land. But they are unable to identify the new place as their home. Instead they find their home elsewhere, back across the boundary and they always wish to come back. The expatriate has to start his next beginning wherever he goes to settle.

This research has also examined Bhabha's theory of hybridity, Bhabha chiefly looks at the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized psychoanalytically and from a different angle; in other words Bhabha's theory merely shifts our focus. Unlike Said's focus on the colonizer and Fanon's focus on the colonized, Bhabha takes a new perspective and shifts the emphasis toward both the colonizer and the colonized simultaneously. He puts forward his concept of the Third Space or the in-between space. The latter space is evident in the confluence of cultures, and characterizes the lives of the (ex)colonized as well as the diaspora.

This research has proved that the hybrid individual, text, or cultural expression is concerned with ideas of exile from one's native culture brought about by alienation from language, landscape. It is also related to ideas of displacement experienced by the (ex)colonized.

This research has also examined the Central of Bhabha's notion of hybridity is the concept of unhomeliness. According to Bhabha home is perceived to be a place of stable identity where one has been and is understood. In nation and cultures that are experiencing oppression , home is linked to positive version of the past .It means a life before oppression home is linked to positive version of the past .It means a life before oppression .In other words, 'home' is tied to freedom. Bhabha develops the notion of unhomely by referring to some work of postcolonial literature that problematize the idea of the real and stable home. Bhabha emphasizes on instability of home and of the past.

Lalami uses her writing to explore the immigrants' feelings of being outsider and other in her novel *The Other Americans*. Lalami has written an exploration of the struggles, tensions and regrets of two generations of an immigrant family. Their stories are intertwined with the inner lives of others, both native and foreign-born who, in one way or another, are similarly alienated and struggling with various demons. The interactions set off a chain of events that expose both the town's hypocrisies and connections.

The true-life dramas of Central American asylum seekers and refugees from war-torn Syria have dominated the headlines over the past few years. But Lalami tells a story that explores what has happened to an immigrant couple several decades after their arrival. Much of that saga is filtered through the perspective of the couple's

daughter Nora, who disappointed her mother by becoming a jazz composer instead of a doctor. “For me, immigration is a timeless theme, Lalami says. It’s something that people have written about literally since the dawn of humanity.

Through what seems to be an ordinary hit-and-run crime Lalami craftily delves into the lives of nine representative characters of an American society divided by racism, ethnicity and exclusion. She succeeds at juxtaposing host and ‘guest’ identities in a confessionary polyphonic account of a society in constant becoming. Indeed, the tale of Driss murder is Lalami’s climax criticism of an America which is haunted by 9/11 traumas, Whiteman supremacy and Trumpian policy of exclusion. In an article she wrote on Fiction in the Age of Trump, she emphasizes that ‘we see what they see; we’re provoked or inspired or amused; we take sides or withhold judgment – but in the end, we find order in disorder’.

Evidently, the diasporian self seeks order in a disordered context of displacement where it is reshaped by the processes of othering and disillusionment. Lalami’s novel provides a holistic account of the dislocation experience where the homeland roots of Maryam’s intersects with Driss’s rootlessness and Nora’s endless attempts to assimilate contrast with Coleman’s subjugation to the power of the past.

In reality, being trapped between an oppressive hand of the homeland and fatal wheels of the host land reveals the anvil and hammer experience plenty of diasporians have to endure. The writer also challenges the Self’s act of scapegoating of the Other to compensate for its inadequacies .and failures and suggests, instead, a more revelatory approach in which the traditional colonial categories and binarisms melt into a third space of negotiation and reconstruction.

The study has approached *The Other Americans*, through Homi Bhabha's Theory and notion of hybridity focus unhomely which is meant for the character's analysis and also their situation behind their interactions between after the hit-run of Driss Gerraoui. It has helped find feelings of displacement, disillusionment, diaspora, alienation, othering and being outsider. These motives are the causes behind the hit and run crime of Driss.

Mainly, it is the deconstruction and analysis of the notions of othering and disillusionment in Lalami's latest novel *The Other Americans* that this paper seeks to address. Through such novel, Lalami goes beyond the enchantment of integration, assimilation and hybridity of the host space to the unearthing of the subversive power embedded in the process of othering and exploration of the cycle of disillusionment the displaced self-encounters in the new location. This research has identified and explored instances of othering in the narrative and, second, explore how they feed the process of disillusionment of some characters in this polyphonic novel. This polyphony, indeed, helps probing into each character's microstory and, hence, understanding how they contribute in weaving the macrostory which is needled by race, xenophobia and belonging threads.

Lalami's novel is a stunning and necessary look at a country struggling with racism, resentment and the aftermath of war. Through research, Lalami showed in her novel *The Other Americans* what the characters of the novel were suffering from as immigrants and hybrids, in the beginning with the Moroccan couple Idris and his wife Maryam, who emigrated to escape from the political situation and threats in Morocco, their country of origin, and how the displacement affected Maryam, who faced difficulties in integrating into American society and learning language Or

building friendships with her surroundings, because she is a conservative woman, unlike Idris, who was a man open minded to society, who wanted to integrate in any way. He wanted to be American, and this appeared by expanding his business to prove that he was American despite the harassment of his neighbor Anderson and his son Anderson Junior.

Through *The Other Americans*, Lalami discussed issues related to identity and belonging, as well as the problems that result from displacement, giving examples of Nora's old friend Jeremy, who was suffering from the consequences of his participation in the Iraq war, in addition to his feeling of alienation starting from the death of his mother and caring his family since he was young, drinking father and sister all that influence the relationship with his love Nora.

This research has shown haw Lalami's characters in *The Other Americans,* all suffered from diaspora, immigration, internal and external alienation, fear of lack of acceptance, in addition to disillusionment, Because in the eyes of white Americans, they are just others and minorities living on the margins, and this was evident at the beginning through the title of the novel itself and through the character of Efrian because he is Mexican.

This research discussed the concept of otherness and how it appeared through the characters in the novel and its impact on them as immigrants. And he gave examples, especially with Nora during her childhood, and how her classmates viewed her as different in school, in addition to Detective Coleman, who suffered from the idea that she was different and other because she is Afro-American and woman also because any white supremacists isolate people of colour by physically and mentally hurting them, either by using racial slurs or beating them because these supremacists believe

that humans that are not white don't deserve to be in their perfect America, If someone looks Latino, they are poor and part of drug dealer gangs; if they are Middle Eastern, they are suicide bombers that only want to watch the US burn.

This research has shown how Lalami as immigrant writer in *The Other Americans* showed the problem of belonging and unhomeliness that each of the nine characters in the novel suffers from as result of hybridity, immigration and disillusionment which manifested in the case of Efrain and Coleman also Maryam and Jeremy .

To cure the problems of othering, homelessness, hybridity and diaspora, American authorities are required to take care of the immigrants especially youths and their needs in order to limit all the phenomena and to create future generations of devoted and loyal subjects to the country in which they live. Literature can produce informative text to read about immigrant's problem of belonging displacement and unhomely. It is one of the gateways to portray human tragedy. As Lalami did, she wants to highlight the suffering of immigrants through her writing specially *The Other Americans.*

As a result of this research, to be an American, there are still many stages that must be overcome by immigrants in order not to have a preconceived view of their direction to eliminate all forms of discrimination and racism that America still suffers from after 9/11, which is to help them integrate regardless of their colours and origins And facilitate this by enacting laws and the most effective

To conclude, this writer has examined the problem of otherness and identity, disillusionment, belonging and home through her novel. The research has analysed the ensuing identity crisis. It thus focused on the ideas of home, displacement, disintegration, and belonging in the selected novel. Despite her different view about

the complex notions of otherness, language, history, and identity, Lalami have set out to dismantle the structure of identity and belonging and the home's notion to offer ways of constructions of otherness and stereotyping.

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RÉSUMÉ

La présente recherche examine les questions d'identité, de déplacement, d'altérité, de mal-être et d'appartenance dans « The OtherAmericans » de Laila Lalami (2019). Le roman dramatise les histoires occultées et réduites au silence des migrants déplacés dans la vie des personnages (neuf personnages) à travers l'histoire d'une famille de migrants marocains dont l'espoir d'un rêve américain vient se briser sur les rives d'une réalité d'altérité après la mort du père Driss; relégué à un statut inférieur par la société dominée par les blancs. Tout au long du roman, Driss et sa femme Maryam, leurs filles Nora et Selma, Jeremy, le détective Coleman et Efrain sont décrits comme étant tiraillés entre les deux mondes de leur patrie d'origine et de leur pays d'accueil. Par conséquent, l'étude vise à mettre en évidence les difficultés des migrants à trouver un nouveau foyer et une appartenance loin de leur pays d'origine. Lalami scrute l'angoisse d'appartenance dans « The OtherAmericans » en mettant l'accent sur les idées de déplacement, d'aliénation et d'altérité. Lalami s'efforce d'enquêter sur l'aliénation des personnages et la quête d'identité à la lumière des idées et des théories de l'hybridité d'HomiBhabha. L'étude analyse l'impact du déplacement, du mal-être, de l'altérité et de l'appartenance sur le protagoniste Driss et sa famille ainsi que sur les autres personnages du roman. La présente étude est divisée en une introduction générale, deux chapitres, le premier chapitre a fourni le contexte socio-historique et le cadre théorique de cette recherche, le deuxième chapitre a exploré le dilemme de l'appartenance au roman et une conclusion générale. A la fin, la recherche conclut que le changement de domicile et de pays est lié au dilemme d'affiliation, et son impact est clair sur les immigrants qui vivent un dilemme d'appartenance et de diaspora.

Mots clés: déplacement ; hybridité; mal-être; désillusion; autre .

الملخص

يبحث هذا البحث في قضايا الهوية ، والتهجير ، والغيرية ، والشذوذ والانتماء في رواية ليلى العلمي الأمريكيون الآخرون (2019) ، حيث تعرض الرواية القصص المظللة والصامتة للمهاجرين النازحين في حياة الشخصيات (تسعة شخصيات) من خلال قصة عائلة مهاجرة مغربية ينهار أملها في حلم أمريكي على ضفاف حقيقة كونها مغايرة بعد وفاة الأب إدريس. هبطت إلى مكانة أدنى من قبل المجتمع الذي يهيمن عليه البيض. طوال الرواية ، توصف شخصيات إدريس وزوجته مريم وبناتهما نورا وسلمى وجيريمي والمحقق كولمانوإفرين بأنهم ممزقون بين عالمين من أصول وطنهم والبلد المضيف. ومن ثم ، تهدف الدراسة إلى تسليط الضوء على كفاح المهاجرين للعثور على وطن جديد والانتماء بعيدًا عن بلدانهم الأصلية. تفحص العلمي القلق من الانتماء في رواية "الأمريكيون الآخرون" مؤكدة على أفكار التهجير والعزلة والغير. تسعى العلمي إلى التحقيق في اغتراب الشخصيات والبحث عن الهوية في ضوء أفكار هومي بهابها ونظريات التهجين. تحلل الدراسة تأثير الإزاحة والاختلاف والانتماء على بطل الرواية إدريس وعائلته وكذلك الشخصيات الأخرى في الرواية. تنقسم الدراسة الحالية إلى مقدمة عامة، فصلين، قدم الفصل الأول السياق الاجتماعي-التاريخي والإطار النظري لهذا البحث ، أما الفصل الثاني فقد تناول معضلة الانتماء في الرواية وخاتمة عامة. في الأخير يخلص البحث إلى نتيجة أن تغيير المنزل والأرض مرتبط بمعضلة الانتماء ويظهر تأثيرها واضحا على المهاجرين الذين يعيشون ازمة انتماء وشتات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشتات؛ التهجير؛ التهجين؛ عدم الانتماء؛ خيبة الأمل؛ الأخر.