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**Negotiating Boundaries Arab American Narratives and
Dilemmas of Dual - Identity**

Case Study: Diana Abu-Jaber "Crescent"

A thesis submitted as partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of *Master* in
Literature & Civilization.

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material that has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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Dedication

First and Foremost, I thank God for his blessing and his power to lighten my thinking. Every challenging work needs self efforts as well as guidance of elders, especially those who are very close to our heart. I would like to express my deepest thankfulness and gratefulness to my respective parents who have been my constant source of inspiration. They have given me the drive and discipline to tackle any task with enthusiasm and determination.

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Abstract

The complexity of Arab American identity is examined in Diana Abu-Jaber's 2003 book *Crescent* which focuses on issues of cultural displacement, dual identity, and the need for belonging. The story follows Los Angeles –based Iraqi American chef Sirine as she negotiates the nexus between her American upbringing and Arab ancestry. The narrative emphasizes the conflicts between assimilation and cultural preservation through her experiences in an Arab immigrant society and her romantic engagement with Hnif, an Iraqi expatriate. Abu –Jaber shows how Sirine utilizes cooking to reconcile her hybrid identity by using food as potent metaphor for identity, memory, and connection. The book also explores the more general struggles faced by Arab Americans, including their sense of exclusion, their desire for a homeland, and the search for self –definition amid societal expectations. *Crescent* ultimately portrays the Arab American experience as one of negotiation, where individuals must navigate their dual cultural affiliations while forging their own sense of belonging.

Keywords: Arab American, *Crescent*, Diana Abu Jaber, Belonging, identity, hybridity.

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List of Abbreviations

U.S :United States of America.

General Introduction

America is a “Salad Bowl”, in other words, it is a mixture of different elements that preserve their unique qualities to immigrant populations, which do not mix together but instead make America a genuinely multicultural nation.

For instance, Arab-Americans play an important role in the United States ‘multi-ethnic landscape’. They are gradually raising their voices. However, the process of Americanization has influenced Arab American experience and writing, both directly and indirectly. The early immigrants confronted the demands of assimilation in American society while simultaneously attempting to preserve their Arab identity among the American-born generation. Cultural issues relating to immigrants’ experiences, such as biculturalism and bilingualism, appear in Arab-American literature.

Studies have looked at the quiet surrounding Arab-American lives since long-term immigrants who spoke Arabic and arrived in the early 20th century were determined to fit in.

Indeed, some people of Arab descent have claimed their ancestry due to political shifts brought about by the 1967 Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab boycott that followed, and the civil rights movement’s demands for minority rights. The phrase “Arab American” was first used at that time, and Arab-speaking groups welcomed it. They established political organizations, published books, translated Arabic literature, and organized Arab art exhibitions.

While Arab American literature has addressed identity-related topics since the early 1900’s, it has only recently started to concentrate on the development of Arab American hybridity.

Diana Abu-Jaber is a well-known Arab American novelist whose works examine the intricacies of her characters’ identities via their relationships with their environments. Through her investigation and exposure of the two cultures, Abu-Jaber offers the Arab American woman a voice she has never had before, allowing her to examine her problems with each culture and comprehend how her identity is created and altered as the two cultures collide and diverge. As they interact with others and assume their Arab American roles, Abu-Jaber’s characters delve into their own interpretation of who they are or where they truly belong.

For that purpose ,the goal of the study to investigate how Arab American narratives,in particular Diana Abu –Jaber work in her novel “Crescent” ,address and negotiate personal,social ,and cultural confines.It looks how ideas of identity ,belonging and ,cultural fusion within Arab American community are reflected in and challenged by Abu –Jaber ‘s novel.

This work employs an analytical method to illustrate clues found in Diana Abu Jaber’s novel “Crescent” ,which show how the characters’identities were misplaced during their exile and how events eventually assisted them in overcoming numerous barriers that kept them from realizing who they really are .Thus ,the study draws on two primary theoretical frameworks :psychoanalytic theory and feminist theory .First ,the psychoanalytic approach examines Sirine’s psychological state in light of her painful previous experiences ,traumatic past events ,and depressing recollections.Secondly ,the feminist theory explains the issues that the female character Sirine faces in her social,political,and economic relationships and links her to analytical perspectives on the issues of identity and belonging that she faces .

To answer this dilemma,this effort will concentrate around three essential questions:

- ✓ How can Arab Americans balance two unique cultural identities ,and how do they shape their self –concept and sense of belonging?
- ✓ In What ways does “Sirine”the protagonist in Crescent ,reconcile her identities as an Arab woman and a woman born in America ?
- ✓ In what ways do cooking and Mediterranean Café help Sirine rediscover her cultural heritage and foster a sense of belonging?

These questions in return led to the development of the following hypothesis to conduct this work :

- ✓ Negotiating these identities involves finding common ground between the traditions, values and beliefs that are specific to each culture .
- ✓ Arab American create hybrid identities that is uniquely their own .
- ✓ Sense of belonging involves spaces where Arab Americans can express their heritage while also contributing the diverse fabric of American society .
- ✓ MeditteraneanCafé is seen as an emotional attachment .Sirine looks for her own home and her identity focusing on imagination of home in Medittranean Café .

- ✓ The Café serves as a place where the tastes, smells, and sounds of Mediterranean that remind her of her past.

In the same vein, ethnicity has always been a highly relevant factor when discussing identity concerns, but the way that globalization has effected the configuration of the global system has caused us to reevaluate this once-important factor. According to anthropologist Fredrik Barth, ethnic boundaries endure in spite of the considerable interdependency and fluidity that exist between ethnic groupings. Abu-Jaber places her female characters outside of their preconceived notions of who they are and examines them as distinct since it is what they are in a manner never seen before. Abu-Jaber shows the identity of an Arab American woman.

Furthermore, Diana Abu-Jaber uses food as representative of identity and culture for Arabs living in America. In other words, Arabs use it as a means to express their nostalgia for their home. It is believed that food is a language associated with a particular community; it helps to identify this community, so Diana Abu-Jaber uses it in her works to portray Eastern culture.

The research is prearranged into three chapters. The first chapter that is entitled “Navigating the Dynamics of Hybrid Identity” will cover and define some fundamental concepts for instance, identity, hybrid identity, and diasporic identity. Moreover, we define identity according to some situations like dual identity and communities across borders. The second chapter which is entitled “Arab American voices: Narratives of Identity” provides an overview of the issues raised by the concept of identity in Arab American literary works. Furthermore, it initiates a political discussion concerning relationships between Arab American women issues.

The last chapter that is entitled “Sirine’s Belonging Beyond Boundaries: Sirine’s Evolving Self in Diana Abu-Jaber’s *Crescent*” examines the protagonist Sirine’s self-concept and sense of belonging which are the key components of Sirine’s character development. Moreover, the novel shows how the Mediterranean Café and cooking boost a sense of belonging for Sirine.

In *Crescent*, Abu-Jaber uses detailed sensory elements to paint a vivid picture of the lives of the characters and how their experiences in America intersect with their cultural backgrounds. The novel’s examination of the experience of being an immigrant, its subtle

portrayal of personal and cultural limits ,and its skillful fusion of culinary narrative with storytelling are its many accolades .Abu –Jaber explores larger themes of self-discovery ,cultural fusion ,and belonging through Sirine’s journey and the environment of the restaurant.

Chapter I

Navigating the Dynamics of Hybrid Identities

I.1. Introduction

In the social sciences, identity has emerged as one of the most important research topics, especially in fields that deal with interpersonal communication. Over the past 20 years, identity has been extensively social psychology discussed by sociolinguistics, anthropological linguistics, interpersonal pragmatics, and social psychological in special and narratives studies.

Identity is formed and emerges in specific social circumstances. Since identities are viewed as highly negotiable in interaction. Although people differ from one another, our shared cultural heritage is what unifies us all. Besides, without individuals, we cannot discuss culture. Every culture has its own set of inherited values and systems. People typically travel, thus they come into contact with the cultures of various nations or locations. Various societies and locations exhibit diverse cultures. If they do this, people learn about different cultural values and cultures and may even adopt characteristics of another culture. These people most likely developed hybrid identities as a result of this experience, which is known as Diaspora. Identity, like diaspora itself, emerged from particular specific psychological environment and has since become a buzzword in special sciences and the humanities.

I.2. Defining the Concept of Identity

It's difficult to define identity. Identity is not as straightforward and unchanging as many people believe. Although a lot of other people also believe that identity is flexible and dynamic, even they err in their understanding of the concept and the process, which leads to incorrect use of the term. To get a better idea of what identity can be Oxford English Dictionary 1999(10th) edition defined as “the fact of being who or what a person or thing is” (705)

So, what is the very basis definition of identity? the question “who am I?” or “who are you?” is might just be the world's most frequently asked question, and it may be distilled down to our sense of self or our overall perception of individual that includes the roles, characteristics, abilities, disabilities, behaviors, and associations that we value most.

For this, understanding the meaning of the term “identity” serves as a starting point for the next parts.

Identity is linked to the fundamental principles that guide our decisions ,which in turn reveal our values and essence .Everybody posses a feeling of identity .Most people actually have numerous way of thinking about themselves that are significant and meaningful enough to be regarded as multiple senses of self .These ways of thinking can include some many or all of the following : occupations ,social relationships ,familial relationships ,avocations affiliations ,abilities ,disabilities ,salient attributes .

Identity refers to our perception of who we are on a personal and social level .It also speaks to our perception of labels that others might a scribe to us .The complexity of many types of identity cannot be fully explained by basic lexicon .Three definitions of identity exist role identity ,social identity and personal identity . Self- identity refers to how you relate to your individual traits, social – identity to how you relate to a group, and role-identity to how you relate to certain social role.

Within the same path, environmental influences frequently impose at least foster identities. A sense of identification or belonging to a group that shapes one's own identity .It relates to nationality,ethnicity ,religion ,social class ,genealogy ,locality ,or any other type of social group that has its own unique culture .It is an integral aspect of an individual 's conception and self-perception .Identity in psychology refers to one's traits ,convictions detrimental process .The blending of cultural influences shapes self –concept by forming a hybrid identity that is uniquely their own.

I.3. Definition of Hybrid Identity

One of the most enduring and intricate ideas that is unwaveringly connected to identity formation is the term hybridity .One of the pioneers of contemporary cultural discourse, Homi Bhabha offers the conceptual vocabulary of hybridity and third space through his theory of cultural difference.

On the other hand ,Bhabha's concept of hybridity is based on Bakhtin's concept of hybridization ,which is defined as:

a mixture of two social languages within the confines of a single utterance; an encounter between two distinct linguistic consciousnesses within the utterance's arena, separated from each other by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor (Holquist 358).

Moreover, for Bakhtin, the definition of hybridity is the double voice of a language. His literary theory states that a language can represent another while maintaining "the capacity to sound simultaneously both outside it and within it" (358).

As a result, their culture and the dominant languages are diluted and repulsed. Therefore, local culture can be promoted, indigenous people feel more secure, and their sense of belonging can be restored. And on his concepts of dialogism, "the other" as polyphony, which refers to several voices, and heteroglossia. That idea was applied to hybrid discourse, like as folklore, by Bakhtin. He suggests that hybridity is a representation of "not only the coexistence of multiple speech styles and genres, but plurality of perspectives wherein utterly incompatible elements may be distributed within different perspectives of equal value" (the Dialogic). In the same vein, Bhabha keeps emphasizing that the idea of hybridity is something that is produced and formed rather than the result of inherent harmonic identity.

Additionally, Hybridity is a shared and lived experience that is multidimensional and multifaceted. But it's also a weird dilemma and a reality at the same time. The recognition of cultural diversity is a fundamental concept of hybridity. The definition of hybridity is incredibly diverse, using anthropology and history to convey a multitude of meanings.

According to Beck-Gernsheim and Beck (1998),

"Hybridity is a consequence of globalization, where changes to societies and cultures are brought about by the movement of people, products, and information."

By all the ways, hybridity is not a novel concept. This phenomenon has existed through history, dating back to the dawn of civilization. Hybridity of modern culture is distinct, nevertheless, because technological and transportation advancements have caused an incredible

acceleration of global interconnections and interdependencies .As a result ,cultures and communities are becoming more multicultural and multiethnic.

Additionally, Hybrid identity is “the fusion of two or more cultures coexisting in a single individual” (Smith and leavy, 2008).A hybrid identity is a patchy combination of identification with the host society and the culture of immigrant’s native country .Split identity or dual identity are other terms for hybrid identity . This static perspective of hybrid identity, which ignores alterations to an individual’s identity or the process of identity formation, may be overly restrictive.

In other words, hybrid identity refers to a shift in identity under specific conditions.this refers to a person’s capacity to switch between multiple identities with ease and without considering unfavorable outside situations .As a result,no one pretends or adhere to a single historical narrative or a single historical narrative or to a single national identity .Under no circumstances can a person with a hybrid identity change these principles ;this is not because they want to survive ,but rather because they like the way things are done and find it to be the most expedient for quickly shifting their perspective of history ,events ,and their place in society and the nation

I.4. Understanding the Role of Hybrid Identity

Because identity negotiation is never –ending process that is always based on conflicts, similarities, and differences, it has gained importance .Identity formation is adapting to mainstream cultural ideals and reenacting one’s ethnic roots. Identity negotiation is determined by a person’s past, sociocultural background, and sense of belonging .to put it simply, they create hybrid identities in order to fend off the host country hegemony and live.

The concept of transformation and shaping drives culture and personal identity in an integrated society this integrates the evolving methods in which we recognize, comprehend, and navigate our diverse identities.

The implications of hybrid identity and its idea are best understood in countries or cultures experiencing major cultural transition as a result of immigration .people who live in such communities perceive themselves as being caught up in a rapid and frequently disorienting process of changing themselves.This also holds true for the psychological and personal

changes people experience when they are on the margins of society and feel like outsiders. Identity and belonging are becoming increasingly important issues, whether on a personal level of feeling different and marginalized or on a bigger one of the society change.

I.5. Discovering Self and Identity

According to Erickson's (1968) a psychological theory of development ,teens experience a phase of identity versus role uncertainty when they experiment and explore their identities in an attempt to figure out who they are .Finding others who share similar connections or social roles is the goal of identity exploration .It involves developing a sense of self .Identity is defined by difference between individuals who are like to us and those who are not .How can we identify those who are the same as us ?

What criteria do we apply to classify ourselves and others? Assign ,such as a badge ,a team scarf ,a newspaper ,the language we speak ,or even the clothes we wear, is frequently what matters .Occasionally ,it is apparent .A badge can serve as a conspicuous public declaration of one's affiliation with a specific group .At times, it may be more appropriate,but representations and symbols play a crucial role in highlighting the ways in which we both set ourselves apart from others and share identities with certain individuals .

Parents ,friends,school ,and the media all contribute to shaping our identities .While this occurs from birth ,most people in western countries reach an age in adolescence when increasing cognitive capacities and heightened social awareness prompt them to reflect on who they are .This starts a lifelong process of considering who we are now,who we were before,and who we will become(Talum,B.D,2000).

Our identities are crucial to our self-concept and can be divided into three categories: personal ,social and cultural .We reject the temptation to think of our identities as fixed. Instead ,our identities are established by processes that began before we were born and will continue after we die;so,our identities are not something we acquire or complete .Our personal and social identities are two independent yet related aspects to our identities (Spreckels,J.&kotthoff,H.,2009).

Personal identities encompass the aspects of ourselves that are largely transpersonal and linked to our life experience .For example ,I consider myself a puzzle lover ,whereas you

identify as a hip-hop music fan. Our social identities are aspects of ourselves that stem from participation in social groups to which we are interpersonally devoted. Social identities differ from personal identities in that they are externally organized by membership. Our membership can be elective or involuntary, explicit or implicit. There are several personal and social identity alternatives. While our personal identity choices reflect who we are, our social identities connect us to specific organizations. We make statements about who we are or are not through our social identities. Personal identities can change frequently as people get new experiences and develop new interests and hobbies. A current interest in online video games may lead to an interest in graphic design. Social identities do not change as frequently since they take longer to create and need interpersonal investment. Personal identity evolved into a social identity that is more interpersonal and rooted.

Cultural identities are socially constructed categories that teach us a way of being and include expectations for social behavior or methods of performing (Yeb, G.A., 2002). Because we are typically apart of them since birth, cultural identities vary throughout time, but what distinguishes them from most social identities is their historical roots (Collier, M.J., 1996).

Any of these identity kinds can be ascribed or avowed. Ascribed identities are those that others impose on us, such as personal, social, or cultural identities, whereas avowed identities are those that assert for ourselves (Martin & Nakayama, 2010). People may assign an identity to another person based on stereotypes. Ascribed or avowed identities can be identical.

I.5.1. Personal Identity and Self Concept

“The self and identity are closely related concepts” (Tap and Sordes -Ader, 2012). An organized configuration of one’s self – perception is referred to as the self. The definition of self – concept is “overall vision (as integrated, coherent, and stable individually) transcending the experiential and event content of self- awareness” (Lipian sky, 2008, p38). Differentiating between identity and self – concept is crucial so identity is more than just a cognitive aspect of who we are; it is made up of representations and emotions as well. (Tap & Sordes -Ader 2012). The investigation of one’s own self – concept includes the question of what abilities one has that are vital to professional decisions. Furthermore, researchers generally agree that a person’s identity is imposed by a variety of factors with regard to various aspects of their life. Moreover, a person’s personal identity can be characterized as a system of ideas and values that they come to understand about themselves and that change throughout the course of their

life, encompassing both significant and potentially controllable aspects of their life. i.e, it addresses the individual's necessary circumstances for continuing to exist throughout time as the same person.

According to Fearon,

Personal identity is a set of attributes, beliefs, desires, or principles of action that a person thinks distinguish her in socially relevant ways and that (a) the person takes a special pride in; (b) the person takes no special pride in, but which so orient her behavior that she would be at a loss about how to act and what to do without them or (c) the person feels she could not change even if she wanted to (25).

According to Fearon, an individual's personal identity is based on how and what they identify with in their community .

I.5.2. Cultural Identity and Belonging

It takes understanding ourselves to build a culture of belonging .Exploring cultural identity can be a difficult and meaningful process .Even if it draws attention to disparities ,cultural identity can also unite members of the same culture .If you've ever found yourself in situation where you can't grasp something while everyone else seems to get it or connect with it .it's possible s people .Cultural identity is important because everyone wants to be in situation where they feel a complete sense of belonging.

Learning about one's cultural traditions, history, and values well as figuring out how to connect with their community are important steps in exploring one's cultural identity and sense of belonging .After all, we all want to be in a place where we feel completely home .In this sense, culture refers to the attitudes, customs, behaviors, and values that specific group deems proper .However ,identity is about coming to terms with what is genuine and appropriate for you .

We develop cultural identity when we blindly read and internalize environmental cues into our identities is an attempt to feel like we belong.

Finally , it is critical for everyone to explore their cultural identity and sense of belonging ,as this can be a life long journey .Though cultural education ,community engagement, seeking mentorship, and introspection ,individuals can cultivate a more profound comprehension of their cultural identity and sense of belonging in ethnic groups.

I.5.3. Ethnic Identity and Assimilation

While addressing issues of identity, ethnicity has always been a point of high relevancy. Ethnic identity as a process of becoming that is maintained through the interaction of practice on inclusion and exclusion (Barth, 1969).

The primary factor that defines a group is its ethnic .It conveys both the awareness of one's uniqueness and the sense of belonging .Common names ,languages ,religions ,and other cultural behaviors and attitudes are examples of how it is accomplished .There are two frames of reference offered by ethnic identity .It connects the individual to the greater group and frequently directs communication within and between groups .People's attitudes, behaviors and emotions are frequently influenced by prevalent identification and the typical preconceptions that these group hold . Researches in wide range of academic fields have generally divided ethnic identity formation into two major theoretical categories: situational and primordial. The primordial (commonly referred to as essentialist) viewpoint contents that ethnic identity is something that people are born with ,that it is instinctual and natural ,and alter .However , the situational perspective also referred to as the instrumentalist or constructionist –holds that ethnic identities are socially constructed phenomenon .That is to say the definition and bounds of ethnic identity are continually being renegotiated ,revised and redefined ,depending on specific situations that each person or ethnic group encounters.

I.6. Back ground of Theories of Identity

We can summarize the four identity theories (personal, role ,social, and collective) that are commonly used by modern social psychologists. The most fundamental of the four identities ,personal identity was developed by American sociology psychologists especially Sheldon Stryker .He highlights the ways that human social interaction is impacted by demographic, social ,and cultural factors .Every person, has a unique personal identity theory that is defined by their particular biography (e.g. ,name, birthplace),distinctive qualities (e.g,athleticism ,intelligence),role identities (e.g,employee,daughter),and unique

mix of private and public experiences. Dramaturgy's vocabulary serves as an inspiration for role identity, which was also developed by American sociology social psychologists, especially George J. McCall and J. I. Simmons.

The definition of role identity is the role of (or character) that members of organizations assume when occupying particular social roles. People connect with one another through their own role identities, making it relational. Pioneered by European Psychological social psychologists, especially Henri Tajfel and John C. Turner, social identity highlights how individual's cognition, affect, and personality qualities affect, immediate person-to-person social interactions and vice versa. It is the aspect of a person's self-concept that is developed via awareness of affiliation with significant social groups and organizations. To put it succinctly, we use our public selves to simplify the world around us by drawing comparisons and contrasts between ourselves and others through categories. Last but not least, collective identity, which was developed by European Psychological and social psychologist, particularly Alberto Melucci, is the self in action. When political activists, members of social movements, and others come together to work toward common objectives and develop action plans, collective identities play a crucial role in facilitating or impeding social change. In a nutshell, it's the process by which a group of people interact to form a collective identity or consciousness.

In psychology, identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality, looks and /and or expressions that make a person (self-identity) or group (cultural identity). Identity formation can be a productive or destructive.

Understanding how the subjective experience of identity comes about, and how it is limited to other subjective experiences, There were three main approaches Freudian (Freud's theoretical understanding of the mind), Lacanian (Lacan's thesis on the mirror stage hierarchical model of subject ideals) and the psychoanalytic attachment theory within the tradition Fonagy and Target (Fonagy and colleagues 'thesis on how the self develops and how regulation occurs in the setting of attachment relationships). These theories are all relevant. According to psychoanalytic ideas, identity is not core concept. Moreover identity is most frequently used to refer to personal identity or the distinctive characteristics or attributes that set each person apart. Identities are closely linked to one's mental model of oneself, individuality, self-esteem, and self concept. Two theories specifically address the

process of forming an identity. The first one Erik Erikson's stage of psychological development (specifically the identity versus confusion stage) James Marcia's identity status theory and Jeffery Arnett's theories of identity formation in emerging adulthood.

I.7. Communities Across Borders : “Diaspora”

A population that moves to a different “host” community while sharing a same national and /or ethnic identity is referred as a “diaspora” .This movement , whether forced or not ,is frequently viewed as permanent alteration .Nonetheless , the preservation of the emotional and material connections to the motherland has a significant impact on the second generations ‘ability to preserve the cultural heritage of the ancestors .This keeps the apparent“link of existence “intact even when the ancestral land is geographically far away .Diaspora communities are social constructs that are dynamic and frequently enduring founded on actual or perceived similarities with their original motherland .this frequently includes maintaining a culture distinct from that of the people living in the “host” community

Greek word “diaspeirein” (meaning to disperse) is where the word “diaspora” originates, Its noun from “diasporein” has been employed to characterize the circumstances around Black and Jewish individuals .However ,Barbara welshe notes that the term “diaspora” has been applied quite broadly to characterize a wide range of diverse groupings ‘migrations.It is frequently applied to any population that has migrated from its native country ,and academics who do embrace this expensive interpretation find it hard to identify any group that has lived in the original country since the so – called “golden age” of established existence According to Cohen (Boroughs ,1997) ,disporas are groups of minority migrants who hold onto shared experiences ,a sense of identity ,and a concern for either their place of origin or the identity of ethnic group . Long- distance economic ,social ,and political activities have been successfully maintained by diasporic communities over the ages ,and the organizations and endeavors of the recent arrivals give every reason to believe that migration and a shared sense of identity will continue for some time to come .Therefore , an appreciation of the historical continuities in the diaspora formation process is essential to comprehending the modern moment with its enormous numbers of uprooted individuals and the numerous transformations that occurred in underdeveloped world .

I.7.1. Diasporic Identity

People who live in different nation than their parents 'or grandparents 'home country experience dramatic life. They are always obliged to balance the two tasks that get harder depending on how much the two diverge at any given moment since they are constantly presented with living in two worlds and realities simultaneously .the question of what significance the idea of diasporic identities entails arises in this context .Diaspora is a journey for identity ,understanding ,realization and definition

The field of modern Diaspora studies has given this term new semantic opening ,wherein aspects have been taken and connected to historical or historical or situational events .In this context ,the definition of Diaspora communities comprise ethnic and religious minority who have remained connected to their homeland for many generations, helping to develop their self-perception. According to Stuart Hall, the conflict between one's cultural identity arises .Individuals who identify as Diaspora frequently have ties to one another through history ,history religion ,culture ,and or lineage .Most people see this belonging to be familial and intergenerational .The identity of the diaspora is constantly being debated and evolving.

Diasporic identity is a topic that interests academics from a broad range of disciplines,but is also has great significance for the people and communities whose lives and experiences are classified as diasporic .Diasporic identity is characterized by its flux and lack of permanence .it is adaptable ,and its components are the product of a never ending process of discovery ,encountering ,and compromise .this aspect of diasporic identity is connected to the second significant issue since it is through the process of forming an identity that diasporic individuals and communities learn to negotiate their status as outsiders in respect to both their home country and their host community.

I.7.2. Experience of Diaspora

Diaspora is a slippery term .It is used to describe the experience of immigrants who have been obliged to flee their country of origin. It is also commonly used to characterized the mentally and the practically challenging effort of navigating two new and old identities when one is immigrant. As Crane and RadhikaMohanram contend, Diaspora is “the Oscillation between the strange and the familiar” it must be acknowledged however ,the Diaspora is “historically laden» the meaning of Diaspora varies depending on the culture ,time period

,and gender of the individual experiencing it .the diasporic experience can also differ significantly from that of refugees with limited social mobility .personality traits also impact the Diaspora experience .while some succeed in embracing their diasporic status ,others do not Assimilation and accommodation are typical experiences of Diaspora in western countries such as the Arab Americans who are conflicting between their two identities .

A diasporic experience is typically used to describe the identities ,experiences,and relationships of people or communities who have left their own nation and settled in other locations ,either by choice or be coercion .Feelings of dislocation ,identity issues in assimilating to a new culture and society ,and the maintenance of ties to one's ancestral homeland can all be characteristics of diasporic experiences .These experiences can be influenced by a range of things ,like colonition or the navigating of difficult dual identity difficulties ,which involves balancing the cultures of one's adopted country and one's native country .

As they search for their position in the new society ,they could also experience feelings of bereavement ,isolation ,and marginalization while remaining true to their origins at the same time .Not with standing the difficulties ,experiences of diaspora cab also result in the development of dynamic cross border networks ,lively cultural groups ,and distinctive blended identities .They can give people the chance to develop new modes of cultural expression and practice while also fostering ties to their own nation .All things considered ,the diasporic experience is intricate and varied ,formed by wide range of circumstances and influences ,but it can also be a source of strength ,creativity ,and resilience for individuals who engage in it.

I.7.3. Navigating dual culture and conflicting identities

People frequently find themselves juggling several cultural identities in increasingly globalized society .The idea of many identities has gained popularity ,whether as a result of globalization, migration ,or cross –cultural experiences . Dual identity is defined as having several cultural influences and connection coexisting .Investigating the spectrum of dual identity ,from people with mixed ancestry to those who later in life embrace a new cultural identity through cultural fusion. Recognizing how cultures mix and how distinct hybrid identities are created..

Hammond (2010) proposes the idea of conflicting identities occurs as a direct result of the acculturation and assimilation process. It occurs when a person moves to different culture and tries to adopt the roles and identities of new society, only to discover that this is in conflict with their home culture. Since acculturation involves changing one's native customs in response to interaction with the new host culture, it is nearly synonym to acculturation. At any point a conflict could occur when the demands of one position diverge and clash with those of another role; it can be easier to understand conflicting identities. All these identities may live harmoniously when existing in the same person whereas for others could be a source of conflicts.

I.7.4. Challenges of Maintaining Cultural Roots in New Environment

People face many difficulties throughout the process of cultural assimilation, including adjusting to new cultural standards, striking a balance between their heritage and host culture, and resolving opposing ideals. Maintaining links to one's original culture can cause feelings of isolation, uncertainty, and identity crisis. For immigrants, challenges might include language barriers, marital difficulties, and identity acceptance to western standards. Furthermore, assimilation might be hampered by misconceptions and assumptions about the host culture, which can build imperceptible barriers between people from different cultural origins. Overcoming these obstacles necessitates striking a careful balance between accepting new cultural elements and respecting one's past, which ultimately results in distinctive fusion of customs and values.

It can be difficult to maintain cultural variety because of things like prejudice, assimilation, and a lack of respect or understanding. Assimilation is a major obstacle to preserving cultural variety. This is the process through which members of various ethnic, cultural, or religious backgrounds become to blend into one culture—typically the dominant one. Loss of distinctive cultural identities and custom may result from this. For example, when people move to a new nation, they frequently experience pressure to fit in by acquiring the language, habits, and behaviors of the prevailing culture. This might cause their own culture to gradually fade away. Discrimination is yet another important issue. Individuals with different cultural backgrounds may encounter bias and discrimination frequently, which may deter them from freely expressing their culture. This can manifest itself in a variety of ways, including hate crimes, racial profiling, and even small-scale microaggressions in day-to-

day interactions .People may hide or give up their cultural traditions as a result of such situations if they feel unsafe or unwanted .Another problem is when people don't respect or comprehend other cultures .If people are not understanding or well-informed about other cultures ,cultural diversity may cause miscommunications or confrontations.This may lead to prejudices ,stereotypes ,and unfavorable views against particular cultural groups.As an illustration ,some individuals may consider particular cultural customs to be “weird” or “backward” just because they diverge from their homeland.

I.8. Conclusion

Although the term “hybridity” was first used to characterize the accelerating speed of racial amalgamation ,it now refers to any action or conversation that permits a “cultural overlapping and mix” .Being able to claim a hybrid identity as one's own is becoming increasingly common as the globe grows more interconnected and globalized and transitions from colonial era to one which individuals are exiles ,immigrants ,and refugees of various kinds .Thus ,since hybrid identity affects everyone ,it becomes essential to comprehend how it develops and what implies for individuals who have it .

A vivid example, Arab immigrants who developed and expressed their Arab American hybrid identity in both public and private sectors .An Arab American hybrid identity has been shaped by many factors but particularly by continuing interactions between the culture of the new homeland and the traditions and conditions of the old homeland, as well as by the interplay between Arab American's perceptions of themselves and how others see them .However ,the original identity gets weaker the longer Arab Americans are away from their country of origin .

Chapter II

Arab American Voices :Narratives of Identity

II.1. Introduction

Arab Americans are a multicultural group of immigrants and offspring of immigrants from all across the Arab world who came to US in different periods and under different circumstances .Arabs'immigration to US has been an active process since the nation 's creation .Even though Arab American have lived in the US for more than a century ,they have just lately started to be acknowledged as a distinct ethnic group within literary America.Nonetheless ,there has been a notable surge in the publication of Arab American writers over the past twenty years .

Furthermore, Arab American literature captures the experiences of Arab Americans living in the United States, and most Arab American writers have as their central theme the immigrants'journey of exploitation and acculturation ,which makes them doubt who they are in their new society . Arab American literature began about the same time that Syrian, Lebanese, and Palestinian Christians arrived in the late 19th century, predating the official recognition of Arab Americans as a distinct ethnicity.For that reason,the development of the Arab American identity is covered in this chapter.Also ,it provides contextual details regarding Arab immigrants within American society and the circumstances behind their entrance .Additionally ,it covers the topic of women's contriburions to Arab American writing.

II.2. Historical Background of Arab Americans

Arab Americans trace their ancestry to multiple Arab nations . Lebanon is the homeland of the vast majority of Arab Americans ,followed by Syria,Palestine ,Iraq,Egypt ,Yemen,and Jordan .The Arab world comprises of 22countries ranging from North Africa to the Persian Gulf.

Arabs are heterogeneous ethnic group who are primarily speakers of the Arabic language, are originally found throughout the Middle East and North Africa(MENA), and claim ancestry of 22 Arab countries (Samhan ,2000).

So, Arab Americans are people of Arab descent who have a shared language and culture, can be traced to regions outside of the United States, including 22 Middle Eastern, North African, and Southwest Asian countries. Despite their shared history, Arab Americans differ greatly both as a people and as ethnic community. They follow several religions, for instance. Their origins and preferences in terms of politics, education, the economy, and the professional are likewise varied. From Egyptians, whose genealogy dates back 4,000 years, to people who more recently arrived as refugees, Arab Americans represent a very diverse group of people. Arabs Italian Americans, Arab German Americans, and Arab Irish Americans are a few examples. Arab Americans identify with several different identities, or with half – identities with specific Arab countries like Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and other places nonetheless as half Egyptian and half American, half Syrian and half Arab and half American. These remarks apply to people who are born, for instance, to a French American father and a Lebanese mother, or to an Egyptian father and a British American mother.

Phrases like “half Egyptian, half American” suggest variety and multiplicity, in contrast to the word “Arab American”, which implies unity. A young Arab American may try to further delineate his ancestry within the multicultural environment of the United States by asserting, for example, that he is one-fourth American, one-fourth Lebanese, one-fourth French, one-fourth Syrian. It is more a matter of yearning for roots, imagined or real, in the fatherland and complete acceptance or acknowledgement in the new land than it is of divided loyalty resulting in split personalities.

Moreover, the dialectal distinctions among Arab Americans from various countries often lead to stimulating conversation topics. Some Arab Americans feel differently about their immediate surroundings. They take pleasure in and stand up for the freedom that comes with being Americans. They appreciate American science and technology as well as the country’s creative and inventive spirit. However, they take issue with several aspects to American society, particularly they racial stereotyping of some groups, such as Arabs. Arab Americans understand that, in spite of their differences, their shared identity creates a special fusion of the old and the new, or modern existence. Their new hybrid identity combines elements of uniqueness and sameness. It’s similar to one individual speaking multiple languages. Nonetheless, the fact that Arab Americans have a same identity does not exclude the existence of distinct identities associated with their individual Arab homelands. Overall, Arab American

configuration creates a lasting force that unites all Arabs residing in the United States. Additionally, The history of Arab immigration to the US is lengthy and intricate. It's been and still is a story of hope and fear, acceptance and rejection, immigration and citizenship. It is also a story that is strongly related to US immigration and naturalization rules.

The roots of Arab American can be found in 22 different nations in northern Africa and western Asia. In the latter part of the 1800's, there was a notable increase in Arab immigration to the United States. Arab immigrants increased quickly in 20th century; the majority of these immigrants were Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese, with minor proportions of Iraqis, Jordanians, and Egyptians. Increased economic prospects in the US, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the French mandate system in the Arab world, and recurring political and economic crises in the Arab world were the causes of this immigrant waves. Compared the preceded immigrants, this group was more diversified in terms of education, social background, and religion. Originally from the Ottoman Empire, the first immigrants were Lebanese, followed by Christian Syrians of varied religious backgrounds and Palestinians. The majority are best characterized as transient immigrants who arrived in the United States in order to improve their economic circumstances before leaving.

Early migration of Arabs three significant historical periods have seen waves of Arab immigration to the US. Most of these early immigrants (1880 s-1920 s) were poor and working class Syrian /Lebanese Christians from mountain villages. The main reason for the first wave was economic opportunities, freedom, and equality, and to escape oppressive Ottoman rule, conscription, and taxes. The second wave of immigrants (1950 s -1960 s) escaped the 1948 Palestine /Israel war and revolution in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Syria. About half of these immigrants were Muslims and many from the upper and more educated segments of their societies. The third wave of immigrants (1970 s – to present) escaped after the 1967 Middle East War –most of these immigrants were Palestinians and Egyptians, and during the Lebanese civil war, beginning in 1975(to 1982). Many Iraqis also fled their country during protracted war with Iran (1980-1988). Many Iraqis, primarily Christians escaped the fighting during the first and the second Gulf Wars, and they continue to do so in order to avoid the current conflict. Because of political and economic situations, this most recent wave has the most number and diversity. The nationality Act of 1924 dealt a serious damage to the Arab American community by essentially outlawing Arab immigration. The group grew increasingly exclusive and preserved the traditions and practices of their native countries as a

result of the door being closed to new arrivals .During this time, Arab Americans became far less “Americanized “since they were not required to connect with the current American culture because so few were entering the US. From the 1924 until 1965, there were both advantages and disadvantages to the immigration laws.

The effects of immigration are profound for the immigrants .It was not easy journey to make the decision to start again and leave everything behind .Arabs American community had numerous obstacles when attempting to socialize as defining their identity.

II.3. Arab American Identity Formation

Anthropologists assume all shared legacy, including artistic ideals, customs, traditions, and relationships that govern particular groups and individuals within a community, constitute identity, this is why, one important factor that unites all Arabs living in the United States is their shared identity as Arab Americans. The concept “Arab Americans” implies, even if these citizens are inherently diverse. The Arab American identity has been increasingly prominent in America.

For this, identity formation is difficult ,particularly for ethnic groups who face significant levels of persecution .Many academics have stated that there is ambiguity regarding the Arab American racial category in US society .Arab Americans are thought to be a diverse population with a wide range of physical traits,and origins from a wide geographic area .Arabic – speaking people’s varied physical characteristics are in various geographical areas from which Arabic –speaking people are descended are reflected in this range of physical characteristics .As Omi and Winant note,”without a racial identity ,one is in danger of having no identity .”(1986;62) further they point out that the fight for collective recognition ,the valued individual who unites the group by providing members with an alternate perspective on themselves and their surroundings should not be undervalued .As they actually stated,”Individual consciousness and practices shape the universe of collective action”(Omi and Winant 1986:68). Additionally, the use of Arabic as a first language and national origin in one of the Arab League’s member nations are defining characteristics for individuals who identify as Arabs .Moreover ,there is a prevalent misunderstanding between the terms Arab and Muslim.While the term “Muslim” refers to anybody who follows Islamic doctrine, the term “Arab” refers to broader ethnic group that does include religious connection.

According to Souad Joseph, there are three main misconceptions concerning Arab identity. The whole Middle East is viewed as Arabic, and Arabs are mistakenly associated with Islam. All people who reside in Arab countries are regarded as Arabs, regardless of whether they identify with their ethnic heritage. When one takes into account the multidisciplinary nature of Arab American studies, where the distinctions between Arab and Muslim identities change depending on the discipline and national scholarly background, it becomes even more difficult to define Arab identity.

II.4. Arab American Literature

Arab American literature originated in the late 1800s, when a large number of Arab immigrants arrived in North America from the Ottoman Empire's Syrian province. Mostly from what is now the modern country Lebanon. The majority of the first migrants were sojourners rather than immigrants. They expressed a largely diaspora awareness by settling in colonies in places like New York and Boston with the intention of eventually returning home. This was made clear by the news articles they published, which were frequently political, sectarian, and focused on happenings in the Middle East.

“Arab American organizations were formed for the first time to defend the Arab point of view and to combat negative stereotypes of Arabs in the popular press”, claims Ludescher (94).

Some Arab immigrants began writing as a result to document their new experience in the diaspora. Among them was a significant literary collective known as Al-Mahjar, which is a term used to describe the works of immigrants from both North and South America.

The Northern American branch, which included writers like Khalil Gibran, Ameen Rihani, and Mikail Naimy, concentrated on what Ludescher described as “the desperate need to escape the mundane materialism of the peddler lifestyle a desire for reform in the Arab world; acute concern about international politics and the political survival of the homeland; and while the Southern American branch (97). Writers from the diaspora were keen to talk about the political and social realities of immigration.

The 1800s saw the emergence of Arab American literature in America. The writers encountered numerous difficulties right from the start of the writing process. Being a varied

and eclectic community ,Arab American writers 'first issue was identity .Arab Americans, like any other minority ,have battled with “the question of identity “according to Hall (Questions of Cultural Identification,20) .Along with a variety of Arabic languages ,the society was made up of individuals from diverse Arab nations and religions .Since the authors were seen as minorities ,there were additional issues with the publishing houses and the work itself .Notwithstanding these challenges ,the development of Arab American literature elements .According to Ludescher ,the first was looking for voices in Anglo –American who weren't part of the established canon and the other element in the Arab American community politics influenced a great deal of things (106) .the political issue is a major theme in the writings of Arab American authors ,who have created excellent pieces that capture the day-today realities of Arab American realities of Arab immigrants in the United States .The authors make an effort to capture the complex struggles and responses of Arab immigrants to political and social environments both before and after 9/11 . The majority of male or female Arab American writers have primarily focused on writing about their ethnic communities or the diaspora .Poets and authors of Arab descent in a nation where immigration and transplantation are the norms confront the urgent problem of self -identification.Arab American literature has been and still is a potent vehicle for expressing this experience and its aftermath. As it tackles the evolving realities of the Arab American experience, this literature is currently maturing.

In the evolution of Arab American literature ,women writers have played a crucial role. We honor Arab American women for their contributions to various areas of life .Arab American women are deeply committed to their social settings ,careers ,and families .their motivation makes them exceptional storytellers and communicators .

II.4.1. Arab American Female Writers

Arab American female writers are individuals who are citizens of United States or a long-term resident there, who have a primary cultural connection to the Arab world, and who is writing from an Arab American feminist perspective . In Arab American Literature, hold significance to men .It should be noted that, because most immigrants at the time were men ,there is little evidence of a shortage of women writers among the Arab American works from the early migration period in the United States of America. The new stable conditions that facilitated the establishment of families and communities resulted in a rise in the number of women during the second and third periods.

Arab American women saw it as a good chance to enroll in educational institutions at all levels, from high school to universities, and they achieved excellent qualifications in a range of specializations as well as literary genre inventiveness. Thus, among the Arab American community, the second and the third generations comprise a sizable percentage of sophisticated and educated women, signaling the beginning of a period of active and influential women writers who went above and beyond the competition to reach the present. The post 1980s writings of Arab Americans, in particular, are the most prolific and imaginative, and they are clearly flavored with feminine sensibility. Arab American feminism has empowered these women and made it possible for them via literature.

As a result, women writers in this genre have emerged as significant figures in Arab American literature. The latest several decades have seen a notable rise in the number of English language written by Arab women authors who have published more than men. This is worth mentioning. Their literature attempts to address difficult subjects, delicate and significant subjects like identity crisis, the homeland, diaspora, and extends to their investigation of intersections of race, hybridity, ethnicity, sexuality, class, gender, and politics, as well as locations of oppression and violence. They also make effort to provide fresh options and open up new lines of communication in an effort to advance the community. Cultural Hybridity in this sense, writers belonging to other ethnic groups, such as African Americans, Asians, and Native Americans, have had a significant impact on the cultural identification of Arab women. As Barbara Nimri Aziz claims, their unity with other people of color specifically, the African –American experience could assist Arab American writers in their “struggle for empowerment and recognition». By focusing their voices to subvert the codified meanings that bound Arabs to a litany of insults, they attempt to humanize the Arabs through their writings. But it’s important to keep in mind that American political institutions have historically categorized Arab Americans as white. Aligned with individuals for color, Arab American female writers want to emphasize the complex connections that exist between their culture and other cultures. Michelle Sharif makes the argument that Arab American women will need to associate with other Arab Americans are unique in that they are part of two cultures. Arab –American feminism has done a great job of assisting Arab women in speaking up about their issues.

There are a great deal of Arab American women who work as publicist, essayists, poets, screen writers, etc; they have established themselves over time or are now gaining notoriety.

Though they express both ethnic affirmation and diaspora sensibilities, contemporary Arab American writers struggle with these excluding influences. Writers after 1967 gave expression to the powerful drive for identification, which is especially appealing due to its American vernacular. These English-language authors drew from US literary traditions, particularly free verse and lyric poetry, for their writing, which they published in American literary newspapers. Writers like Sam Hamod, Sam Hazo, and Jack Marshall Poetry by Naomi Shihab Nye and others explored what was lost during the centuries of assimilation and occasionally touched, sometimes deeply, on Arab identity. For example, in the poem "Dying with the wrong Name" Lebanese American poet Sam Hamod depicts immigrants who were to "Americanize" their names upon entering Ellis Island. The poem shows that forced integration results in more than just a name. It is self, a past and an identity.

"there is something lost in the blood," Hamod composes, "something lost down to the bone in these small changes. At Ellis Island, a man wearing a dark blue shirt says, looking fatigued but authoritative. "You only need two names in America." and suddenly- and cleanly as the air, you've lost your name" (Dying with the Wrong Name, 19). Given this, it should come as no surprise that Joana Kadi's anthology "Food for Our Grandmothers", which featured literature by Arab American and Arab Canadian feminists, was published as the next significant literary event. The anthology established the genre of feminist American literature in English by bringing numerous voices into publication. There were actually more female emigrants than male emigrants following the Armistice because many of them travelling alone leaving their husbands behind along with their children. (Shakir, Bint Arab, 28). In addition to reiterating many accomplishments of Arab American women as doctors, lawyers, college graduates, aviators, and musicians, the Arab American press of the 1910s and 1920s provided a forum for discussions on gender issues. For example, Lebanese American Afifa Karam, wrote a great deal about gender issues between 1904 and 1924, primarily for the Arabic journal *Al Hoda*. Formal feminist organization, however, did not emerge till after the 1967 war,

When Arab American life in general was revitalized within the framework for US social, civic, student, women's rights organizations. The short-lived Arab American Network, the Association for Middle Eastern Women's studies, and the Union of Palestinian Women's groups in North America were among the several feminist associations, both activist and academic, that were founded in 1980s.

Literature has always played a significant role in shaping cultural backgrounds, and personal growth in order to illustrate the complexity of human identity . So, one of the important topics to be covered in literary works is identity .Characters in literary works typically struggle with their identity to some extent .The difficulties of defining oneself in a world that changing quickly are explored by writers along with the intricacies of human existence.Identity has been a recurrent issue in some of the most influential modern literary works,from Samuel Beckett's postmodernist writings to Zodie Smith's contemporary novels .Modern literature is notable for emphasizing the individual and their quest for purpose and meaning in an often confusing and alienating world.Modern literature regularly explores themes of alienation,fragmentation,anddislocation,and the quest for identity is reflected in its characters and plots.

In the same vein,Writers aid readers in learning more about themselves by exposing them to a range of stories and points of view. By analyzing the plots of diverse literary works, we can discover how characters 'journeys serve as a mirror for readers ,revealing the intricacy of identity and its ever-changing nature. Through these stories ,readers can witness characters facing challenges ,thinking about social conventions, and developing as individuals. This study raises reader's understanding of the fluidity of identity encouraging them to reflect on their own personal growth and the transformational power of life experiences .the different perspectives and journeys depicted in provide readers with deeper understanding of complexity of identity and its continual progression in literature.

III.4.2 Self –Concept :A literary Perspective

Self-concept is overarching idea we have about who we are - physically,emotionally,socially ,spiritually,and in terms of any other characteristics that contribute to our identity (Neill,2005).As we grow ,we develop and govern our self-concept depending on what we know about ourselves .It is multidimensional and can be devided into these individual components .For example ,you may have quite diverse ideas about who you are in terms of your physical body versus your spirit or soul .

Roy Baumeister (1999) ,a renowned self-efficacy researcher,describes self-concept as following: "The individual's belief about himself or herself ,including the person's attributes and who and what the self is"

Rosenberg's (1979) book on the subject offers a similar definition, stating that self-concept is: "...the totality of an individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object."

Self-concept is linked to various other "self" constructions, including self-esteem, self-efficacy, and self-awareness. Self-concept is not the same as self-esteem, however the latter may be a component of the former. Self-concept is our opinion of ourselves, or our response to the question "who am I?" It entails understanding one's own tendencies, ideas, preferences and routines, hobbies, abilities, and areas of weakness. Carl Rogers, the originator of client-centered therapy defined self-concept as an overall construct that includes self-esteem (McLeod, 2008). Self-concept is more complex than efficacy. While self-efficacy to an individual's assessment of their own skills, self-concept is broader and encompasses both cognitive (thoughts about) and emotional (feelings about) assessments of oneself (Bong and Clark 1999). Self-awareness has an impact on one's self-concept. It is that quality or attribute that requires cognitive knowledge of one's own thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and traits (Cherry, 2018). To have a fully formed (and realistic) self-concept, a person must be self-aware. Most crucially, the self is dynamically distributed in time; the self-concept is shaped by past and future selves, which also have an impact on present behavior (Markus and Nurius, 1986). Past selves are our ideas of who we were in the past; they are based on autobiographical memory (Strahan and Wilson, 2006), and they are essential to the self-sustaining personal story, no matter how fluid such recollections may be (Bruner, 2004).

In literature, the idea of the self has changed over time. Rather than passivity or resignation, satisfaction was viewed as a dynamic and productive component of the self in early modern literature. The idea that the individual self is a comparatively new concept is challenged by the actuality of the individual self in Old English Literature. The concept of the self has been examined in more recent literature in relation to culture, identity, and globalization, emphasizing the multifaceted and complicated nature of self. In literary studies, the study of self also entails disciplinary self-awareness, or the recognition of the presumptions and authority of the discipline itself. The relationship between self-concept, dual identity, and belonging in literature frequently examines the inner conflicts that characters have as they attempt to reconcile contradictory cultural, societal, or personal

identities in an effort to find a single ,cohesive sense of self and a place of belonging in diverse or split worlds .

II.4. 3. Dual Identity and Belonging in Arab American Literature

The stakes are especially high for Arabs ,in contrast to other hyphenated Americans. This is because ,rather than being a diverse group of people with a wide range of beliefs, most Americans consistently see themselves as belonging to a monolithic c religious or ideological group .for those Americans of Arab descent in particular ,the constant connection and inevitable overlap with one's respective societies makes maintaining two separate identities difficult .Bing able to adapt to different cultural settings is only one aspect of dual identity .the intricate of dual identity stems from a combination of factors including the diversity of cultures involved ,the time and effort required to comprehend these cultures,and the rejection of those that ca not be reconciled .this blending and rejecting of cultures can occur in a number of settings, including those involving cuisine ,family ,individual routines and beliefs ,as well as public conduct .When someone's identity is shaped by two different things ,it's known as having a dual identity .A change in beliefs or values that results from the blending of seemingly incompatible identities might give one the impression of being between two cultures . Most frequently, writers on dual identity discuss the condition of being between two or more cultures and feeling a part of each one. The sensation of having two identities Arab American in this case that are ostensibly incompatible is the notion of dual identity .It's a dispute about whether or not an individual is the victim that society wants them to be .Usually ,moving to drastically different culture causes this ,which frequently leaves on feeling alienated.

Arab Americans because of prevailing ideas in the United States, immigrants frequently feel they must abandon their original identity and take on a new one in order to fit in .this can have a serious negative impact on a person's mental health .Among Arab Americans, one recurring issue in the feeling that Americans ,whether or not they were born here, they must always demonstrate their authenticity or value to others .this is because of their race or confessional affiliations ,they are assumed to be disloyal to America and its policies .in actuality ,a lot of people wish to avoid being perceived as Arabs in America .and wants to blend in without attaching any ethnic identity ;it's just looking for an opportunity to be treated equally.

T. Arrigoni discovered that while strength of ethnic identification was high, public self-identification was low, which lends credence to the argument that Arabs feel they must suppress their “Arabness” in order to prevent unfavorable stereotypes . “Who am I?” is fundamental inquiry of personal identity .According to Cheri Vasta of Yemeni Community Association in Brooklyn , it is a crisis of our being to have to fit in with everyone else’s culture while also wearing a piece of your own .Who am I when I go to home or go to school or work and who am I when I am with people from my own ethnic community and who am I when I step outside that ethnic milieu to larger community? Who is the real me? These are defining issues of dual identity which have brought up by Arab American writers in the aftermath of September 11th attacks.

II.5. Conclusion

The complicated and diverse Arab American community in America is frequently misinterpreted, mislabeled, and misrepresented .These people live in a social and political environment in the U.S that has an unfavorable perception of Arab culture .They have experienced psychological and emotional strain. As a result of this, some of which is impairing their capacity to embrace their Arab identity .Their capacity to melt into American society is hampered by their total rejection of their American identity .Along side this are the difficulties Arab Americans encounter in figuring out who they are . Arab Americans also struggle with a sense of separation from their new country.

Authors like Diana Abu Jaber have created novels that combine the unique characteristics of Arab American literature. Her contribution to Arab American literature is essential in giving a voice of Arab American identity ,belonging, and cultural negotiation .Additionally, by using the motif of storytelling and the motif of food ,which has a long history in the Arab culture and has been brought to the American context, Abu Jaber offers a unique perspective on placelessness, uprooting, assimilation ,border crossing ,and identity exploration .It appears that the language and culture of Arab immigrants in America are reflected in Abu Jaber’s literary recipes . .

Chapter Three Belonging Beyond Bundaries: Sirine's Evolving Self in Diana AbuJaber's Crescent

Chapter III

Belonging Beyond Boundaries :Sirine's Evolving Self in Diana Abu- Jaber “Crescent”

III.1. Introduction

Writers of Arab descent in America have consistently utilized various literary elements and services that mirror the authentic history and customs of Arab Americans. The literary work of Diana Abu Jaber 's *Crescent* , is one of the most significant Arab American novels, illustrate the difficulties Arab Americans have faced as a result of diversity in America. Diana Abu Jaber has mostly concentrated on revealing the cultural facets of Arab Americans in her novel *Crescent*. She has attempted to differentiate these characteristics from those of white Americans' culture . Understanding the specific literary device she uses in her work is crucial to understand how it helps to explain the distinct culture of Arab American immigrants in the U.S.

Diana Abu Jaber's novel ,*Crescent* ,is a clever hybrid novel that delves into the complex identities of Arabs and Arab Americans living in the United States . *Crescent* presents characters that have to overcome unstable,fragmented identities as well as different kinds of exile in order to create new identities that embrace and make sense of their hyphenated ,hybrid locations. An important theme in *Crescent* is food which is an important part in creating immigrants identity . Therefore it provides minorities and exiles with the strength and power to reconstruct their past ,bring back fond memories from the past ,and bring back the entirety of their former lives . The main goal of this chapter is exploring Sirine's self –perception and sense of identity .Examining how her relationships ,experiences ,and cultural background have affected her self-concept ,it highlights both her inner struggles and strong points . The chapter also looks at her sense belonging ,emphasizing the places and groups she feels most comfortable in which is Um-Nadia's café.

III.2. Background of the Novel

Diana Abu.Jaber 's second novel is titled *Crescent*.It'sa story about exile and search for both personal and collective identity .Sirine , a thirty nine years old Iraqi –American ,lives with an uncle who raised her after her parents died when she was very young .Her life revolves around cooking and academics .She works as the principl cook atUm-Nadia's Café ,which is located near the University of California Los Angeles Campus ,where her uncle,a professor in the Near Eastern Studies Departement ,has spent the most

of his life in the Iraqi –Lebanese Café 's customer is predominantly Middle Eastern, and this is where tales, news, and Middle Eastern concerns are discussed and debated. It is also where Sirine, encouraged by her uncle, begins a romantic relationship with Iraqi immigrant Hanif AlEyyad. Hanif, a new employee in her uncle's department, is distraught by his separation from his family in Iraq. The protagonist Sirine is struggling to find her sense of self and belonging.

The stories of immigrants and their experiences of being uprooted and uncertain are interwoven with Crescent's own journey throughout the book. Though these intertwined stories, the book explores the intricacies of multicultural identity, the challenges of navigating various cultural contexts, and the significance of family in forming a person's sense of self.

Crescent finds a feeling of connection to her family 's history and a sense of self as she works through her own journey of self-discovery and the reconciliation of her dual identities. A deeper understanding of the varied experiences and difficulties that come with encompassed various cultures is provided by the novel's deep dive into the complex tapestry of Arab American culture, cuisine, and traditions.

Though Sirine and Hanif's courting the reader gets a totally different picture of Iraq than what the media is telling them. They discuss their familial and geographical memories, as well as their losses, as they become acquainted. The reader is transported to an intimate world discussing not only their childhood but also their memories of place. Reading this novel now is moving, especially the parts in which Hanif reconstructs places like Baghdad before the bombings and Hussein. His homesickness stems from a visceral "recent immigrant" experience, but Sirine has no knowledge (211) or recognition of a nation she can only claim as ethnic ancestry.

Svetlana Boym, a cultural critic, defines their juxtaposition in this work as the meaning of nostalgia "Algia" –longing –is what we share, yet nostos – the return home –is what divides us". The Spice –filled scents of Nadia's Café draw expats and immigrants into a place that provides a break from longing as well as a matriarchal Community of sorts. Um Nadia, the owner, and the determined Mirielle complete the close knit community of women supporting women. Abu –Jaber's hands, these characters transcend prevalent

perceptions of Arab –American s women .The specifics in scences about their daily life differ from CNN's portrayal of Middle Eastern women as meek n,silentans concealed .

When Sirine joins the women Islam group ,we see welcome contradictions to stereotypes.Rania is vibrant and commanding personality .The best writing happens inside the Café .Here, Diana Abu Jaber enjoys the sensual and the holy act of cooking .Sirine 's ruminations while preparing the baklava or lamb meals are poetic and contribute to the plot's development .The uncle's storytelling serves as the novel's other primary point of connection .We go into AbdelrahmanSalahdin's private world ,where he "carries himself like a handful of water".The novel 's primary premise subtextuallyincorporates the uncle's Salahadin story throughout .When he narrator remarks toward the end of the book, these stories – which originate from "the collective unconscious of family"-are reflection of reality".The loss of Sirine and Hanif's house and their eventual ,possibly figurative ,making it feel like post –denouement when the reader learns the truth about him.Too much has happened ,and his excuses for staying silent sometimes sound implausible .One additional round of editing would have helped the book's latter half as well.

Ultimately,Crescent explores the search for connection,traditions,and identity in a heterogeneous environment.It emphasizes the value of remaining loyal to oneself while honoring one's past and history .

III.3. Sirine's Search for True Self

Diana Abu Jaber 's Crescent ,Sirine battles with her identity and self perception throughout the whole book.She was portayed as a character who is conflicted with her American upbringing and Arab heritage ,which finally causes her to feel alienated and unsure of how Sirine perceives her intricate family history ,especially the tales of her grandparents' traumatizing and uprooting experiences . The ties to her ancestors determine Sirine'ssence of identity and belonging .As she tries to make sense of her two different ethnic backgrounds .Sirine struggles with her sense of alienation ,her need for relationships ,and her desire to fit in with the world.

Sirine goes through a journey of self –acceptance and self-discovery throughout the book , Sirine gradually learns to accept the duality of her identity and come to terms with her conflicting emotions throughout the course of the book .Indulging in self-reflection and

reestablishing her connection to her roots, Sirine develops a more robust and self-assured sense of self, fusing her American and Arab influences into a more complex and cohesive identity. By the time the book ends, Sirine has a more mature understanding and acceptance of her personal growth and discovery trip. She also learns to embrace her heritage and enjoy her family's history, as well as find a sense of self-assurance and grounding in her identity.

III.3.1. Sirine's Inner Reflections

In Diana Abu-Jaber "Crescent", Sirine's self-perception is complex and inextricably linked to her feeling of identity and belonging. As an Iraqi-American woman living in Los Angeles, she frequently feels torn between two worlds: the American society she grew up in and the rich, yet distant, legacy of her Iraqi roots. Sirine sees herself as a bridge between various cultures, especially as a cook at Um-Nadia's Café. She finds refuge and expression in food, which also serves as a means of connecting with her heritage. However, she also has feelings of alienation and uncertainty, as if she is an outsider in both her American and cultural roots. Her romantic involvement with Han, an exile Iraqi, makes her undermine her self-perception. Sirine's deeper identity, perception of love, and sense of belonging are all shaped by this relationship. This journey is characterized by moments of self-doubt and discovery as she navigates cultural complexity and personal desires.

Sirine is middle-aged, fair-skinned and unclear about her Arab heritage. While Sirine's query concerning her roots and sense of self hasn't escaped her; in addition, they offer a space for developing selfhood tactics. As she glances in the mirror, "all she can see is white", she speaks of her eyes, "almond-shaped, and sea-green", and her other traits "tidy and compact". Only her mother. When she reveals that she is half Arab, many who inquire about her nationality are shocked. She mills the notion she "inherited her mother on the outside and her father on the inside" (Crescent 195), and feels that should she be able to look "the blood and bones and the shape of her mind and emotions—she would find her truer and deeper nature." (Crescent 196), as an Arab American living in between states, Sirine's inquiries over her ancestry and blood type are representative of this.

Furthermore, Sirine is a complex character that experiences identity and self-concept issues. According to Freud Sigmund, this is the trait of an "Armor character"—a person who prefers to adopt a protective and safe position in an unfamiliar environment over the

insecurity and stimulation of the outside world .Her personality was also quite isolated because she had no idea of where she was outside of Los Angeles or what was going on in the world.Her routine life was limited to her home and the restaurant .The crucial aspect of this situation was how tattered Sirine's character was from the beginning , however it should be noted that this state may be remembered as the state prior to Hnif al Eyad debut on the scene.

Sirine had never explored her Arab American identity as deeply as she did via her relationship with Han .Han was portrayed as the individual who awakened Sirine's lingering curiosity about her country ,Iraq,which she had forgotten or purposefully disregarded following her parents' death.AsSirine got closer to Han ,she realized how starved he was for Iraq .He would often repeat :”the fact of exile is bigger than everything life ,leaving my country was like –Idon't know- like part of my body was torn way .Ihave phantom pains from the loss of that part –I'm haunted by my self.”(Crescent106). She is gradually piecing together his terrible past,his flight from Iraq ,and the horrifying fate his family suffering under Saddam Hussein .Despite her knowledge that she would never be able to fill that vacuum ,she tried attempting to piece together her father's history as an Iraqi and learning about Islam ,”Han answersSirine's questions about Islam –she 's curious ,not having been raised with formal religion .He describes what the interior mosque looks like ,its clean ,open prayer hall.....”(Crescent 49).

Sirine's sense of being “in –between” is exacerbated by her parents 'passing when she was a young girl.In a moving moment, Sirine examine an old picture of her parents .She ponders their opinins on her decisions ,her profession ,and her overall existence .This self-examination indicates her desire for acceptance and a better comprehension of her cultural and personal origins .She is metaphorically disconnected from a part of her self that she is unable to fully reach through the photograph . In Um-Nadia's Caf   ,Sirine as chef primarily views herself via her work as a self-expression tool and a link to her history .She feels closer to her roots when she prepares traditional Middle Eastern food,and she enjoys feeding people and fostering a sense of community .She also wonders ,though ,if being able to prepare cuisine from her ancestry defines her identity.

Finally, emotional complexity ,cultural ambivalence ,and a need for connection and belonging combine to define Sirine's sense of who she is .Her quest to reconcile these disparate facets of her identity is journey of self –discovery that spans the entire book.

III.3.2. Influences on Sirine's Evolving Self Image

Self-concept is a set of thoughts, feelings, and perceptions you have about yourself. It encompasses a wide range of different facets of your identity, such as your qualities, values, physical appearance, talents, abilities, roles and interpersonal interactions. Self-concept may be influenced by social variables, personality traits, life experiences, values, and cognitive processes. Fundamentally, self-concept is how you would view yourself if you were to think about who you are. Your self-concept may lust for the things you think about as a self and include in your description. It is crucial to have a positive self-concept since it influences several aspects of your life, such as relationships, motives and behaviors. While having a strong sense of self might make you feel more driven and confident, having a weak sense of self can make you feel insecure and unsure about your worth. A person's self-concept is molded by a variety of elements in their life, some of which being media influences, experiences, identity input from others, culture and upbringing.

Sirine's self-concept is molded by numerous circumstances that reflect her complex identity as an Iraqi-American woman. Despite being born in Iraq, Sirine has spent her whole life in Los Angeles which has left her feeling torn between her Iraqi parents' home and her current life in the United States. Despite having been raised entirely in the United States, she maintains a strong connection to her Middle Eastern roots, particularly via cooking and storytelling. Because of her cultural hybridity, she struggles to define who is and wonders if she really fits anywhere. She feels "in-between" rather than fully belonging to either culture, which is influenced by her cosmopolitan upbringing. She feels like she is "somewhere in between everything –not fully Iraqi but not fully American either." (Crescent)

In the same vein, a major influence on Sirine's self-concept is her family history. Her childhood was filled with regret and longing for a place she had never been, Iraq, thanks to her uncle, who raised her after her parents passed away. and he constantly tells her stories of Iraq contain both mystical and realistic components, complicating her perception of her background. While they connect her roots, they also create distance because she has never visited Iraq.

Moreover, cooking is fundamental to Sirine's self-image. She works as a cook in the Mediterranean Café, where she showcases her cultural heritage by preparing classic Middle Eastern meals. Food becomes a major symbol of her identity and a way to bridge her American life with her Iraqi roots. Cooking is both a source of pride and a reminder of her ambiguous connection to her cultural origins. Also, food emerged as a tool to validate or create both personal and cultural identities :

"Sirine learned about food from her parents. Always said his wife though about food like an Arab. Sirine's mother strained the salted yogurt.

Though cheesecloth to make creamy labneh, stirred the onion and lentils together in a heavy iron pan to make *makemjeddrah*, and studded joints of lamb with fat cloves of garlic to make roasted *kharuf*. Sirine's earliest memory was of sitting on a phone book on a kitchen chair, the sour-tart smell of pickled grape leaves in the air. Her mother spread the leaves flat on the table like little floating hands, placed the spoonful of rice and meat at the center of each one, and Sirine with her tiny fingers rolled the leaves up tighter and neater than anyone else could-tender, garlicky, meaty package that burst in the mouth. (Crescent 36-37)

However, it also reveals her insecurities—she sometimes feels that her ability to cook these dishes is not enough to fully claim her heritage. Another factor is Sirine's relationship with Han, an Iraqi professor who had a significant impact on Sirine's self-concept. During one of their heated exchanges, Han shares his recollections of Iraq, including the hardships, beauty, and suffering of being exiled. As Sirine realizes how far distant she is from such experiences, she listens with a mixture of admiration and unease. In the light of Han's strong ties to his native country, she occasionally feels unworthy and questions whether her love for him serves as a bridge or a barrier between them. She analyzes her own thoughts about her identity and what it means to love beyond ethnic boundaries.

The Mediterranean Café where Sirine works is a microcosm of the Middle Eastern immigrants in Los Angeles. While serving meals, Sirine observes their interactions and experiences both a sense of belonging and awareness of her outsider status. She is aware of the community's welcome for her, but she also feels that, as a lady born in America, she is different from others who have experienced migration and exile in homeland.

Sirine's self-concept is influenced by how she negotiates gender norms. She considers the cultural expectations of marriage and family that are imposed on her as an Iraqi woman, in contrast to the American principles of independence and self-determination that she grew up with. Reflecting on her connection with Han and where she belongs, Sirine shows signs of self-doubt. She reflects for a time whether she is too accommodative, too quiet, or not passionate enough. Her internal turmoil and yearning for a more confident self-concept demonstrated by her self-examination. It has an impact on her relationships; she becomes reluctant to take chances or to completely embrace one facet of her identity over another.

Sirine's self-concept is influenced by her connections, family history, cultural backgrounds, and personal insecurities—all of which contribute to her journey of self-discovery and sense of belonging.

III.4. Finding Her Place :Sense of Belonging

The book "Crescent" by Diana Abu Jaber offers a thought-provoking viewpoint on the subject of sense of belonging. Sense of belonging is a fundamental human need that can be summed up as a sense of fitting in with certain individuals or places. This theme is embodied in numerous ways by the protagonist of the book, Sirine. Through her journey, readers are invited to reflect on their own understanding of cultural fusion and identity. From cultural identity and familial relationships to community engagement, *Crescent* offers an in-depth exploration of how different factors can influence one's sense of belonging. Sirine's dual cultural identity is a central theme of the narrative. Through Sirine's experiences, the issue of sense of belonging is made evident right from the start of the book.

The difficulties that Sirine has in relation to her cultural identity are effectively communicated by Abu Jaber through the use of language and syntax as well as the use of cultural references. This facilitates a deeper comprehension of the ways in which culture can influence an individual's sense of belonging both inside and outside their immediate environment.

Overall, the book does a very good job of introducing the key characters and their struggles through precise and well-structured guidance, a clear framework, and an

examination of the major themes .Through her characters,AbuJaber offers glimpses into a specific world where they search for belonging..

III.4.1. Sirine's Quest for Belonging

Sirine ,who was thirty –nine yearsold ,was employed as a chef at Um-NadiaCafé or the MediterraneanCafé,awell known Middle Eastern café close to the University of California ,Los Angeles ,during the entirety of the book;Her physical attributes were briefly described as follows,".....with her skin so pale it has the bluish of skin milk ,her wild blond head of hair ,and her sea –green eyes"(Crescent 16).In general,this description was intentionally ambiguous to allow readers to form an impression of her .In addition ,Sirine was born to an American mother and an Iraqi father who were both employed for the International Red Cross but were absent for much of her early years .When Sirine was nine years old ,they died while on a mission in Africa.Sirine was raised by her uncle ,a university professor and ebullient storyteller, following the death of her parents .Her uncle's stories interjected with the plot of the novel .Essetially ,it can be said that even when her uncle was telling his stories about Arabic people and their experiences ,Sirine 's relationships with her Iraqi family did not exist at all .We could also say that there were no indications that she understood the significance of his stories ,just as readers could have understood them after reading the novel.In addition, Sirine lacked proficiency in speaking Arabic ,and it remained unclear if she adhered to Islam .

Since she lost her parents when she was a little child,in both the recognized countries of Iraq ,where her parents were born,and Africa ,where they passed away, Sirine is aware of how her identity has devided from her roots .According to Sirine ,she realizes that she does not belong to any country ,not even the United States ,where she was born .She mentions :” I guess I'm always looking for my home ,a little bit .I mean ,even though I live here ,I have this feeling that my real home is somewhere else somehow ” (132) .

In the same vein,Sirine 's sense of “unbelonging” is the fact that she does not go to her uncle's house,where she has lived since she was a young child .That Sirine does not regard her uncle's house as her home or her place to belong.

Sirine did not speak Arabic ,as it said previously,but she was able to re-establish a connection with her heritage by cooking at Um –Ndia's Café ..When Han asks her :”what makes a place feel like home for you?”, she answers “work”,and “workis home”(132) .Sirine

refers to her work as her "home" since she is looking for her place to understand where she belongs.

Moreover, the Arabic atmosphere of Um -Nadia's Café ,from the Arabic -speaking patrons who converse in Arabic and English about their solitary existence in exile to the Arabic - broadcasting TV station ,made Sirine reflect and ask about her real identity and belonging :

"Nadia's café is like other places- crowded at meals and quiet
in between- But somehow quiet in between- there is so usually
a lingering conversation, currents of Arabic that ebb around Sirine,
fill her head with mellifluous voices .Always there are the same groups
of students from the big university up the street.....;"(Crescent 16)

Food proved to be the ideal vehicle for Sirine to explore and discover the answers she sought in this perplexing yet surprisingly supportive environment .She therefore started cooking ,usually Arabic food, following her parents' recipes .Unintentionally ,this gesture was what led to immigrants revealing who they really were when they walked into Um-Nadia Café and sampled the delectable dishes that Sirine had made ,like knafea and tabbouleh .It appeared as though those meals immediately touched their nerve endings and entered their brains.

Indeed, Sirine's cuisine and lovely presence in the kitchen compelled the students to open their heart ,as stated:" and only the men spent their time arguing and being lonely ,drinking tea and trying to talk to Um-Nadia, Mireille ,and Sirine. Especially Sirine "(Crescent 17).

To sum up, Sirine's sense of belonging evolves throughout the narrative ,fueled by her experiences at Mediterranean Café ,her relationships with a broad set of customers ,and her connection to her Iraqi ancestry .As Sirine joins Um-Nadia's café ,she begins to experience a sense of belonging among people who enjoy Mediterranean cuisine and culture .the Café 's warmth and inclusivity offer her with support and acceptance .Through food ,talks ,and shared tales ,Sirine discovers commonalities with the café's guests that transcend ethnic barriers and foster a sense of belonging .Sirine finds that cooking and eating together help her create relationships and foster a sense of connection and belonging .Moreover, through her culinary traditions ,family recipes, and recollections of home -cooked meals ,Sirine's Iraqi upbringing had a key part in creating her identity and sense of belonging .She conserved her legacy and

found comfort in the familiarity and comfort of her cultural roots . Furthermore, Sirine gains values ,appreciation ,and a sense of being respected for who she is from her interactions and connections at the Café.She feels free to be herself in this supportive setting,express her creativity ,and share culinary talents without fear of criticism or pretense §.As Sirine faces difficulties ,overcomes barriers,and gains a deeper feeling of self-awareness and belonging,she empowered .She identifies her assets ,develops her cooking skills ,and finds her voice in expressing her goals and value.All things considered ,Sirine's path toward a sense of belonging at Um-Nadia's Café is proof of the transformational power of food ,community,culture,connection ,and self-discovery as factors that enhance and shape her life.

III.4.2. Belonging Through Flavors :Sirine's Story in the Mediterranean Café

Sirine was born in Iraq and now lives in the United States .It gives her multiple identities – Iraq-America .Sirine became orphan when she was nine years old. Since she lives with her uncle in an Arab immigrant neighborhood .However,she never feels" Home" in her uncle's home .She continuously looking for her home .Until one day ,she landed a job as chef at the Mediterranean Café.Surprisingly,she discovers that she belongs there.The atmosphere ,the owner and other customers all give her the feeling of being at home and the a sense of belonging.

In Crescent,home is no more just a physical area,but also an emotional bond or imagination.Sirine is someone who seeks for her sense of belonging and her identity .She found her imagination of home at Mediterranean Café,also known as Um-Nadia's café .The café has evolved into more than simply a typical place to work;it's now a space where culinary components and activities done could make meaning out of her complex identities.

Sirine credits Mediterranean Café with helping her find warmth.Because it is a gathering place for people with many cultural backgrounds .The owner of Café Um-Ndia is a Muslim – Arab American,while the workers include :Victor Hernandez,a young Mexican,Mireille,a Jordanian-American,andCristobel,a South American.As a result ,it is also a space where people of many identities can gather and engage in activities together.For example,they commemorate events from different religions or cultures.It is portrayed in:

“Um –Nadia has Victor Hernandez stand on the shaky

ladder and string christmas lights aroundthe inside of the

café. She stands beneath him, giving a lot of instructions”(216).

From this quotations it is clear that Mediterranean Café becomes an imaginary home for Sirine and other immigrants since it is a neutral location that promotes warmth between them

“Sirine announces that this year will be an Arabic

Thanks giving with rice and pine nuts and ground

lamb in the Turkey instead of corn bread, and yogurt

sauce instead of cranberries”. (Crescent 162).

They are unconcerned with their differences; instead, they focus on the happiness that may be shared as a type of bargaining for immigrants who wish for their hometown. As a result, their efforts have also demonstrated hybridity and challenged the dichotomies of Oriental and Occidental. Bhabha (1994), as reported by Djohar, claimed that “hybridity is new, neither the one nor the other” (1). Bhabha’s message is reflected in the combination of ingredients that will be served during the Thanksgiving celebration. The portrayal of home that is offered by Mediterranean Café is also conveyed through immigrant customers. Several immigrants have come to enjoy the meal and share their experiences. “Occasionally a student would linger at the counter talking to Sirine. He would tell her how painful it is to be an immigrant.” (22).

The Mediterranean Café provides a secure for immigrants to vent their fidgetiness. Food as cultural trope is explored in variety of academic, including anthropology disciplines, sociology, psychology, cultural studies, and literary criticism. According to this viewpoint, food is a cliché that diasporan writers use to negotiate their presence and raise questions about their identity and displacement from the host country. Furthermore, the Arab author Diana Abu Jaber’s use of thematic portrayal of food contributes to the discussion of political themes and self by highlighting this cultural motif. In “Crescent” Diana Abu Jaber portrays food in diaspora and exile in relation to identity. Furthermore, food is examined as a marker that aids in the survival of persons in exile. Abu Jaber also presents food not only as a basic necessity, but as a symbol of home, identity, and childhood memories.

“Food functions as a complex language for communicating love,

memory, and exile. In their texts, food also becomes an avenue for

questioning boundaries of culture, class, and ethnicity. Food is another

respository for memory and traditionand reveals the possibility
for imagining blended identities and traditions(Mercer,and Strom,33).

Eating with others and preparing food for consumption were two actions that were done for reasons other than just nutrition (Claxton01).Stated differently,your identity and cultural affiliation may be determined by the food you ate ,the ingredients you used in your cooking,or your personal preference.Forinstance,olive oil is associated with Arabic culture v.Tell me what you eat ,in general ,and I will tell you who you are.(Anthem182).

Beside MeditteraneanCafé ,Sirine feels the warmth of home through the food ,especially Mediterranean Dish since she was born in Iraq .

“Um-Nadia says the loneliness of the Arab is terrible thing,it is consuming .It already present like a shadow under the heart when he lays his head on his mother’s lap ;it threatens to swallow him whole when he leaves his country ,even though he marries and travels and talks to friends twenty hours a day .That is the way Sirine suspects that Arabs feel every thing – larger than life ,feeling walking in the sky .And sometimes when she awake in the central of the night ,the night cool and succulent as heart of palm or a little chicken kabob,Sirine senses these feelings rushing in her blood “(Crescent21/22).

Sirine was not proficient in Arabic .But via her work as a chef at Um- Nadia’s Café ,she was able to reaffirm her connection to her heritage .According to the aforementioned statement ,Sirine’s love of food was primarily influenced by her memories of her past life,which she shared with her parents,as well as the mental image of her happiness in the kitchen ,filled the room when her family gathered around her .In the end,when all else failed and she was faced with ucertainty ,confusion ,and identity conflict ,she turned to the kitchen and cooked herself and her history into existence (Mercer and Strom 40) .Essentially, Sirine’s cooking is a form self-realization and Goldstein’s self –Actulazation(Freud 27/84) which refers to a person’s use of his talents ,skills ,and capacities to his satisfaction within the area of his own freedom ,and the establishment of realistic ideals.Furthermore ,it refers to the unrestricted ability to seek out and meet their requirements for happiness and security .

In summary ,Sirine’s cooking acted as kind of medicine ,relieving the immigrants of their homesickness and giving them the strength to carry on with their daily struggles . Diana Abu –Jaber elaborates on Edward Said’s comment with the following epigram:”Imiss....?”What

about the kitchen ?My home,(.....)I miss my mother's coffee /my mother's bread"(C .57).Abu- Jaber claims that when he assists Sirine in preparing the Bklava ,Hanif "misses every thing ,absolutely every thing "(C.59).In this respect ,Sirine food preparation from the previous home serves as a figurative link to ancient culture for Han ,who is visiting the host country as an exile .In this regard ,Han's visit to Um-Nadia's café and preparation of Baklava with Sirine,as well as his usage of food,represent his survival in the host culture and a bridge beyond exile .

In the end ,Sirine felt more rooted in her heritage and accepted her identity as an Iraqi American thanks to her experiences at the Mediterranean Café.In addition to providing her with a sense belonging and comfort in a strange and foreign environment ,the cuisine she enjoyed at the Café served as reminder of tastes and smells of her home .

III.5. Conclusion

The protagonist ,Sirine ,an Iraqi American cook,shares the place where she belongs her "home" with Hanif ,an Arab American professor ,and other immigrants with diverse identities from around the world .By showing and investigating numerous identities in her novel,Abu- Jaber demonstrates how Mediterranean Café seves to unit these minorities in order to challenge the concept of American individuality .Specifically ,focus is placed on Abu – Jaber's complicated representation of American belonging to a variety of ethnicities ,religions ,and immigration in the Arab or Muslim American context and diaspora .In addition ,Crescent represents the concept that culinary pracrice is an important cultural component for diasporic individuals to define their identities ,particularly in a multi-cultural environment.

General Conclusion

The thesis analyzed one of the Arab American novels “Crescent”, which is written by Diana Abu Jaber. *Crescent* revolves around the challenges of identity formation for Arab American who must navigate the cultural divide between their Arab background and American existence. It also investigates how characters deal with cultural hybridity, displacement and marginalization. Furthermore, *Crescent* digs into how Arab Americans negotiate their feeling of belonging, reinvent their identities, and adapt to alter cultural landscape, all while fighting monolithic depictions and embracing the fluidity of hybrid identities.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine how Arab American narratives navigate the complexities of identity, belonging, and cultural hybridity in a diasporic environment by analyzing the negotiation of borders and barriers in *Crescent*.

The findings of this study varied, firstly, characters like Sirine, who have two different ethnicities, serve as an excellent example of dynamic process of cultural hybridization. As they affect the characters' emotional and psychological landscapes, the emphasis is on the significance of exile and displacement in the construction of identity.

Secondly, the stereotypes of Arab Americans resemble to the difficulties in negotiating identity both a personal and cultural level, it examines the intricacies of cultural negotiation through personal connections. This leads to an increasing shift in Arab American narratives toward more inclusive and complex depictions.

Thirdly, the researcher finds that food is a powerful metaphor and picture to represent love, loss, and exile. Food serves as a symbol for the Arab American community's cultural diversity and hybridity as well as a tool for subverting social norms and boundaries. For example, Sirine, a half-Iraqi caterer, creates dishes that blend ingredients and cuisine, like lamb paired with rose petals or baklava with chocolate. She also falls in love with Hanif, an exiled Iraqi who confides in her over meals and shares his memories and stories.

For this, home can be an obscure location, an utopia, or an unfixed geography in which no one can succeed. Many theorists refer to diasporic people's homes as non-existent spaces. However, there are also ideas that provide explanations of diaspora situations. Exilic people mistake the concept for something precious and desired like fetish object.

General Conclusion

Having more than one home to which one can belong as a result of forced or voluntary migration can be beneficial to people since it challenges the notion of fixed or identified home or origin.

Sometimes belonging to a home causes discomfort since it binds the individual in one place and gives them little incentive to move or change. While migration refers to mobility, dislocation, and boundary crossing, this time having a place creates unease, boundaries, no movement, no change, and a set identity. It is not the answer for Arab Americans to accept either side of the hyphen as the only place where they belong; rather, what is required is the capacity to better navigate the fluidity between worlds.

Finally, Sirine needs to investigate her identity as something that exists independently of her American and Arab identities, but is ultimately connected to them. Though examining her new identity, she will also start to discover what needs to be revitalized in her multicultural environment. To understand herself and start changing the culture she lives in, she needs to investigate several facets of her identity.

Overall, there are restrictions on the research on Arab American narratives, which focuses on Diana Abu-Jaber's *Crescent*. It's set in an American atmosphere following 9/11 and is restricted to a single literary piece, excluding a range of experiences. Additionally, there is limited exploration of other American literary voices. Additionally, it is advised to examine a greater variety of Arab American authors, analyze post-9/11 works, investigate narratives from various eras or nations, and to close the gap between literary representation and actual identity negotiations in order to gain deeper understanding of negotiation of boundaries and dilemmas in Arab American narratives.

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