

DEMOCRATIC AND POPULAR REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF AMMAR THELEDJI- LAGHOUAT
FACULTY OF LETTERS AND FOREIGN LANGUGAES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**Re-examining The American Dream: A Postcolonial Study of
Laila Lalami`s *The Other Americans* (2019)**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment for the Requirements of the Degree of Master
in Civilization, Literature and Language Teaching.

Submitted by:

Sadeki Ayoub

Supervised by:

Dr. SELT Djihad Afaf

Academic Year 2022-2023

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Dr. SELT Djihad Afaf for
her support, patience, and constant encouragement.

Special thanks and appreciation to the board of examination for their efforts.

Dedication:

To my dear parents with love.

Abstract:

America has been promoted as the land of dreams and opportunities, people from different parts of the world choose the path of the unknown destiny to achieve success and fortune through immigration, crossing borders, seas, and oceans chasing their passion. This research re-examines the American dream through the novel Laila Lalami's *The Other American* (2019). This thesis adopted a historical and postcolonial approach, along with qualitative, descriptive, and analytical methods. These latter helped to look into the truthfulness of the American dream and how various types of immigrants handle it in a diasporic community. As a consequence, problems that second-generation immigrants face have originated from their ex-colonized countries with their political instability which pushed them to flee and be exiled in someone's else society in search of an opportunity that was not fulfilled, much like the work of Lalami that investigates the American dream as a failure not as a success.

Keywords: The American dream, Postcolonialism, Immigration, Diaspora

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	I
Dedication	II
Abstract	III
Table of Contents	IV
General Introduction.....	2
Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings.....	6
1. Arab American Writings: Definition and Prospects.....	7
1.1. Arab American Literature's Recurrent Themes	10
2. The Concept of the American Dream for Immigrants, Pre/Post 9/11.....	12
3. Postcolonialism: Diaspora & Immigration.....	13
3.1. Diaspora and Exile.....	14
3.2. Othering.....	15
3.4. Cultural Hybridity.....	17
4. Arab Diaspora, North African Immigrants in the U.S.	18
Chapter Two: North African Diaspora in Laila Lalami's <i>The Other Americans</i>.....	22
1. The Apprehension of The American Dream in the Novel's Main Characters.....	23
1.1. Driss and his Widow.....	24
1.2. Nora's character.....	26
1.3. Efrain's experience	30
2. Diasporic Characters Experiencing the American Dream: A Multifaceted Exploration.....	35
2.1. Salma & Tareq.....	36
3. The Illusion of the American Dream as Experienced by the American Characters.....	37
3.1. Jeremy and the War in Iraq	37

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel’s Characters as Postcolonial Subjects..... 40

1. Exploring the Notions: Exile and Diaspora in *The Other Americans*.....41

2. Othering..... 43

3. Hybridity..... 45

3.1. Exploring Mimicry.....48

3.2. Ambivalence50

4. Assimilation.....51

General Conclusion56

Works Cited.....59

Résumé

الملخص

Acronyms:

U.S.: United States

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

PhD: Doctor of Philosophy

ID: Identity Document

CNN: Cable News Network

General Introduction

General Introduction

The field of literature has exhibited immigrants' experiences through novels and short stories. Africans and Arab diasporic intellectuals have played an important role in developing this kind of novel such as the Moroccan Laila Lalami in her book *The Other Americans*. Throughout history and at all levels of life, people have believed in the freedom of immigration. In the same vein, the American dream was first coined in 1931 by the American historian James Truslow Adams who believed that most people are born equal in terms of chances and life opportunities. For example, today's American dream is about making wealth and being a member of the wealthy class. Therefore, *The Other Americans*, written by Lalami in 2019, investigates the death of Moroccan immigrant Driss Guerraoui in a hit-and-run accident in California's Mohave Desert. The story is told by multiple narrators which perfectly mirrors the struggles of minority groups in America especially the ones who experienced all kinds of segregation, inferiority, and cultural assimilation problems.

Laila Lalami, in her novel *The Other Americans*, provides the reader with a clear view of immigrants' problems in a foreign American society. She is considered a postcolonial author Lalami usually discusses themes like displacement, immigration, and belonging problems. Further, this dissertation examines the concept of the American dream within the context of Lalami's narrative and how the author adeptly narrates the experiences of an immigrant family as they navigate the pursuit of this dream. Lalami's narrative strategy is marked by a sophisticated exploration of postcolonial identities interwoven throughout her storytelling. This study identifies key postcolonial concepts, including exile, othering, hybridity, mimicry, and ambivalence, all of which are integral to the fabric of her narrative. Through her portrayal, Lalami constructs a semblance of an immigrant Moroccan family's endeavor to attain the American dream. The family's trajectory spans from their homeland to their persistent efforts to assimilate into a dominant white American society, thereby illuminating the complexities inherent in this journey.

General Introduction

The significance of this dissertation is manifested in that it deals with Arab immigrants in the West and analyzes their experiences while chasing the American dream before and after the 9/11 attacks. This research demonstrates how Laila Lalami's work has been expanded to encompass the cultural and psychological concerns of Arab immigrants and other undocumented immigrants and how they are not regarded as equal to American citizens. Furthermore, the study broadens by exhibiting how Laila Lalami prefers to return to her youth, particularly during Morocco's civil manifestation in 1981. As such, it recounts the reasons why a Moroccan family leaves their homeland to become a part of an immigrant minority in another country; it is significant because it depicts the challenges of Arab and African immigrants as they pursue the American dream.

Then, as an overarching aim of our research, we seek to re-examine the American dream via the lens of Lalami's work, beginning with a description of the historical notion of the American dream and progressing to a comprehensive examination of *The Other Americans*' characters and events as a post-colonial work. To reach this aim, many questions arose in need of answers. As a main research problem, we ask: To what extent did the exiled characters in the novel of Laila Lalami achieve the American dream? Other sub-questions can be asked:

- What are the key obstacles and barriers faced by the characters in "*The Other Americans*" as they strive to fulfill their dreams?
- How did the Arab immigrants survive the difficulties after the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.?
- In the American host society, did the second generation of Arab immigrants succeed in preserving their cultural heritage as the first generation did or not?

For an answer to the previously mentioned questions, multiple hypotheses may arise. The answers may say that achieving the American dream is related to many other factors, such

General Introduction

as individual beliefs, social class, bank account numbers, and from which background you came. We hypothesize that Arab immigrants survived post9/11 because of the collective support feelings from the diasporic community. We thought that the novel provided some possibilities and stopped by narrating the main hit-and-run accident and how it negatively affected people's lives. Finally, the second generation of Arab immigrants may or may not save their cultural legacy, because it depends on the family structure and beliefs with its social network.

The novel was the most significant work used as a primary source in this research. The 1995 book by Jennifer L. Hochschild, *Facing Up to the American Dream*, depicts some ideals such as rights, equality, and representative democracy, in which freedom mirrored an individual's success, other works include two articles, one from the British Daily online newspaper *The Guardian* under the title *The Other Americans* by Laila Lalami review—the political is Personal by Aminatta Forna, as well as another source from *The New York Times*, *A Suspicious Death Exposes Painful Fissures in a Mojave Desert Town* by Madeleine Thien. Also, another review is forthcoming in the academic international journal *The African and Black Diaspora*, entitled *Othring and Disillusionment in Lalami's The Other Americans 2021*. Finally, Bill Ashcraft's book "Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts", helps to define all the key concepts of postcolonialism.

This study examines "*The Other Americans*" through descriptive and analytical methods, using a historical and postcolonial approach to provide critical and academic research that explores the American dream. This research will question the truthfulness of the American dream for North African Arab immigrants. The data will be collected mainly from primary sources, such as the novel and interviews. Also, it will be obtained from other secondary sources, like history books, journal articles, and websites. Choosing this kind of source is due to the historical context of the topic and Lalami's work as a postcolonial novel.

General Introduction

This dissertation will be structured into three distinct chapters. Primarily, the first chapter will encompass a comprehensive exploration of the historical and theoretical foundations of both the American dream and the field of postcolonialism. It attempts to define the main key concepts of this later and illustrate its relationship with Arab American literature. Moreover, this chapter will exemplify the theoretical and historical underpinnings of the American Dream. Along with this, the second chapter will engage in a comprehensive literary analysis of Laila Lalami's novel "*The Other Americans*," specifically centered on its status as a work within the postcolonial framework. This chapter will extensively explore the nuances of the novel, delving into its textual intricacies to elucidate the manifestations of postcolonial themes and elements within its narrative structure. This analysis will encompass pivotal narrative occurrences and their portrayal of the nuanced interpretations of the American dream among diverse characters. Also, this investigation will span from the characters' individualized perceptions of the American dream to their encounters with diasporic realities and the illusory constructs held by indigenous inhabitants. Finally, the third chapter will provide a comprehensive explanation and exemplification of the central concepts introduced in the initial chapter, such as diaspora and exile, othering, cultural hybridity, and the American dream. These fundamental notions will be illuminated and expounded upon within the context of the novel's analysis, employing postcolonial theory to facilitate a precise and comprehensive understanding.

**Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The
American Dream in Arab American
Writings**

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

Introduction:

In recent years, there has been a wild interest from scholars, students, and academics in the field of postcolonial literary theory, both from decolonized and Western countries. The field of literature and arts is increasingly important in many different aspects of life, all over the globe it gives a voice to the voiceless minorities. In the post-colonial era, intellectuals of the decolonized countries resisted all means of colonization through their writings to protect their cultural, historical, and religious heritage. Over these tensions, inside and outside 'home' along with the nostalgia of the dream that delivers the letter of freedom to our now-day generations, the world has seen the birth of post-colonial theorists, authors, scholars, and researchers. One of the vast factors that led people to immigrate from their decolonized countries was the search for better life conditions, and apparently, that's the product of the American Dream in the U.S. Colonization had a huge impact on Arab African people by forcing them to dislocate, separate and move to someone else's country, not only that but they had no choice only to accept the reality of joining and living in a different culture with strange traditions and language. This chapter attempts to illustrate the background information about Arab African writers in the diaspora, before and after the period of immigration to the U.S., as well as discussing certain common themes that they agreed to write about, starting from general scope and reaching the essential key concepts of this dissertation. Moreover, it presents the chronological order of different connected topics from postcolonial theory to the contribution of its scholars and theorists. In addition to that, light will be shed on the concept of the American dream for immigrants, pre and post-the 9/11 attacks.

1. Arab American Writings: Definition and Prospects

Arab American writers play a crucial role in shaping today's world of literature, showing the power of the word and erasing the stereotype's negative image from people's minds around the globe. The journey of Arab American literature started before the 1800s

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

when people began to voyage to North America from the Ottoman Empire from what is now present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine. The first people who arrived were not immigrants but travelers who settled in colonies such as Boston and New York. Arab American writers' extending mark on the current literary landscape is an unquestioned experience of their crucial role in building the rich and diversified world of literature that presently exists. Their literary contributions serve as powerful proof of history-making, by language and narrative, challenging popular misconceptions and refuting the negative and frequently false images that have been implanted in the minds of people all across the world about Arabs and Muslims. Arab American writers construct tales that shatter prejudices and cultivate a greater awareness of their rich cultural history

Chronologically ordered, historians divide the era of Arab American literature into three main parts: pre-9/11, which represents 'El Mahjar' literature; post-9/11; and contemporary. In the second and third periods, Arab American literature showed how minority groups of people in the U.S experienced dreadful and tough events because of wars, media propaganda, and political conflicts. Pre-9/11 Arab authors focused on studying the immigrants' issues and cultural identity challenges in a new host society while also trying to bridge the two worlds, East and West, from the prominent Arab American writers before this period, Ameen Rihani, a Lebanese American writer who is considered one of the founders of modern Arab American literature. Naomi Shihab Nye, a Palestinian novelist and poet, tackles identity conflicts and the experience of being an Arab American in her writing.

Edward Said was born in Jerusalem, Palestine on November 1, 1935. A Palestinian-American scholar and activist, a towering intellectual and literary critic of the twentieth century who had a major impact on postcolonial studies, literary theory, and cultural criticism. was known for his famous book *Orientalism* 1978; this work was considered one of the most influential books of the 20th century. *Orientalism* is a word that refers to 'the Orient when it's

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

discovered, observed, and described. Its discourses are about the West's vision of the East through a social and cultural perspective. He argued for a deeper understanding of East-West interactions, highlighting the need for self-awareness and flexibility in discussions in academia. He served as an important support towards Palestinian rights as an Arab-American, employing his position to raise awareness about the Palestinian struggle and battle

After the 9/11 bloody event, the way of thinking changed on both sides, among Arab American writers and the local intellectual community, especially concerning U.S. government policies toward the Arab world and the Middle East. Laila Lalami is a Moroccan Arab scholar and novelist who was born on February 24, 1968, in Rabat, Morocco. She earned her Licence de lettres degree in Morocco and finished her studies overseas in the United Kingdom (UK), where she received a master's degree in linguistics. Now occupies a teaching position at the University of California as a professor of creative writing. She has written several books, including "Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits" (2005), "The Moor's Account" (2014), and *The Other Americans* (2019).

Finally, contemporary literature is a step-by-step continuation of the enthusiastic resistance after the 9/11 event; it supports publishing and sharing the word of truth. In this case, Laila Halabi's literary novel "Once in the Promised Land" (2007) depicts how Arab minorities became subjects in the aftermath of the crushing attacks. Not only that but there are many other contemporary literature authors like Susan Abulhawa, born on June 3, 1970, a Palestinian-American writer who wrote several books, the most famous of which is *Mornings in Jenin* (2010). In conclusion, Arab American writers witnessed radical changes through the history of immigration and local events in the U.S. They were ordered under three main groups of writers, the pre-9/11 intellectuals, and they were not seeking a settlement. The second wave of authors are the ones who lived through the post-9/11 struggle to survive and refight the stereotypical image of Arabs. And the contemporary era of literary work is still shining in the

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

sky of Arab American literature thanks to the creativity of different generations from the Arab world.

1.1. Arab American Literature's Recurrent Themes

Over time, Arab American literature developed rapidly due to the country's social and political changes; indeed, minorities and ethnic groups struggled to describe their daily life circumstances and problems in their writings.

In the beginning, Arab ethnic groups did not assimilate into the new host societies, but they did respect the local cultures, even though they couldn't hide their Arabic origins. The flourishing of Arab American literature increased the number of published texts in English that were also translated into other languages. Arab American writers were mostly from the Eastern Arab world. What motivated the writers at that time were the European colonialist ideologies and the orientalist paradigms about people in the Arab world, like those in the diaspora. In this regard, the main direct and indirect role of U.S. conflicts and wars in the Middle East has a specific impact on Arab immigration, pushing millions of Muslims from their land with different forms of displacement, exile, and oppression. Additionally, recent studies found that the Arab American novel is a modern and contemporary genus in the current age of literature, and researchers who are interested in Arab American writings demonstrated how authors played a luminous role in giving birth to and developing the modern novel.

Whereas, for writers like Mohja Kahf, Ali Behdad, Rabih Alameddine, Joseph Geha, Laila Lalami, and others, Islam was and is a primary theme; in fact, other novels consider themes like identity problems, anti-Arab racism, immigration, the situation of refugees, marginalization, and exile. Besides, Arab-American novelists tried in some of their writings to approximate and reconcile the two cultures, the East and the West, the displacement of Palestinians, wars, and poverty in the eastern Arab world, and oppression, stereotyping, and social injustice in the host countries.

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

Sometimes, we find through history that one of the Arab American writers linked politics and literature to combine and create, a genre that gives the reader a sense of resistance and motivation to think and ask questions, namely, Edward Said and his famous books (*Orientalism*, *Covering Islam*, *The Question of Palestine*). Said masterminded a brand-new contemporary literary skeptical criticism. Next to Saidian political and cultural sense of writing, the diverse backgrounds of Arab American writers played an exceptional role in building their identities, which were reflected in their works, for example, through religion, social circumstances, language, culture, and imperialist effects. In Mona Simpson's *The Lost Father* (1993), a novel by an Arab American author where she discusses the social problems of family and belonging, in the novel a young girl named Mayan, born in the U.S. She starts looking for her roots—her father, who dropped her mother in her childhood. In this story, all the Mayan wants is to legalize her situation. *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* (2006) is a novel by Mohja Kahf, a story that discusses the perplexity of the culture inside Arab Americans, especially secular society, with a protagonist named Khadra Shamy, who missed her childhood and remembers the memories of bad treatments with the local racists against Arabs after the 9/11 attack. Laila Lalami, in her post-9/11 novel *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2005), covered themes like illegal immigration (*el Haraga*) by Arab young people sailing across the Mediterranean Sea in small handmade boats or search and dreaming about heavens they think they are on the other side of the sea in Europe. In his writings, the author stands with his people, defending their position while risking their lives for a decent life away from home. Also, the writer illustrates to her Western followers that Arab immigrants are not terrorists or colonizers; they are only victims of their homeland's political problems and social injustice, only dream pursuers. Lastly, the representation of Arab American writers highlighted different important themes that mirrored their real-life experiences inside and outside their homes. Major novels and short stories treated the case of religion and the problems of identity, culture,

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

displacement, exile, and diaspora. All of this simplified the view for Western readers about Arab-Americans in general and the writers in specific, plus gave an opportunity and debatable topics to scholars and researchers who are interested in Arab-American writing.

2. The Concept of the American Dream for Immigrants, Pre/Post 9/11

"I ran for president because I believed the American Dream was at risk for millions of our fellow citizens." President Bill Clinton, 1995. Throughout history, researchers have believed that the ideology of the American Dream spread out to the world decades ago, and its foundations can be found in the Declaration of Independence (1776). The principle of this declaration carries the idea "that all men are created equal," and the term itself was stamped in the famous best-selling book *The Epic of America*, written by James Truslow Adams, in 1931.

This actual concept has been used several times to the point of being overused. The motivation for the American dream is that everyone willing to work hard can achieve his or her dreams of success and have better life conditions than their families. And that is what made America the land of opportunity for millions of immigrants, no matter their class, position, race, or place of birth. However, as a consequence of social shifts, economic upheavals, as well as cultural growth, the meaning of the American Dream has changed and diversified over time. While traditional interpretations of the American Dream focus on financial stability and social mobility, modern standards of wellness often include elements such as having access to high-quality schooling, healthcare, social justice, and environmental sustainability. On the other hand, some researchers define the American dream from their perspectives, and many of them believe that some of its themes are common in definition, such as living in a beautiful house with a backyard in which life should be happier and richer in materials and having a chance to achieve what they are capable of in a well-organized and respectful social order. Adding to this, what supported the waves of immigration toward the U.S. was the role of media productivity, which boosted a vast propaganda campaign that everyone from elsewhere could

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

pursue his hopes and dreams inside the country. This may seem illogical, but it succeeded in inspiring individuals and groups of people who are willing to take the risk and move to the new land, especially from Cuba, China, and the undocumented daily migrants of Mexico and the Middle East.

The September 11, 2001, attacks, or what's known as 9/11, are a series of attacks carried out by a group of terrorists that bombed the World Trade Center in New York City. This horrible event has been used as background and a theme in narratives, films, music, and literature. It also had an impact on the history of immigration to the U.S., and it widened the boundaries between the West and the East. Complexities appeared in the local social, ethnic, and racial groups, especially among Arabs. The U.S. government launched policies to reserve security and restrict immigration, which in turn reduced the number of dreamers living the American Dream. The 9/11 attacks helped to increase the dramatic hate crimes against Arab and Muslim minorities and the discrimination behaviors against immigrants.

The dream is too old; it was more than a century ago when the Declaration of Independence of the U.S. was released to the public in 1776. Therefore, people started seeking opportunities to pursue their happiness and financial liberties. Media and literature promoted this American Dream globally, so people from different backgrounds were ready to run after it and immigrate to the dreamland, but it wasn't like they imagined it. After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. government restricted the movement of immigrants from Eastern Arab countries and Islamic nations out of fear of terrorism, and because of the bad stereotype, people suffered from hate crimes and racism within the U.S. society.

3. Postcolonialism: Diaspora & Immigration

The word diaspora, which means "to scatter", is about the movement of people, forcibly or voluntarily, from their home region to another foreign region. Besides, immigration is the other great companion and definition of the diasporic communities.

3.1. Diaspora and Exile

One reason that inspired researchers to classify ‘Diaspora’ into more than three phases is the deep roots of this worldwide scattering phenomenon, from its religious and cultural background to its economic and political aspects. Historically speaking, it refers to the ‘homeland’ concept, and chronologically we have three popular cases: the Jewish Diaspora, Black/African Diaspora, and Palestinian Diaspora, which can be categorized as a ‘Victim Diaspora. Its first appearance and connection to the diaspora was in a 1965 United Nations report. From its features, William Safran explains that to be recognized as a diasporic member of a community, you have to have been dispersed from your homeland to two or more regions; this community should have a collective memory and heritage about their home; they believe that they will forever be scandalous in the host place.

For instance, the Palestinian diaspora is not the same as other diasporas (Indians, Africans, Jews). When Palestinians were forcibly expelled from their homeland in 1948 by the Zionist invaders, many of the Palestinians who did not choose Western countries but emigrated to the ‘Arab Union countries did not feel like strangers in terms of identity, religion, or even language. They even did not sacrifice their culture in their diaspora. Indeed, this situation of the Palestinians' consciousness and awareness of the future challenges for saving their memory and cultural heritage is burned in recent generation's minds. The meaning of exile is the situation where you are forced to be displaced from your country; a political act against people is “punishment. It’s not similar to the context of being a member of a diaspora, yet the two concepts are usually used in correlation. Exile means staying in a place where you feel insensitive. Although, in Said’s way of thinking, he insisted that there’s some differentiation among the exiles. As we mentioned, some of them were forcibly displaced, as in the case of Palestinians, but other exiles chose to leave for fear of political persecution,

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

economic reasons, or self-implemented exile for academic, intellectual, or artistic career reasons.

In his memoir *Out of Place* (1999), the famous Palestinian scholar Edward Said showed how difficult his childhood was with the experience of being moved three times over the course of his life. Said was born in Jerusalem in 1935, but he did not spend much time in Palestine. After his father decided to move to Egypt because of his business, he finished his primary school in Cairo in 1951, and when he turned sixteen, he went to Mount Hermon School in Massachusetts and graduated from Harvard School. In addition to this journey, Said describes his third journey of displacement, where the family decides to spend every summer in Lebanon. On top of this, Said, at the end of his journey, decided to stay and live the life that he didn't expect—a successful career as a professor at Columbia University. Deep down, he stayed in conflict by not accepting the idea that he was an American citizen but a temporary resident.

3.2. Othering

The term 'Other' means everyone separate from oneself. It can refer to the colonized subjects that are characterized as other. Some notably existential philosophers, such as Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (1975), define the term as the relationship between the self and others in the context of concessions and identity. In postcolonial theory, the concept of the 'Other' is usually linked to the Indian scholar Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. In Spivak's article, *The Rani of Sirmur* (1984), she opens new doors to the argumentative stage of othering, which defines the hegemonic position as that of a colonizer who occupies the colonized, marginalized others. Her understandings were based on reports and actions between the British rulers, who were classified as colonial masters, and the natives," whom she introduced as specimens," while the British masters held a position of superiority. In her articles, Spivak

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

uses examples from the real official correspondence from the British colonial era of the East Indian Company around the beginning of the 19th century.

An example from Spivak refers to a letter from General Sir David Ochterlony to the Governor's secretary. She defines him as a gentleman who hates people who live in hills; in his words, the local sovereign 'Kings' (native) have no right to landed property but are obliged to yield the land to the property of the British crown. Spivak illustrates the change in position of the subject from a native to another object of imperialism. Similarly, relationships in the context of othering appeared in Edward Said's writings, where there is a connection between knowledge and power, especially in political relations and social discourses about minorities such as migrants. After 9/11, "Muslims" were directly accused through a stereotypical judgment from the Western countries, demonstrating the power of language practices and discourses. To analyze a certain othering context, Ahmet T, of Turkish origin, once reported "I was a German adult education trainer with a discursive practice. In the 1980s, he was invited to a panel discussion to speak about the Turks. In 1990, he was invited again to talk about migrants. Politicians, educators, and teachers—everyone wanted to learn more about their 'culture, the way immigrants think, their family structure, and more.'" [1]

Ahmet's report reflects the "epistemic power" of discursive practices, which produce subjects through discrimination and attribution. Western society distinguishes between the inside and outside of the social system. From the perspective of Edward Said and his book *Orientalism*, it is impossible to attain discursive stability and power without building social subjection, cultural antitheses, and knowledge dualities. So, Othering is about the position where the strongest part puts himself as superior to the other when people are minoritized and subjected in a host society othering sometimes does not require violence or actions, but norms and normalities.

3.4. Cultural Hybridity

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

“The creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization” (Bill Ashcroft et al. 108). One of the most widespread definitions of hybridity in postcolonial discourse is produced by two scholars, Homi K. Bhabha and Mikhail Bakhtin. The contact zone that was created between the colonizer and the colonized, the cultural, linguistic, religious, and racial hybridization, is the final product of hybridity.

Homi K. Bhabha, the famous thinker who coined a large vocabulary for analyzing postcolonial texts, was born in Mumbai, India, in a small village. Received his B.A. from the University of Bombay and his Ph.D. in English literature from Christ Church, Oxford University. Homi’s notable works include *Nation and Narration* (1990), and *The Location of Culture* (1994), and most of his theories are highlighted in his 1994 book, *The Location of Culture*. The creation of a hybrid cultural identity within the contact zone led to a linguistic change that pushed the cross-cultural ‘exchange’ within a colonized country. This term was criticized because it neglected the imbalance and inequality of powers between the two parties. In Bhabha’s philosophy, it is illustrated that all the cultural statements and systems are constructed in a space called the ‘Third Space of Enunciation, that the cultural identity most of the time emerges from a contradictory and ambivalent space, and that it is a space of hybridity itself. World and societies Nowadays are widely affected by globalization, which has touched almost all aspects of life, politically, economically, and especially culturally, as Bill Ashcroft defines it, “The process whereby individual lives and local communities are affected by economic and cultural forces that operate world-wide” (et al. 100).

People in the Diaspora are not the only group who suffered from this cultural issue, but the colonized societies did face a problem within the ‘contact zone’ and the transcultural pedagogy that was forced by the colonizer. The term ‘contact zone’ was first used by Pratt, who described the social spaces when “disparate cultures meet, clash and grapple with each

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of dominance and subordination-like colonialism, slavery, or their aftermaths as they are lived out across the globe today” (Pratt 1992: 4).

Moreover, when a scholar wants to describe and highlight the ambivalent relationship in the contact zone between the colonized and the colonizer, he needs to mention the term ‘mimicry’, which refers to the colonial discourse when the colonized subject imitates the habits, traditions, culture, values, and assumptions of the colonizer, the findings won’t ever be the same, and indeed, it’s the interpretation of the colonial dominant in a society. To conclude, hybridity has been widely used in the postcolonial context to bear the burden and definition of culture, which means cultural exchange in the third space “in-between”. According to Bhabha, in the liminal "third space," new cultural identities and meanings are generated via the contact zone and exchanges between diverse cultures. He underlined the significance of acknowledging and accepting the complexity and fluidity of identities that develop as a result of cultural hybridity.

In-between concept investigates the spaces or gaps that exist among well-defined entities such as cultures, genders, identities, and beliefs. These areas are viewed as places of complexity, negotiation, and potential transformation. It examines the blending, mixing, or hybridization of various aspects, whether cultural, social, linguistic, or other. Hybridity is regarded as a constructive and creative force that is capable of breaking down strict boundaries and creating novel structures, identities, and perceptions. It also frequently explores issues of identity, particularly for those who are on the periphery of society. It investigates how these people negotiate and establish their identities in the context of multiple social, cultural, and political paradigms.

4. Arab Diaspora & North African Immigrants in the U.S

The Arab diaspora is a worldwide dispersion of people of Arab heritage, encompassing a complex network of cultural, linguistic, and historical chains that extend beyond the

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

conventional boundaries of the Arab world. Historically rooted in the expansion of the Arab Empire, The Arab diaspora has experienced waves of migration motivated by a multifaceted factor during the seventh century and subsequent socio-political and economic developments.

“Take me as a relic from the mansion of sorrow. Take me as a verse from my tragedy; Take me as a toy, a brick from the house So that our children will remember to return.” (Said 179) Mahmoud Darwish, a Palestinian author and poet, addressed in his poem the meaning of being exiled and the feeling of not feeling like a normal person who’s living under suspicious conditions for someone who’s left his country of origin for the house of exile. In Darwish’s words, he seems like he is still holding out hope that one day a new generation will remember to return home. Yet, the feeling of unbelonging and tragedy will remain as a result of the dislocation of millions of Palestinians.

Thus, the Arab Diaspora is not only made up of Palestinians; it also covers all Arabs who live constantly in other countries rather than their homeland, and regardless of the reasons that push people to leave, they retain the idealized image of their homeland as a paradise. In Arabic literature, Diaspora is widely used in Arabic writings by authors like Tayeb Salih, Haifa Zangana, and Hannan Al-Shaukh, even though it’s in Arabic but differs from the literature written in the Arab world. Some other writers use the host country’s language in English and French: Ahdaf Soueif, Jamal Mahjoub, and Malika Mokadem. Therefore, it can rightly be called “hybrid literature,” which holds the author’s origins and his host country; this is the third space in which two cultures meet, intersect, and meet. Arab writers and artists who were living in exile created a new platform of diasporic creativity on the Western side and became a true assembly for modernist writers throughout the world.

A growing and diverse segment of the American immigrant population is made up of North African immigrants in the U.S. Typically, the term 'North African' means people from countries in the northern region of the African continent, such as Algeria, Egypt, Libya,

Chapter One: Postcolonialism and The American Dream in Arab American Writings

Morocco, Sudan, and Tunisia. For African immigrants in the U.S, studies show that before the 1990s, northern Africa was the continent's main source of immigrants, with about 1/3 of African immigrants in the U.S. Most of the immigrants at a state level tend to favor California, and 60% are to be found in New York, New Jersey, Florida, and Virginia. African immigrants are regarded as the most exceptional ethnic educational group; around 65% of African immigrants have completed more than one year of university studies, except for Asian Americans. Over the years, there has been a rise in North African immigrants in the U.S., and their experiences are a mix of cultural heritage, migration trends, economic pursuits, and sociopolitical dynamics. In the past, North African immigration to the U.S. was relatively small, with significant waves taking place in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. North Africans have been seeking opportunities in the U.S more frequently in recent decades. Acculturation, language barriers, and navigating the U.S. immigration system are all challenges faced by North African immigrants. Furthermore, there may be instances of discrimination or bias because of cultural differences, religious beliefs, or perceptions related to geopolitics. Migration patterns were influenced by the Arab Spring, which began in 2010, people were seeking refuge from political problems to find a place in a haven in the U.S. The attraction is based on factors such as educational prospects, employment opportunities, family meetings, and political steadiness.

Roughly, North African immigrants make up 32% of all MENA immigrants. Egypt first, with 206,000 immigrants in the U.S., then Morocco, with 77,000 immigrants, (The most recent study was in 2019), as a first generation. According to recent research, around 50% of Moroccan immigrants came to the U.S in or after the 2000s. A significant number of these immigrants have applied for American citizenship. Additionally, 11% of the Moroccan population in the U.S. possesses either a master's degree or a Ph.D. or works in an advanced profession.

Conclusion

Postcolonialism with its unique theories helped us to understand what's beyond the American Dream. Thus, the Immigration of people from decolonized and colonized nations produced for us, a generation of Arab American scholars and writers' riches of the current knowledge and literature of honor. On the other hand, the first chapter was mainly seen from a theoretical lens it outlined and covered many important key points from this research, including Postcolonialism, Diaspora, Arab American writings, and the concept of the American dream. These themes serve as a reference to understand and analyze the novel *The Other Americans* with its diasporic Arab immigrants as part of the exiled community.

To discover the American dream through the eyes of Arab American writers we had to define the period of this movement, which started Pre-9/11 and focused on studying the immigrants' issues and their cultural identity, then the post-9/11 period when everything changed from both sides, lastly, the contemporary literature as a continuation of resistance after the bloody event. This chapter deals with various theories and themes that serve as the foundation of the mentioned elements, while it highlights the definitions, similarities, and differences related to the dissertation. These tackled elements exemplify how life would be in the diaspora, especially for the North African Arab immigrants.

**Chapter Two: North African; Diaspora
in Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans* (2019)**

Introduction

Not only from North Africa but people from all over the world immigrants are chasing the American dream in the U.S. of America for better social lives, luxury houses, green spaces in their backyards, and motor homes so they can comfortably travel and move to their work offices. Laila Lalami is herself an immigrant in the U.S. Most of her work's themes are related to the displacement of borders and immigration and the problem of belonging; sometimes she discusses race and identity as well as citizenship and the feeling of nationalism in the U.S. What pushed her to write her fourth long novel, *The Other American* (2019), was when her father got sick and entered intensive care in the hospital. So she was obliged to go back to Morocco to visit her father, this life event motivated her to write this masterpiece of fiction.

The narrative unfolds through the perspectives of nine distinct characters, each providing their unique account of the accident and the death of Driss Guerraoui. By embodying diverse voices, these narratives serve to encapsulate individual experiences, beliefs, truths, contradictions, and the challenges prevalent within a complex societal framework. The tragedy occurred as a result of a hit-and-run incident within a quaint village situated in the Mojave Desert of California, U.S, ultimately leading to the untimely demise of Driss. This chapter emphasizes how Lila Lalami portrays the Illusioned experience of a Moroccan family through her polyphonic narration, throughout this chapter, it could be understood that every single character in the story suffered during their residence in the U.S., being inferior to the white dominant citizens in the American society, and lastly illusioned by the American dream.

1. The Apprehension of The American Dream in the Novel's Main Character

The American Dream has been woven into the fabric of American society, promising equal opportunities and mobility for all who dare to dream. However, as time has progressed, the dream has taken on a more complex and nuanced form.

1.1. Driss Guerraoui & His Widow

Driss and his wife lived in Casablanca. Maryam dropped out of college, while Driss graduated with a degree in philosophy. Salma, their first child, was born in Morocco. His wife worked as a receptionist in a doctor's office in Casablanca, while he came from a family of bakers.

On a sunny Saturday in 1981, Driss paid a visit to his friend Ibrahim at a little cafe in downtown Casablanca. Driss and his colleague had their normal conversation that morning about the Saharan conflict, the price of flour how grocery prices are rising day by day, and how the Moroccan labor union is calling for an all-out strike. Along with his meeting, because of the nervous situation on the streets, he noticed that he was late for lunch and that his wife would be worried. Driss realized that he should go back home, so he went down from the building, walking across the bloody cops in the streets. Finally, he went back home to Maryam, finding her worried and scared about the news. She thought that he had been arrested by the police. Maryam asked him if you were followed by the security, scared of the investigative process after the arrest of Ibrahim, the friend of Driss. His wife has a brother living in Culver City and suggested that he offer and sponsor a visa for them to immigrate to the U.S. Maryam and her husband faced job challenges in Los Angeles due to their limited English skills. They moved from Casablanca to the Mojave Desert, selling their properties and borrowing from family. Driss bought a donut shop in Mojave, and Maryam and her husband named the business Aladdin Donuts.

Even so, during the first years in America, Maryam and her husband slept on an air mattress with their daughter Salma, they survived to pay back the money they borrowed, paying for the building and livable situation there. After days and days, they sponsored their shop locally, senior centers, local schools, police stations, and local constructions. The shop

finally spread and got clients. After a while, their second daughter Nora was born and they raised her with her sisters Selma, and Maryam as all mothers wanted to have a successful child and a happy family. Maryam was surprised by the social lifestyle in the U.S, including gun shops, religious discussions, and different milk types. She was also shocked by TV shows discussing issues like marriage, plastic surgeries, and gambling. Maryam watched the show to improve her English, even though she was surprised and had pronunciation problems.

In mid-December the family had their first Eid in the U.S, Maryam forced her husband to go to the mosque with her, because of his religious state, he didn't feel comfortable going, but his wife asked him to take the girls with him if he wants to. Selma was back home from college for the winter holiday so her father Driss didn't want to make it hard for his family, so he went. Living in America for Maryam was akin to growing up without a father, and the most challenging aspect of it was the sense of distance she felt from her family and her brother, when she was walking around in the store, she saw a rose in the hand of a woman. During this moment, memories came to her mind, including a flashback of her sisters playing and trying some hairstyles with different lipstick colors and looking at their reflections in the dresser mirror. Unconsciously, Maryam followed the woman to have a conversation with her; she wanted to ask for her name if she lived nearby if she had children, and if she tried to bake a cake! Unfortunately, all these questions did not come to reality because of her bad English. This experience made her cry while her daughter Salma watched her. She also lost her coupons while trying to talk to the lady; she dropped them somewhere in the market. Driss turned angry because now he has to pay more for the groceries. They were so careful with money that they could manage to live in the U.S., pay taxes, and run their investing project, Donut Shop. While backing home, the couple started arguing about everything. Her husband started to think about how to learn to forgive each other for the mistakes they had made.

Maryam, an active woman, spent over six months taking care of her baby Nora, all days waiting for her husband to return home. She always hoped for a happy life but couldn't understand her daughter's constant crying. She gave up her job to raise her daughters, who were her life's light. Maybe because of their age or personality differences, Nora and Salma didn't have much in common, just like other sisters. Nora grew up, left playing with dolls, and started to love to listen to music alone in her room. Salma loved to socialize with her friends on the volleyball team and moved to play Clue and Monopoly. The difference between the two sisters was so obvious: Nora has dark skin like her mother, and Salma has light skin, the same as Driss. By days and days, Maryam spent most of her time alone, waiting for her husband to come back from work, Salam at her practice, and the other with her music.

One night when Maryam was home waiting, her husband did not answer the phone. Usually, he stays home in his lounge chair doing puzzles and crosswords to improve his English and find answers to his questions. But he did not show up; later that night, the police came.

1.2. Nora

She is the youngest daughter of Driss; she is an American citizen who was born in the U.S. and comes from an immigrant family. She looks like her origins: black hair, brown skin, and beautiful Arabic eyes. She used to love listening to music and staying a bit alone away from her parents, arguing about the problems of daily life. And she always heard the idiom echo in her life, "Your head in the clouds." (Lalami 15) Especially after deciding not to study in medical school, it became an accusation to her.

Nora remembers when she was nine or ten, at Yucca Mesa Elementary. In her first year in school, her teacher did not know how to pronounce her full name, Nora Zhor Guerraoui, and she called her only Zhor. Her classmates turned silent because of their curiosity about the

word. The teacher herself noticed how strange the name was, so she asked her, "What an unusual name!" "Where are you from?" (15). Outside the class, pupils were in groups, each with their friend: military kids, hippie kids, and church kids. Nora did not know any of them, and that made her sad. She remembers when she was eating her lunch in the cafeteria, a pretty blonde girl named Brittany asked Nora, "What are you eating?" (15). She thought that finally, she had someone to talk to, but unfortunately, that one did not respect her because she was eating "eggplant," the *Zaalouk* that her mother prepared for her, because of how her food looked.

By the next few days, she was obliged to go to school even though she was not comfortable. Nora learned her alphabet, the pledge of allegiance, and how to stay away from bullies in the class. She became quiet and did not participate in the lessons, so her teacher called her mother to tell her that her girl had severe mutism, social anxiety, and oppositional behavior. Maryam argued with her husband about their little daughter's condition, but he did not believe the teacher because he knew that his daughter was fine. Nora liked the situation when she was forced to repeat the year to avoid the bullies, especially when she memorized her colors and alphabet. Then she met someone quiet like Sonya Mukherjee, who did not fit in with the others, and finally, Nora had a friend.

By the time Nora entered middle school, she found a music group in middle school, focusing on music and colors after her father enrolled her in piano classes. Kids in middle school did not ask her, "What are you?" but, "What do you play?" (Lalami 17). She was not forced to talk, but only to play, and it helped her to join a music band in school.

At the festival in Palm Springs, the band performed, and she was excited to perform, but nervous, she heeded her teacher's advice. She remembers feeling happy that night, yet the feeling of being different never fades away, whether it is when she is asked what church she

went to, when her mother speaks to her in school, or when the history teacher asks her randomly about the Middle East. At home, it didn't help that her parents were not acquiring further and there was constant bickering. In these conditions, Nora usually locks herself in her room, listening to music or dreaming about growing up, going to university, and running away from the desert. That Saturday morning, Nora decided to go with her father to work with him. She remembered the moment when she changed the station from the news to another one that played classical music. Leaning back in her seat, she smelled smoke while her father turned to the 62, a big gray plume raised in the distance.

As they got closer, they found that the shop was burning. Someone called 911, and after a while, the firefighter came and helped. The smell of gasoline, melting plastic, and ash came to Nora's door. The officer said that it was "homemade,"(34) and the cause of the fire was a brick wrapped in a cloth that flowed into the accelerant. Her father said yes and moved his head in disbelief sign. Nora also didn't believe that her family moved thousands of miles for safety, but it was not safe at all. When Nora and her father returned home, they found Maryam where they had left her in the morning, sitting watching CNN, where scenes of the Twin Towers burning in New York were still playing in a never-ending loop. "What happened?" (34) She asked them. The father told her the story, and Nora walked to her room with the smell of soy in her. Her parents started arguing as usual, and Maryam told Driss "We should go back, home to Casa" (34), Her husband did not accept the idea, and her mother insisted that things changed in Morocco, for Driss Mojave had already grown on him; he could not imagine living in a big city like Casablanca again. And he was thinking about his daughter Nora, who is still in school, and he disagreed with his wife.

They were still arguing for days and hours with no change. The more they argued, Maryam turned to the Quran. She found peace, and it calmed her, especially after the attacks at the dinner table, where she quoted some verses from it with her perfect Arabic enunciation.

Chapter Two: North African; Diaspora in Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans* (2019)

For Nora, it was a never-ending Cold War inside that house. Every morning, the mother takes her husband's beer from the fridge, pours it down in the sink, and throws the bottle in the trash. However, he would not say anything to her except complain that he was not free in his own home. Maryam says that she did not feel safe in it. The problems disappeared slowly after the insurance settlement came in. Her father bought another old diner called the Pantry, saying, nothing is more American than that. "Everything will be fine," (35). He promised his wife, and for Nora, this is how the Cold War ended. She thought of college as a safe place to run to, and she felt desperate to leave.

In her years of college, on April 28th, Nora was with her roommate Margo drinking champagne and celebrating because her friend received a grant from the Jerome Foundation to work on her new chamber piece. They ordered steamed mussels, and while the waiter was convincing them to get the chocolate mousse for the dessert, Nora's phone rang. A sheriff informed her, that her father was killed on the road in a hit-and-run accident, she packed her bag and drove to her parents' house in the Mojave. Entering the family house, shocked by the sad atmosphere inside, and how her mother did not hear her call, all she could do was comfort and hug her mother.

The next morning, while she was taking a shower, Nora did not believe how her family could keep living without her father. When she entered the kitchen for a morning coffee, she found her sister Salma and her mother preparing breakfast for them. After a second, she said, "I have been thinking about something." They found it in the gutter of Chemehuevi's way, and that means whoever hit him did it consciously, and he side-tracked for it! Her sister Salma answered, and because of that, they thought he was a drunk driver. Nora did not believe it was an accident because she knew it was meant to be this hit-and-run. She talked about her mother for any signs or details about some people who can do it. Maybe because of the restaurant he

owned or the kind of business he had, especially since they had some neighbors who had Keinney's tire shop, Linden's beauty salon, and the bowling alley next door to Mr. Baker.

Her mother entered when Driss bought a new huge lighting system for the pantry so it became clearer for the customers and helped them choose the right parking space, she also talked about the clipped space and how that man always tried to make trouble because our customers took up all the parking spots and he has no space for his own business. Tourists who are coming from Joshua Tree do not pay attention; they only park whenever they find it free, and that is what makes Mr. Baker angry all the time. Now Nora remembers Baker's son A.J., a young brunette who studied with her in high school, a popular kid and a vicious bully. She remembered how she wrote raghead on her locker at that time and how everyone called him Nasty Kid.

Nora did not know about the family problems with their neighbor because she left home at eighteen and did not need to hear about her family business. Usually, her father asks about her studies, health, and financial situation out there.

1.3. Efraín

Efrain is an undocumented Mexican immigrant who is living in California's Mojave Desert. Married to Marisela, she is a mother of two children and works for a senior-care center. Her daughter Elena is eight years old and Daniel is six years old, and both are American citizens. In the morning, Efrain works for carpet cleaning services, and in the evening, he works for washing linen at the motel.

That night, when Efrain was riding his bike on the 62-street heading home after work, the chain of his bicycle broke, so he was obliged to stop, and he wished that he did not. When he got back home, he couldn't tell his wife about what he had witnessed, so he would not get his family in trouble. After he made his chain, Efrain raised his head carefully because of the

darkness, even though he couldn't see well. Suddenly, he heard a speeding car toward the intersection with the sound of a dull car. While he started looking, the car was already making a turn. An old man was falling on his face and landing in the gutter. The car did not even stop and went as it had only hit a plastic bottle. When Efrain went back home and told his wife about this accident, she said, "You should call the police" (Lalami 9). When she walked to the kitchen, he followed her and told her about the story of Araceli. He asked, did you forget about what happened to her? A neighbor of theirs used to live next to their house! One day she called the police to report her neighbor who was beating his wife. When they came to take her statement, they found out that she didn't have her papers. Unexpectedly, immigration was at her door.

Efrain explained how much he wanted to help the old man, but he was scared, and he could not do anything except look for a building to go to and ask for help. He found a diner with a bright sign, but inside there were no lights, except for the one that flashed closed in two colors, red and blue. His wife did not accept how her husband did not help an old man thrown dead on the road. Even though he did not skip the accident easily, when he went for a shower while closing his eyes and saw the old man on the road, some updated details came to his mind, like the advertisement panel on the electric pole. Efrain was not even sure about the car's color; it could be white or maybe it was silver.

Someday, when he was home from a terrible day of work, he found his wife Marisela waiting and the newspaper of the Hi-Desert Star on the kitchen table. Efrain focused on his plate of torta de carnitas and soda, ignoring that newspaper. That day he was working for an old lady with his friend Enrique in Landers, but they were suffering to find the location. Their client was angry, so she followed them from room to room while they were cleaning. She insisted on them cleaning the old stains from the old carpets again and again, even though they would not come out. While Efrain was eating his food, Marisela pushed the newspaper toward

him. He answers that he does not read English, but the truth is that he can only read some, enough to fill out a job application or search for a house for rent and a car for sale. She answered that it was about the accident.

His wife improved her English skills by assisting her children in library readings on Saturdays. In a moment, she told Efrain that the police were asking for the public's help with the case. The moment she gave him his reading glasses, he did not want to look at or remember the accident. Even when he took a bite from his torta, it did not taste right. Then he asked, "What's this? She answered "They are looking for witnesses". (44) he looked at the picture in the newspaper with the caption "Driss Guerraoui." Efrain was curious about the man's origins, realizing he must be an immigrant like him. After a few seconds, Efrain and his wife discuss the newspaper article requiring someone to see the runaway car, but Efrain claims he did not see it. The wife stood by her word and her opinion, so her husband would give it a try, but Efrain was scared. She told him that you can call anonymously on the hotline.

On a day when his daughter Elena was preparing her outfit to play the role of a fairy in her school, Elena was wearing a wig because her hair was black and glossy and long enough to cover her back. While they were walking toward the school, Efrain wished to have a peaceful good time with his family, and when they took their places inside the cafeteria, he started looking at the program booklet and noticed his name on the cast list, Elena Aceves Mendez. He felt a small thrill because of the appearance of his name, he didn't get used to seeing his surname printed on any piece of paper except for his ID. It was a mixture of feelings for him. Marisela said to him, "We should save the program," (84), so they can remember this event. While Efrain was looking at his son Daniel, he noticed that the name that scared him the most these days was repeated twice on the cast list. Aida Guerraoui Darwish. Zaid Guerraoui Darwish. In a moment, he closed the paper, and nothing seemed normal to him, and the performance started.

The Guerraoui family was also there, waiting for their children to appear. Efrain talked to himself and said that it was only a coincidence because of this small town and that there were only two grade schools. Seeing the family of Guerraoui gave him a mental breakdown; he envied all the audience inside the cafeteria who had not witnessed the accident on the 62. Efrain could not take the program booklet paper, so he avoided the names of the dead men in his life so his wife would not ask him again to do the right thing. The right thing for her husband was to save his family and his name.

After the dead men ruined his chance to watch his daughter's performance, Guerraoui invaded his dreams every night, remembering the accident, scared and breathless. In the early morning, while he was shaving in front of the yellow light in the bathroom, he bumped against him and made Efrain cut himself. Part of him knew that it was all in his head, and another part of him tracked chronologically all the mishaps and breakdowns that he suffered from since the accident. The longer he refused to take a step, the longer the list grew. He was surprised how his memory of the accident did not fade away. New scenes appeared in his mind about the car that struck the men. It was silver with a long hood and a round and red sticker on the side window, and it looked like an advertisement for something. Although he didn't tell his wife about these new updates, he was looking to forget.

That evening, when Efrain was leaving Kasa Market after a tired day and while he was thinking about the game he wanted to watch, Guerraoui stuck his foot out in his way, which turned him down, landing in front of the notice board and seeing his picture with a large number, which he could read without the need for his reading glass. Twenty-five thousand dollars. In a few seconds, he imagined what he could do with that amount of money. All you have to do is call. "I'm not going to call," (143) Efrain said. While he was going to pay, he checked the carton of eggs. It seemed undisturbed, but when he checked it from inside, it was all cracked. In his mind, while he was talking to Guerraoui, he asked "See what you made me

do?", (143) He answered with a smile, "This is nothing." Efrain was confused if he was trying to threaten him or if the egg was nothing. He knew that he needed to go home to his family and was trying to take some rest early for a change. Talking to himself made him see the name of the detective: "Look. This is the detective's name. Write it down" (143). A girl noticed him talking, so she observed him with a crazy eye. He had seen this look before, and he wanted to tell her that he was not ill or crazy, but she did not give him a chance. "Write down the detective's name. You can decide later what you want to do." (144).

He confirmed that the more he tries to forget, the more he comes across reminders. And that is what makes him angry and frustrated. When Efrain got back home, he did not feel anything, did not eat his dinner, skipped his children's pleas to join them in the game, and had an inner conflict about whether to tell his wife about the price or not. Having fear mixed with enough voices swirling around inside his head All he could do was avoid this Guerroui and wait for him to go. His wife did not ask and just wanted to check if he was ready for dinner because she already saved a plate for him. In a room full of television red, blue, and green lights, he couldn't answer her question about who won the game, so he was distracted.

One day the couple decided to go to the detective who holds the case of Guerroui and also the police office after the newspaper announcement. They received a few dozen calls, but they were all useless. After a while, the detective entered the lobby and met Efrain and his wife, Marisela. When she introduced herself, she offered to translate for the detective so she could support her husband in talking. But the detective refused and claimed that they have some people who speak Spanish, and this is what disappointed the couple.

Efrain told Detective Coleman the story just as he remembers it: "I was riding my bicycle on the 62, heading home after work, when the chain fell off my back gear." (9). After finishing his words, he felt free from these memories because of the recording videotape, so

he could put all of this behind him. The detective asked questions inside the conversation when he told Efrain to repeat it: "You didn't try to help him? He wasn't moving! And what color was the car, Silver, I think." (213). The detective asked a few more questions about the model of the car, but Efrain was not sure, he answered it could be a Ford. Signs, the detective asked if he saw anybody inside the car, the answer was no, but someone was wearing a baseball cap. The final question was whether the driver slowed down or not; if he stopped at any moment and when Efrain heard the sound of speeding up, the answer was crucial: the driver sped up before hitting the victim and did not stop. After that, the driver ran off down Chemehuevi.

At the end of this questioning, Efrain came out, where he found his wife waiting for him. They took each other's hands and hurried down the stairs. He was remembering how he spent days and weeks of suffering mixed with guilt and self-punishment. He was also worried that they would call him again for a trial. He was not to talk in front of others, feel the pain again, and imagine that nightmare. Marisela asked "What about the reward?" (214), She answered, "They said they have to check if the information I gave is correct." (214) Her face was disappointed. Maybe she expected he would have the money with him in a huge check, but it may take a few days and maybe a few weeks. They walked past the Morongo Basin courthouse and up to the street where the bus stop was waiting. It was cloudy out there, but the heat was annoying. They sat together waiting and sweating. In a moment, Marisela took her husband's hand and tried to give him some hope. She said that everything was going to work out, and he trusted her.

2. Diasporic Characters Experiencing the American Dream: A Multifaceted Exploration

Throughout the immigration journey, people of the diaspora experienced many struggles and difficulties to reach a certain level of social stability. This latter includes the American dream which depends on each character's experiences.

2.1. Salma & Tareq

Before being part of the Diaspora, Salma was born in Morocco and she was excited for school, talking about it for days and weeks. Before they took the plane, her parents told her that school would be on the other side of the world. They arrive, and her uncle is waiting at the gate. He holds her up and kisses her happily while he smells like cigarettes.

Salma and her parents went to her uncle's family to meet his wife and children. They usually play outside, but she didn't understand a word of what they were saying. All she could do was mimic the way they talk, walk, and laugh. After a season on a spring day, they move to a small town in the Mojave, yet she is still asking about school. Salma still speaks Arabic and understands her mother tongue easily, with no difficulties. But no more dreams in Arabic. In the summer, when she turned twenty years old, her parents decided to visit Morocco and go to see her father's family. She did not know her grandmother or recognize her. The silence was between them; how difficult was it for her to miss someone whom she did not remember? In her city, while going for a tour, they asked her in English for a guide in her town, the boys in corners whispering to her while she walked in the streets. She met a fellow dentistry student at her college one day.

Tareq Darwish was a Syrian from an immigrant family who arrived in the 1970s. After a while, Tareq asked her mother for her hand; they were planning to open a joint dental cabin. After the marriage, they had twins Aida and Zaid. For her mother Maryam, she was an example of success; she went to medical college and had the dream job for her parents; she had many

friends from different backgrounds; she had kids; and she lived in a private house. All of these advantages made her close to her mother. The accident affected her, but she did not give up on her family, her sister, or the business that her father left for them. She was present all the time next to her mother, and her job did not separate her from her family.

3. The Illusion of the American Dream as Experienced by the American Characters

The illusion of the American dream is a captivating narrative that has shaped the lives of countless American individuals. Despite this narration, Lalami in her novel also sheds light on the illusioned character because of the American dream.

3.1. Jeremy and the War in Iraq

Jeremy played a central role in Laila Lalami's novel *The Other Americans*; he was a classmate of Nora Guerraoui and her boyfriend later. In the novel, the author did not declare his roots, but from some descriptive analysis of his name, Gorecki, he confirmed his Polish background.

Jeremy in his grade school was looking to study speech pathology, but after he got his Cal State, he did not feel comfortable finishing his studies as he did not feel like he belonged to the campus, especially after the death of his mother touched him so hard. When the United States of America invaded Iraq, joining the Marines seemed like the right thing to do for Jeremy. In the novel, Jeremy says that he always wanted to serve in the army; his grandpa was a medic in World War II, and his dad was part of the Army Reserve. Since he was eighteen, he wanted to be part of something huge like a war. After a while, Jeremy took part in the well-known war to conquer Iraq, and the shock came when he returned home.

When he came back to California, he took a position as a police officer in Mohave town and was a witness to the accident. Jeremy met his childhood friend Nora, the daughter

of the murdered man, Driss Guerraoui. He was in a place where he should support his old friend for the death of her father, while they were remembering some memories from high school. Someday, when Jeremy was close to her, she asked about his war experiences and point of view, as he was there as a part of it. He did not want to talk about it, as he was scared of his hunting memories in Iraq. That day Nora asked for his permission to see some pictures from the war; they were not in an organized order. She picked up the first picture of Jeremy in Camp Taqaddum, and in a second, he was reflected in her eyes as an occupier, an imperialist. That day, when he came back, he could not sleep because of his memories there. Jeremy did not expect that look from Nora; she was not the same as other women who saw him as a hero while he told the stories of war.

The feeling of being sad from his memories did not leave him alone even in his normal days, imagining brooking someone's door at four a.m. The moments of holding a gun to a mother's face while males were arrested, walking across bloody bodies in the streets, were a nightmare that he knew would not leave him forever, but all he wanted was to help Nora. Jeremy remembers his conversation with his dad when he asked why Saddam was a threat to us and why he was a danger to our freedom. Where were the weapons of mass destruction? He never got answers from his father about his questions, and that was a big disappointment for Jeremy.

Even though his new position as a policeman was not suitable and easy for him, his boss was so quiet with him. Working in a dangerous society with drugs, illegal immigration problems, and murder crimes, all of this life-stressing weather did not help Jeremy forget about the mistakes he made in the war. Once Jeremy received a call about someone's neighborhood noise. It was an empty house, but Jeremy did not give up trying to find the source of the noise, it was hard to get inside and discover the source of the noise, but he insisted on doing his job as completely as possible. Then the low mewling sound rose, and he was shocked by the smell

of dusty furniture, birds, and old books. There was a hole, and inside that hole, the baby smell was strong. There was a baby left alone. Jeremy took him outside until the paramedics came with his boss. A few moments later, the media and journalists were in the place to cover the news. Sergeant Vasco, his boss, had an interview with a journal from the Hi-Desert Star. Tomorrow's morning was on the first page of the newspaper, holding the baby, "Police Rescue Abandoned Baby" in a clear headline. Jeremy was upset about Vasco using an abandoned baby for personal gain and sending him to a training session. He was shocked by people's fear of his uniform, he was angry about the war, people were killed, and Bush was enjoying his painting tables. All of that made him upset.

Conclusion

Through the perspectives of some of the nine different characters, Laila Lalami succeeded in telling an extremely brilliant story about the hit-and-run accident that happened in the Mohave desert, California. Tracing to the political problems in Morocco, which pushed Guerraoui's family to escape the fear of being arrested by the government law, they immigrated to the U.S. looking for a better life and a safe zone to raise their children. Lalami's changing perspectives, feelings, and testimonies convey her message and also evoke the deadly mystery of the Moroccan Driss. In this chapter, we try to illustrate the apprehension of the American dream by analyzing the novel's characters and their experiences in American society. It also gives a clear image of the main events that prove the failure and the sacrifices that each faces in an attempt to achieve the American dream.

Furthermore, in this chapter and through Lalami's work *The Other Americans* we try to answer an important question about the survival of the Arab Muslim immigrants after the 9/11 attacks and how they manage their business after this event. Last, but not least this chapter strives to describe the diasporic experiences that appear with the main characters.

**Chapter Three: Challenges of the
Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial
Subject**

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

Introduction:

Searching for your dreams in another home is full of risk-taking and sacrifices, no matter where you are from, your race, culture, and race. People from all over the world were enlightened by the American Dream through media propaganda, books, and movie productions.

In *The Other Americans*, Laila Lalami tells her story with fresh new fragmented techniques of polyphonic characters, where each one narrates the events that they have experienced. How the dead father and husband Driss tell his displacement experience after the forced immigration to the U.S. How the mother struggled to raise her daughters in a good atmosphere where everyone can succeed in the American dream. In a foreign society, Driss's family resisted being stereotyped and othered, the act of being an African Arab immigrant means that you will experience racism, xenophobia, and social disintegration. This chapter is going to examine most of the key concepts mentioned in the first chapter like diaspora, exile, othering, cultural hybridity, and the American dream, by giving a clear and exact understanding of all of the last elements that will be explained in the light of the novel's analysis as a postcolonial work.

1. Exploring the Notions: Exile and Diaspora in *The Other Americans*

Diaspora and Exile are fundamental elements in the novel Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans*, from my interpretation diaspora is involved within a literary, historical, and political context, in this novel the author wanted to explain and show how her polyphonic characters experienced forced Exile through their journey of immigrating to a new land, escaping the local governmental laws, chasing their better future and looking for a chance to attain the American dream. In the context of the novel, Driss and his wife were facing a local political problem with the policemen, some of the reasons were protesting against the laws,

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

social conditions, and economic crises, living a normal life was tough for Driss, with his wife they decided to leave the country, fearing to be arrested because he had some friends who were involved indirectly in these protests.

“Maryam’s relief that I had been spared the same fate turned into a vow: she would never go through this ordeal again. Her older brother lived in Culver City and had once offered to sponsor us for visas to the U.S. She said she wanted to leave.” (Lalami 41) Maryam’s family was exiled to another country due to her fear of being followed by the government. She decided to accept her brother’s help and they immigrated to the U.S. looking for safety in another ‘home’.

The situation of being part or a member of an Exiled group of people you have to be displaced and separated from your own culture, homeland, and people, these restrictions led to the move and experience of immigration. Legal or illegal moves were detailed in the novel’s plot, as the author wrote about Efrain who is an undocumented emigrant Mexican, the harsh life conditions in his country threw him to choose the difficult road searching for his dream life with his wife Marisela. “He couldn’t have been American, that much I knew. He had to have been an immigrant like me. And Guerraoui sounded like Guerrero, but it wasn’t a Spanish name.” (44).

This research focused mainly on the story of the immigrated Moroccan family of Driss’s Guerraoui and his wife Maryam, and how they chase their dreams trying to identify the new land as their home. The novel highlights how Maryam was suffering from non-belonging, lack of integration, and loneliness. Her complexities of speaking English well gave her a sense of non-belonging, Maryam could not communicate easily with the native people in the host society, she only wanted to describe her feelings, thoughts, and ideas with random people just like being in her Moroccan community.

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

“Hello,” I said. The woman turned around, her eyebrows lifting, her lips stretching into a tentative smile. My name is Maryam, I wanted to tell her. What is yours? Do you live nearby? What do you do? Do you have children? I have one daughter; she is three years old. Would you like to have tea with me someday? Are you baking a cake? I know a great recipe. You shouldn't use Star Flour, though, it's not good for cakes. But when I opened my mouth again, nothing came out, my heart was beating too fast inside my chest.” (30)

The feeling of being a stranger affected her so much, she could not communicate in English, and she did not describe her ideas. Living a normal life was something difficult to achieve as a diasporic member of the host society.

2. Othering

What should you have to be an American? This is the question that newcomers to the U.S. ask in their first footstep in the American land, and still a debatable question for scholars and many intellectuals.

In a society that marginalizes and disregards people who are different, Laila Lalami's work reflected her own experience as an immigrant from Morocco to the U.S. She wrote about how refugees and people of color have been stereotyped and excluded from the American dream. Laila Lalami's diasporic investigation in *The Other Americans* is guided by the need to advocate for the marginalized stuck in the ashes of a white monophonic American society. Lalami attempts

“To represent migrants who are stuck in untethered liminal space, reterritorialized and rootless, and whose identities are constantly floating, reshaped, and, hence, redefined. Thus, Lalami's conception of 'home' transcends the traditional nationalist and territorial hopefulness to a more flexible self-centered 'homelessness' where the migrant belongs within rather than without. This belonging is problematized and

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

destabilized due to the processes of Othering and disillusionment the diasporic subject is deemed to undergo throughout the diasporic journey” (Edouihri 1).

In the beginning, Nora when she entered Elementary school, could not fit in, even her teacher could not spell her name because she had a strange pronunciation. “Then Mrs. Nielsen lowered her reading glasses over her nose and peered at me. “What an unusual name. Where are you from? (Lalami 15). Not only that but after the class and while Nora finished her session, she did not find any friend to talk to, “At recess, the kids fanned out and gathered again in small groups—military kids, church kids, trailer-park kids, hippie kids—groups in which I knew no one and no one knew me.” (15).

Being American-born did not save her from racist and discriminatory comments, violent assaults, and stereotyped, especially aftermath of 9/11, she remembers when she experienced being Othered in her childhood memories when they used to call her “Raghead. Talibans. Sometimes, Raghead Talibans” (88). And her journey of being a Muslim in a Christian society she mentions “Growing up in this town, I had long ago learned that the savagery of a man named Mohammed was rarely questioned, but humanity always had to be proven” (160). Lalami in her work *The Other Americans* argues that people of color ‘Native born’ and immigrants create a mental border called “Us versus Them” While reading the novel you notice the uncountable presence of several different groups of people in the American society from different origins and histories some of them Africans, undocumented migrants, travelers, Arabs and north African people. Many of them were marginalized and minoritized by the social, cultural, and political structure.

As well as, The author also presents to us two characters who are involved in the process of othering and suspected in the hit-and-run accident, Anderson Baker and his son A.J believe that they are the legitimate people of the place, The father had the Bowling Alley,

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

while the others are subordinates or unwanted. Anderson Baker said “Some people say I should be grateful for the business that the newcomers are bringing to the town, but the way I see it, they’re changing this place and wanting me to be grateful for it. They didn’t ask if we wanted them there, they just came” (208).

After the 9/11 event, hate crimes rose in American society against Muslims and Arab people, Living in such a situation is undesirable for the Arabic Muslim communities there, Mr. Guerraoui’s first project was attacked because of these xenophobic actions by haters. Nora recounts the accident and mentions, “We turned onto Kickapoo Trail to find Aladdin Donuts burning like a stack of hay” (33). This accident gave Driss and his daughter the feeling of non-belonging as follows, Steinhardt claims that “exposure to xenophobic violence hurts several dimensions of social and economic integration.” (2018). Even though Driss did not give up on his business after this hate crime, it affected the way of assimilating and living in a peaceful atmosphere within American society.

Moreover, another othering experience is exemplified further in the situation of Detective Coleman and the undocumented immigrant Efrain, who represents two minorities, African/American and Mexican/Latino. The state of being illegal immigrants obliged many other undocumented immigrants to live in the shadows fearing exclusion. Detective Coleman represents the Black African/American woman through the novel and her attempt to gain justice and freedom and free herself from the legacy of injustice and discrimination. As Nokes claims: “Still, Black Americans faced public discrimination and openly unfair treatment through most of the 20th century” (Nokes 63).

3. Hybridity

Laila Lalami was once an immigrant before becoming an American citizen, she experienced the meaning of being away from home, culture, traditions, and her mother

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

country. Creating a home in a foreign host society requires challenges to fit in, and find a where to achieve her goals.

Lalami's writing style and techniques include different narrations through nine characters in the story to help the reader differentiate the hybrid and non-hybrid characters, still, the polyphonic voices make it easy to recount the theme of hybridity, each one of the dislocated characters tells his experiences within the American society and living. In general, hybridization comes with different forms of transcultural, language, political, and racial. When two species meet to create a third hybrid space. As Bhabha claims, the cultural hybrid identity always arises in this ambivalent opposed third space. Significantly, the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha 38)

The main characters in the novel share the same feeling of being an immigrant, outsiders, and othered. From Driss to Efrain, levels of assimilating and fitting in are different because of the situation of living, Efrain lived in fear, stress, and anxiety about being arrested with his family one day by the police and sent back to Mexico, so he became obliged to live in the shadows. On another level, Abraham claims that "transformation of the native into something other than himself a westernized native or at least one who is in crisis regarding his /her own cultural identity" (3). Maryam and her husband survived financially on their first landing on the new land because they are the first generation of immigrants. They lived in a small apartment saving money so they could achieve the dream, The family went shopping for groceries, rolling around with her daughter Nora inside the shopping cart, they collected coupons from newspapers to offer money for other stuff, as Maryam says "Looking through

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

the coupons we'd clipped from the newspaper, I found a discount we could apply to a can of Hunt's diced tomatoes" (Lalami 33).

Maryam herself suffered from the hard assimilation process of people of America and while she was in the grocery, she noticed a woman who seemed like an Arabic, She tried to talk to her and make conversation, but Maryam became disappointed when she found out she was not an Arabic and do not speak in Arabic "That's were Driss found me later, crying next to the frosting. 'What's wrong?' he asked, taking my hand. I didn't know how to explain to him that nothing was wrong, and yet, everything was wrong" (32).

Lalami succeeded in showing how immigrated people from different backgrounds melted into the living system of the host society especially those who chase the American dream. "All cultural statements and systems are reconstructed in a space called 'The Third Space of enunciation" (Bhabha 37). The couple gave everything so they melt into the American culture and the new atmosphere of living in that host society, and figuring out how they were stuck between two different cultures which formulated a hyphenated identity, unconsciously finding themselves in a third space. "The others of ourselves" (Bhabha 37)

The clash of two cultures turned Driss anxious because of his hybrid cultural situation, doubting his religious and cultural beliefs were wrong, inside the new society Driss confirms that all of his old doubts and questions about Islam are realities in that community "My doubts were born that day. Over the years they grew, until one day they were all I had." (Lalami 59). Their relationship changed after years of living together in Morocco, his attempts to be more American failed, especially after regranting his marriage, thinking that it was built of responsibilities and obligations not on love and motive, his love affair with a Mexican girl kept in secret till his death. "I had been traveling down the road from birth to death with the wrong companion. But now I had found the right one, and I didn't want to give her up." (113).

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

Opposite to Driss who chose to doubt and question his religion, culture, and way of living, Maryam struggled and saved her own Moroccan identity inside her, she did not give up on her beliefs, values, and culture. She symbolized the Arab Moroccan woman who saved her values and traditions, she resisted the cultural influence of the host society, and all that she worked for was raising her two daughters in Islamic and Moroccan values, she insisted on growing and having a good job., marrying an Arabic man. Nora unveils her mom's simple and impossible dream: "My mother, too had been imagining a world that might have been: a nice house on the western side of Casablanca, a husband who taught philosophy at the university, one daughter is a dentist and the other is a doctor, both married to men who were *comme il faut*" (268).

3.1. Exploring Mimicry

The imperial and colonial powers did not chase resources and economy only, but they wanted to give the colonized nations the feeling of being abandoned from their culture, identity, and religion by imitating the colonizer. According to Bhabha, the post-colonized nations faced problems with the cultural boundaries, People from ex-colonized countries tend to admire colonizer culture and try hard to mimic it. That process is called "Mimicry.", "Mimicry is an exaggeration copying of language, culture, manners, and ideas; thus, mimicry repetition with difference. Mimicry is also one response to the circulation of stereotypes". (Bhabha 122).

Mimicry goes beyond social and cultural contexts. The term refers to the adoption or imitation of cultural practices, norms, or behaviors from a dominant or influential culture by a subordinate or marginalized culture. The concept of mimicry is frequently associated with colonial and postcolonial studies, where it can be used to assimilate or resist dominant cultural powers.

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

Driss Guerraoui is a true personification of Mimicry and Imitation since his realization of the American dream, he followed the American culture, lifestyle, and system by starting a business, another thing that is surprising for his wife Maryam is that Driss always hated the system of Capitalism. "She couldn't believe that the graduate student who spoke so frequently about the plight of workers laboring under the boot of capitalists suddenly wanted to start a business" (Lalami 41).

He often tried hard to be part of the white American community, so he followed the American culture in the way of looking, eating, and drinking. His fridge was full of beers, the way he wanted to learn English from crosswords and puzzles, His wife Maryam says, "Usually, he was in lounge chair doing his crossed puzzles, that was how he improved his English, he was obsessed with finding all the answers, and hardly ever looked up when I walked past him on my way to the kitchen" (31). His motivation to learn the language reflects his obsession with being an American. His ignorance of his wife while she walks is a representation of the constitution of American cultural identity and abounds of his Moroccan identity.

The total assimilation of Driss, is reflected in his attitudes and how he abandoned his religious principles, while he was in Morocco, he was a smoker no more, but when he arrived in America, he started drinking which is forbidden in Islam, and he changed a lot. His daughter Nora narrates "Every morning, my mother would take the beer out of the fridge, pour it in the sink, and toss the bottles into the trash bins, and every evening my father would bring home another six packs". (35). Driss chose an American lifestyle over his own despite being aware of the change. Moreover, he does not abandon only his religion, but even his wife Maryam by leading a double life with his secret Mexican love affair. Ignoring his wife justifies his obsession with American life, and abandoning his Arabic origins. Through this mimicking

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

Driss forgot who is he, and from where he came. Still, he appears an American, but inside his blood veins, he is a Moroccan.

3.2. Ambivalence

Ambivalence, originally a term rooted in psychoanalysis, delineates the intricate psychological condition characterized by a simultaneous desire for and repulsion towards a particular object or idea. Its conceptualization, stemming from the realm of psychology, gained broader significance through interdisciplinary applications, notably within the colonial discourse as theorized by Homi Bhabha. Bhabha appropriated this term to elucidate the complex dynamics of attraction that unfolded between the colonizer and colonized subjects during the era of colonialism, offering a nuanced lens to understand the multifaceted interplay of power, dominance, and resistance that characterized this historical period. A mixture of positive and negative feelings resulted from the Ambivalent situation of the object which led to the feeling of hatred and love at the same. The author represents ambivalence through the character Salma when she suffers from the sense of being in-between which leads to an identity crisis. In her novel, she described the suffering of the second generation of Arab Americans and how they are living in a cultural conflict between East and West. How it is hush to combine your self-definition away from being stereotyped by others. And that is what consequences the ambivalent space and feelings.

Immigration was a decision taken by their parents, so they had to start a new life, especially for Salma who immigrated to the U.S. at an early age, The author mentioned her first ambivalent feeling at the airport, “laughs easily, like her father. Yet not like her father at all” (189). Salma felt a sense of alienation at her first experience with the outside world that she had been brought into. So, mimicking her cousins, who were essentially Americans, was the key to feeling similar. Lalami forms, “The children are supposed to play outside, but most

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

of the time you have no idea what your cousins are saying, so you mimic the way they talk, the way they laugh, and finally the way they walk” (189).

Salma's young sense of blessing and curse has developed. It grew more acute on her twenty-first birthday trip to Morocco. Salma traveled to Morocco with her parents to see her family after Morocco's political crisis ended. She describes how she felt an overwhelming connection with her home once she arrived, even though she didn't recognize anything or anybody, she narrates “A year later when you finally travel Casablanca with your family, you do not recognize your grandmother, nor does she recognize you. How it is possible to miss someone you don't remember? And yet you do” (191).

4. Assimilation

Since the early twentieth century, there has been a significant change and scrutiny in the discourse surrounding the concept of assimilation initially emerging as a topic of debate within the realm of social science and migration studies, assimilation has transformed into an accepted framework for understanding the transformations that immigrants and their lives undergo as they integrate into the fabric of the host society. To make things clear about assimilation or acculturation in a certain society, first, we need to define “Melting pot” the process that has been assimilated with the Americanization idea. It is making society more homogeneous “Melted together”, sometimes the term melting pot is used to describe the cultural integration of immigrants. The Melting Pot metaphor, which has its roots in American sociocultural history, represents the collective absorption of many races, cultures, and traditions into a united American identity. coined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this metaphor exemplifies the concept of cultural amalgamation, imagining a crucible where the diverse elements of society are intertwined. Critics of the Melting Pot paradigm point out the potential loss of unique cultural identities and the imposition of a

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

dominant culture, instead arguing for a more pluralistic and inclusive metaphor that recognizes and protects the unique tapestry of multiculturalism within the American country.

The individual immigrant goal is related to the process of assimilating, even though the American population itself is heterogeneous, from religion to race or region. “We are a country where people of all backgrounds, all nations of origin, all languages, all religions, all races, can make a home,” (Clinton). In the novel many characters struggle to assimilate and fit in the host society to move forward and chase their goals, from the dead father Driss to his favorite daughter Nora, Lalami described Nora as a symbol of the assimilated diasporic character she fully dissolved within the American culture. In mid-December on an Eid morning, the family decided to go to the mosque for morning services and pray, Maryam asked her husband to go to the mosque, and while they were entering someone noticed the way Nora was dressing “The boy called out to Nora. “Sister,” he said. “Cover your legs. You’re indecent.”” (Lalami 55). For her joining the music college was a childhood dream, and she did not want to give up on her dream to become a music composer one day she succeeded in achieving her dream, she drinks alcohol, goes to parties and bars, dates guys and she had no problem to lose her virginity at a certain age. “And me drinking champagne with my roommate, Margo. We were celebrating because Margo had received a grant from the Jerome Foundation to work on a new chamber piece,” (1).

Without a doubt assimilation now, day’s is useful for social dynamics and growth, especially in the U.S., It is something positive for the government to see the immigrants assimilate into their culture, values, system, and business. For the dislocated Driss, the American dream welcomed him, in more ‘Safer land’, running from the threat and his fear of being arrested inside his home. He invested everything to reach financial assimilation in opening a second restaurant after the hatred attacks on his first business, and emotionally when he met another woman in secret, he tried hard to be seen as the ‘Good ones’ by his society and

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

stayed away from the bad side. His young daughter Nora illustrates this when she says “he put up a huge flag outside his restaurant like he had to prove he was one of the good ones. I told him over and over that he should sell. But he refused, he loved it here. God only knows why.” (23).

Disproportionately, in an immigrant nation, the poor have always been the most recent immigrant group, which means they have always been “the other”—the strangers who dress differently, talk with strange accents, or follow strange customs. The stranger, the different one, has always caused fear. (Blank 47).

In the novel the undocumented Mexican parents face a problem in living a normal life like the other immigrants because of the illegal conditions and papers, Efrain witnessing the accident became a nightmare especially since he did not get used to contacting the public services, adapting to the social life is hard for him, he did not get used to seeing his name on a paper “I felt a small thrill because I had never seen my surname printed on anything other than my ID papers.” (Lalami 80). The attempt to assimilate into a new society is a complex journey that the diasporic character goes through, still results in the construction of a fluid identity. By these actions, immigrants seek to decentralize and deconstruct the monolithic Eurocentric misrepresentation of reterritorialized identity. Most of the main characters wished to assimilate into the new community, but at the same time, they felt the nostalgia of home by different types of displacement. “Lalami presents Nora as a symbol of assimilative diasporas who are ready to fully dissolve in the host culture’s identity due to fascination or concealment.” (Edouihri 5).

Chapter Three: Challenges of the Novel's Characters as a Postcolonial Subjects

Conclusion

This chapter was devoted to the postcolonial theory and aims to analyze and observe the essential concepts discussed in the previous chapter. Within this chapter, the theme of diaspora and exile was introduced as a family became part of a diaspora community due to local laws and fear of arrest. How Driss Guerraoui decided to move to the U.S. with his wife Maryam looking for a safe place to raise their children and offering them the best future they will have. The notion of othering was also discussed, particularly when Nora was viewed as an outsider during her childhood. Furthermore, the concept of hybridity is examined for characters such as Driss and the undocumented immigrant Efrain, fighting to fit in and overcome their backgrounds. Homi Bhabha's colonial discourse included the concepts of mimicry and ambivalence, which ultimately support the final theme of assimilation that was discussed in this chapter. Through nine narrators and polyphonic writings, Laila Lalami's work link between postcolonial characteristics and her creative endeavors through the events that took place in the story.

This chapter concluded that people from North Africa suffered to save their identity and protect their culture, language, and even their religion. The inclusivity of the novel and its fulfillment proves that people who are from different backgrounds, those who are from African Arab backgrounds, are usefully involved in a wave of discrimination and biased segregation based on skin color, language, and culture. That's what led to the failure of the American dream and disillusionment.

General Conclusion

General conclusion

General Conclusion

The interpretations of The American Dream's concept were forwarded differently in Laila Lalami's novel *The Other Americans*. This was seen through the author's attempt to tell each character's experience in American society. This research shows how the American Dream from what has been promoted in media and movies. Also, this dissertation deals with different types of immigrants both Arab African immigrants and Undocumented Mexican immigrants. The significance of this paper depends on its focus on Arab immigrants in America, specifically their efforts to fulfill the American dream before and after the 9/11 attacks. And how the story has been broadened to include the cultural and psychological complexities confronting Arab immigrants along with other undocumented people. Furthermore, the study tells the story of a Moroccan family's decision to leave and sacrifice their homeland to join an unknown destiny in the name of success.

Moreover, in this research, we have consciously adopted a multifaceted approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of our subject matter. By combining the postcolonial and historical approaches through the novel Laila Lalami's *The Other Americans*, the latter work tells the story of an Arab African immigrant family in the diaspora when they leave their country dreaming of a better and happier life, where the American dream became a shelter for this Moroccan family. To further enrich our research, we employed the qualitative method since it allows us to engage with narratives, voices, and perspectives that could have been marginalized or disregarded in quantitative analyses. This method helps us capture the nuances, complexity, and lived experiences central to our study, resulting in a more comprehensive and informative analysis.

Summing up, the nine different characters of the novel narrate different events and stories with multiple points of view, some of them experiencing diaspora and being a member

General Conclusion

of an exiled community and others trying to not be in jail because of their illegal situation, other characters who could not survive and keep the culture of his origin. To fulfill the American dream means to be a member of the first or the middle class in American society, but for the Moroccan family their father did not succeed, after he was killed in a hit-and-run accident based on ethnic biased people who think they are more Americans than the immigrants, this kind of people who think that they have righter than the other, more superior than any other non-white race.

The first chapter was mainly seen from a theoretical background, focusing on Postcolonialism, Diaspora, Arab American writings, and the American dream. It analyzes Laila Lalami's work as a member of the diasporic community, highlighting key concepts, The second chapter analyzes the experiences of Arab Muslim immigrants in America, answering the questions of the Arab Muslim immigrants' social struggles with its financial problems due to hate crimes and lack of jobs, businesses after the 9/11 attacks. It aims to illustrate the American dream's apprehension. Finally, the third chapter is mainly analytical, closely analyzing the characters' problems. This chapter helps the reader to understand Laila Lalami's novel *The Other Americans* and understand the meaning of being an outsider, not a native white-born American. The second-born generation immigrants, each with their own cultural background and immigration experience, struggle with the difficulties of assimilation and attempting to preserve their cultural heritage.

people from North Africa suffered to save their identity and protect their culture, language, and even their religion. The inclusivity of the novel and its fulfillment proves that people who are from different backgrounds, those who are from African Arab backgrounds, are usefully involved in a wave of discrimination and biased segregation based on their skin color, language, and culture. That's what led to the failure of the American dream and disillusionment for these people.

Works Cited

Works Cited

Primary sources

Laila Lalami. *The Other Americans*, 2019.

Books

Ashcroft, Bill, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. Routledge, 2007.

Alpana S. Sharma, *New Immigrant Literatures in the United States: A Sourcebook to Our Multicultural Literary Heritage*, 1996.

Carol Fadda-Conrey, *Contemporary Arab-American Literature: Transnational Reconfigurations of Citizenship and Belonging*, 2014.

Steven Salaita, *Modern Arab American Fiction*, 2011.

Jennifer L. Hochschild, *Facing Up to America, n Dream: Race, Class, and the Soul of the Nation*, 1995.

Zahia Smail Salhi, Ian Richard Netton, *The Arab Diaspora Voices of an anguished scream*, 2006.

Articles

Abdalwahid Abbas Noman, *Arab American Novel: Development and Issues*, *Studies in Literature and Language*, 2020, pp. 68-73. CSCanada, doi:10.3968/11631.

Faiza Hairech, *Representation of the Arab Exile in Arab American Literature*, 2020, pp. 70-81, *El Mawrouth Review*.

William Safran, *Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return*, 1991, pp. 83-99. Jhu.edu, doi:10.1353/dsp.1991.0004.

John D. Barbour, Edward Said and the space of exile, Vol. 21, No. 3 September 2007, pp 293-301. JSTOR. doi:10.1093/litthe/frm026.

Oscar Thomas, Astride Velho, Othering and its Effects – Exploring the Concept (2011), University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Setyowati, HOMI BHABHA'S MIMICRY AS REFLECTED IN TANIZAKI'S NAOMI, Vol.5, No.2, 2017, pp.603-612. doi:10-20180111.

Simone Schüller, The Effects of 9/11 on Attitudes toward Immigration and the Moderating Role of Education, 2012.

Dissertation:

Mounir Zergat, Mohamed Aroussi, An Orientalist Reading of Swarup's "Q & A" 2005 and Boyle's "Slumdog Millionaire" 2008 within a Post-Colonial Frame (2020), University of Laghouat, Master Degree in Civilization and Literature.

Ramli Siham, ROUTES RATHER THAN ROOTS: HOME AND BELONGING IN LAILA LALAMI'S *THE OTHER AMERICANS* (2019), 2021. University of Mohamed Boudiaf - M'SILA, Master's dissertation.

Webs Articles:

Mambrol ,Nasrhllah, "Homi Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity, Literary Theory and Criticism", 08 April 2016, <<https://literariness.org/2016/04/08/homi-bhabhas-concept-of-hybridity/>>

Nesbitt-Ahmed, Zahrah, African Lit Review: “Death and Love in a Mojave Desert Town: *The Other Americans* by Laila Lalami”, Society for africans in the diaspora, 15 May 2019, <<https://saidinstitute.org/african-lit-review-death-and-love-in-a-mojave-desert-town-the-other-americans-by-laila-lalami>>

Tikkanen, Amy. “Edward Said American professor and literary critic”, Encyclopedia Britannica, 20 November 2003, <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Edward-Said>
[Accessed 15 April 2023](#)>

Résumé

L'Amérique a été présentée comme la terre des rêves et des opportunités où des personnes de différentes régions du monde choisissent le chemin de l'inconnu pour atteindre le succès et la fortune à travers l'immigration, en franchissant les frontières, les mers et les océans à la poursuite de leur passion. Cette recherche réexamine le rêve américain à travers le roman "L'autre Américaine" de Laila Lalami (2019). Cette thèse adopte une approche historique et postcoloniale, ainsi que des méthodes qualitatives, descriptives et analytiques. Ces dernières ont permis d'examiner la vérité du rêve américain et comment différents types d'immigrants le gèrent au sein d'une communauté diasporique. En conséquence, les problèmes auxquels font face les immigrants de deuxième génération trouvent leur origine dans leurs pays anciennement colonisés, avec leur instabilité politique qui les pousse à fuir et à s'exiler dans une autre société à la recherche d'une opportunité qui n'a pas été réalisée, à l'image du travail de Lalami qui explore le rêve américain comme un échec plutôt que comme un succès.

ملخص

تم الترويج لأمريكا كأرض الأحلام والفرص، كما اختار الناس من مختلف أنحاء العالم طريق المجهول كغاية لتحقيق النجاح والثروة عبر الهجرة خلف المحيطات سعياً خلف شغفهم وأهدافهم المنشودة. هذا البحث عبارة عن مراجعة دقيقة للحلم الأمريكي من خلال رواية ليلي العلمي الأمريكيون الآخرون (2019). تم تبني هذه الأطروحة من خلال منهج تاريخي وما بعد الاستعمار، إلى جانب الأساليب النوعية والوصفية والتحليلية. ساعدت هذه الأخيرة في النظر في صحة الحلم الأمريكي وكيف يتعامل معه مختلف الناس من المهاجرين في مجتمع الشتات. مما أدى إلى نشأت المشاكل التي يواجهها الجيل الثاني من المهاجرين حالياً، بداية من عدم الاستقرار السياسي بلدانهم المستعمرة و الذي دفعهم إلى الفرار والنفي في مجتمع آخر بحثاً عن فرصة الحلم الأمريكي الذي لم يتحقق.