Journal Homepage: - www.journalijar.com

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/5762
DOI URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/5762

RESEARCH ARTICLE

HYBRIDIZED ARABS IN DIASPORA: A CULTURAL READING OF DINARZAD'S CHILDREN.

Dr. Suaad M. Alqahtani.
Assistant Professor of English Literature at Faculty of Languages and Translation King Khalid University Abha.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 04 September 2017
Final Accepted: 06 October 2017
Published: November 2017

Key words:-
Diaspora; Hyphenated Identity;Brisure; Third Culture; First Generation; Us-Born Immigrants.

Abstract

Hybridized Arabs in diaspora: a cultural reading of *Dinarzad's Children*

Diaspora orthe dispersal of people due to migration indicatesdifferent concepts such as travel, migration, displacement, conflict, and home to Arab Americans. This study investigates the reasonsbehind Arab migration toliveinthe US, which results in the convergence between Arab and American culturesthereby creating a new hybridized culture,whichnegotiates the diasporic identities of Arab Americans.The study selects short stories from *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Arab American Fiction* to discuss variations among Arab Americans' experiences of diaspora concerningthe concept of home through cultural concepts of hybridity, third space, exile, and brisure.

Introduction:-

Arab American literature has about seven decades of history with different stages of development. It started with the first wave of immigration that launched JibranKhalil Jibranamong others to the US literary forefront during the 1940s, and mainly included Arabic poetry. The US Civil Right Movement inthe 1960s generated interests in ethnic groups,and writers of different ethnic groups, such as the African Americans, were acknowledged in their own terms. The acknowledgment of minority groups fortified the resolve of Arab American writers, albeit small in number, to begin writing in English.Since 1990,the Arab Americans' literary world has witnessed changes in consciousness and form, from individual expressions of lyric poetry to community-based prose writing. The feminist writer,Joanna Kadi (1994),who once wrote Arab American writers as 'the Most Invisible of the Invisibles', has also re-evaluated her observation with what she describes as '[a] noticeable growing emergence of a body of feminist Arab American writing that corresponds with a shift toward prose writing, fiction as well as non-fiction'.

However, the 9/11 events in 2001 have directed undesirable limelightto the Arab Americans. Investigations of their diverse cultures, religions, traditions, and histories ensued, concurrent with creation of many derogatory stereotypes associated with Arabs. Therefore, the lives of Arabs have deteriorated. Aside from the burden of their hyphenated identity, they are further weighted down by racial bigotry. They have been treated as a homogenous group of people whose cultural and religious principles foster violence and terrorism. As such, this discriminatory treatment has impressed a negative impact on Arabsin the US. In response to the bigotry against Arab Americans, a counter movement defending Islam and the Arabic culture has been initiated by a number of Arab American fiction and non-fiction writers. Although 'terror-stricken', Americans ironically started cultivating a curious interest in the identity of diasporic Arabs in the US. Arab American writers' literary production has increased in response to the increasing interest as well as racist attacks and abuse against Islam and the Arabic culture post-9/11 events.

Corresponding Author:- Suaad M. Alqahtani.
Address:- Assistant Professor of English Literature at Faculty of Languages and Translation King Khalid University Abha.

Although Arab American literature is still viewed as minority literature, in recent years, it has received wide critical reception. The impermanent silence and 'invisibility' of Arab American writers of fiction has inspired the composition of *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction*. Alluding toShahrazad's sister, Dinarzad, from *The Thousand and One Nights (Arabian Nights)* the anthology attests to the emerging powerful wave of Arab American fiction to break the silence and convey various diasporic experiences.

The selected short stories from the anthology reflect their writers' various concurrences and differences in terms of cultural identity and grapple with myriad themes; however, the central themeof home and estrangement remains prevalent, especially on cultural and identity conflicts between the immigrants and their US-born children, poverty, alienation, loneliness, and seclusion. Characters in the stories range from being Palestinians, Syrians, and Jordanians—Arab nations in the Middle East.Seven short stories were selected from the anthology: 'How We Are Bound' by Patricia Sarrafian Ward; 'A Frame for the Sky' by RandaJarrar; 'Fire and Sand' by Laila Halaby; 'Manar of Hama' by MohjaKahf; 'It's Not about That' by SamiaSerageldin; 'The New World' by Susan MuaddiDarraj; and 'My Elizabeth' by Diana Abu-Jaber. All of the aforementioned authors, except Abu-Jaber are first generation Arab immigrants.

Hybrid Arabs in the US:-

Hybridity, which is a process that 'makes difference into sameness, and sameness into difference, but in a way that makes the same no longer the same, the different no longer simply different' (Young 1995, 75), marks the diasporic experience and hybridized cultural identity of Arab Americans forbothimmigrant Arab parents and the US-born generation. In essence, the sameness of Arab Americans is made into difference as they confront a different culture from theirs, thus resulting in cultural conflicts, whereas their difference from the culture of their host country forces them to negotiate the difference into sameness through assimilation. This somewhat contradictory process is aptly summarizedin Jacques Derrida's logic of 'brisure',meaning a state of 'breaking and joining at the same time, in the same place, [thus constructing] difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity' (cited in Yegenoglu 1998, 35),which reinforces the hybridity of diasporic cultural identity.

Traces of hybridity in the works of diasporic Arab writers are found in the language use because'they write in the language of their host country, their literature is by no means similar to that of their host country, nor is it similar to that of their country of origin'.This supports the hybridity of Arab American literature,which is characterized in the amalgamation between the writer's culture of origin and that of the host country (Salhi and Netton 2006, 3). In the selected stories, hybrid markers are evident in the language used in symbols and characters. Diaspora literature is a platform for Arab American writers to bring their culture to dialogue with the American culture and a meeting point for different cultures to 'converge, intersect, and even clash', resulting in 'a third culture'that servedas a symbolic window for both East and West to 'peer in' and understand one another better (4).

Culturalidentity and the third culture in diaspora:-

Hall (1995)provided two definitions of cultural identity in relation to the Caribbean black experience, but these definitions, whichextend to marginalized peoples, are applicable to the Arab American situation. The first definition interprets cultural identity as a 'unitary collective self'within which people of the same culture sharecommon historical experiences and cultural codes with stable, unchanging, and continuous frames of reference and meaning beneath the shifting divisions of actual history (435). To suit a highly globalized and diasporic world, Hall's second and improved definition of cultural identity means difference in addition to oneness. He argued that it is impossible to 'speak for […] any exactness about one experience, one identity, without acknowledging its other side'and that cultural identity is 'far from being eternally fixed in some essentialist past'; it is subject to the continuous play of history and is fluid as it 'undergoes constant transformation—a matter of being as well as becoming' (435).

Through identification of elements and characteristics of similarity and negotiation of any difference and rift caused by diaspora, the cultural identity of Arab Americans is clarified through a dialogic relationship between the two definitions, 'similarity and continuity' and 'difference and rupture', and diaspora is characterized by hybridity, heterogeneity, and diversity, and not by purity, essence, or similarity (Hall 1995, 436–438). Therefore, cultural identity in diaspora emerges out and along such differences and'are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference' (Hall 1995, 438).

A middle ground between the convergences of two different cultures constitutes the cultural identity of diasporans. In defining cultural identity,the term 'third space' refers to being in-between two extremes that, at times, compels

for reconciliation, which means cultures, in general, do not correspond to either 'unitary' or 'homogenizing' entities, nor to 'dualistic' formation of the self and the other (Bhabha 1995, 156). He argued that the 'third space' resembles hybridity and affirmed that, hybridity rather than originality or purity, is essential and tenable in cultures; thus,in the 'third space',culture is given meaning (156–157). Though Bhabhahad a different perspective in assuring the hybridity of culture, he shared asimilar conclusion with Hall.

Bhabha's'third space' is characterized by being contradictory and ambivalent and the willingness to step into a third position, between two different cultures, so that a diasporancan conceptualize 'an international culture', one of which is based on 'the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity'. In other words, a diasporanwho enters the 'in-between' space between the two converged cultures can escape the binary structure of 'us' versus 'them'.Bhabhaconcluded that this space provides a discourse to 'speak of ourselves and others'(Bhabha 1995, 157).

Diasporic experiences of Arab Americans:-

Discussions of diasporic journeys have focused mainly on their subjects and causes andemphasizes not only on the diasporic subjects undertaking these journeys, but also on the 'when, how, and under what circumstances' these journeys are undertaken (Brah 1995, 443). The diasporic situation of Arab Americans varies according to a number of political, economic, or intellectual factors, ranging from diaspora as forced deportation from the home country, fear of political prosecution, economic improvement, or better intellectual atmosphere(Salhi and Netton2006, 2).

In the stories in *Dinarzad's Children*, the characters fit into either one category of Salhi'sclassification. 'A Frame for the Sky' depicts a Palestinian exile moving through a number of places before settling down in the States. Both brothers in 'How We are Bound' flee from civil war in Lebanon. In 'Fire and Sand', the protagonist's Palestinian father seeks financial betterment in the US. 'The New World' offers two reasons for the hero's diasporic journey to the US: to escape from the terrible political situation in Palestine and to seek a better life. In 'Manar of Hama', the situation differs slightly whereby the protagonist and her family escape from the Syrian government's secret services. In Diana Abu Jaber's'My Elizabeth', the implicit cause of Palestinian immigrants' residence in the US is understood on the grounds of their Palestinian identity.

In 'A Frame for the Sky', the protagonist's struggles with his Palestinian identity causes him to undergo multiple diasporic journeys from imprisonment in Jordan after the 1967 Egyptian–Israeli war,marriage in Egypt, and his family migration to Kuwait for economic reasons. After being sent to the US for a work trip,he is banned from re-entering Kuwait because of his Palestinian identity and 'the PLO's support of Saddam Hussein's actions' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 336).As such, he has to remain in the US. However, being an Arab American causes him yet more anxiety, particularly after the 9/11 events due to his belief that it is 'because we are Arab Americans, that's how we are without homes' (42).Moreover, the cloud in the story represents a metaphor of the protagonist's constant movement between places, pushed by the forces of circumstances (as a cloud moves when blown by the wind).

One of the central themeshighlightsthat irrespective of the reasons for diaspora, Arab American characters, particularly the first generation immigrants, could never be totally separated from their home country. This brings to light the political definition of diaspora, which 'carries a sense of displacement [of] a population [that] finds itself for whatever reason separated from its national territory, and usually its people have a hope, or at least a desire, to return to their homeland at some point, if the "homeland" still exists in any meaningful sense' (Wikipedians 2011, 66). Estrangement, loneliness, nostalgia, and alienation characterize the first generation of Arab immigrants in the selected stories. The differentstories show the cultural conflicts of these characters as they face difficulties assimilating into their new environments.

Diaspora identities are characterized by cultural conflicts; as such, new hybridized identities are formulated in a middle position between two different cultures as'diaspora cultures […] mediate, in a lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement, of living here and remembering/desiring another place', andtension in mediating between two culturesis resulted from the sense of connection with the home country that is 'strong enough to resist erasure through the normalizing process of forgetting, assimilating, and distancing'(Clifford 1995, 453). He sees a possibility of such 'cultural mediation' through 'diasporist discourses', which consequently leads to 'transnational connections' between minority and majority communities (453). In simpler words, when the immigrants allow themselves to approach the culture of the host country, the unitary condition of their 'minority discourse' will be substituted with diasporic culture through'assimilation and resistance'with the majority group (453). The host culture coexists with the home culture in a context of conflict and harmony.

The hybrid Arab Americansalso struggle with continual cultural collision and congruence.Faced with cultural conflicts, their lives are split between the tradition of their home country and American modernity in the diasporic panorama of the US. In 'Fire and Sand', Khadija migrates to the US with her family when she was nine years old and struggles between her conservative Arab family and the liberal demands of the American society. At school, she feels ashamed by her name: Being self-conscious about her Arabic name, she says, 'in America my name sounds like someone throwing up. If they can get the first part of it right, the 'Kha' part, it comes out like clearing your throat after eating ice cream' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 73).Her decision to change her name resulted in her father slapping her. She even tries to tell her friends at school to call her 'Diana', but the colour of her skin makes them laugh at her, saying,'[B]ut you don't look like a Diana'. Another cultural conflict arises from Khadija's insistence to maintain her American identity and use of the English language despite her parents' disagreement. Unlike Khadija's eagerness to change her name, the orphan protagonist of 'My Elizabeth' wants to keep hers when her family are given new American names to hide their Arab identity: 'Umtie Nabila had become "Great Aunt Winifred." And my name was Estelle. In the following days, I often could not remember to answer to it. I put the name on in the morning like a wig. My former name grew faint, then fell from memory' (296).

The generational clash in 'A Frame for the Sky' between father and daughter attests to the protagonist's sense of ambivalence. Even with increased economic status in the US, he holds on to his Arab identity and behavioural norms. He has little time to assimilate into the culture; therefore, he just cares about succeeding at work. His thirst for money is prompted by the notion of the American dream. When his daughter comes home late one night, he hits her. He has to go to court as a result. He does not know any more what is right and wrong with regard to principles: '[H]ad I really been the one who had changed? I never used to believe in change. Had America changed me? Or had I not allowed it to change me, holding onto what I thought was my True (Arab) identity?' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 39). The protagonist still could not believe that he was being forced into Americanization: 'either my best or my fifth-worst; my Americanness has brought me nothing but feelings of ambivalence' (40). It clearly demonstrates his inner conflict of his Arab identity being Americanized, as he is undecided. Throughout the story, he traces the seven worst moments of his life in terms of these 'flashes' (or frames). Each moment represents a continuing, cultural precedent of expulsion and abandonment.

However, immigrants can overcome diasporic feelings of estrangement and loss in a number of ways. Salhiand Netton (2006, 3) contends that they might construct a world similar to the real home they left behind through cultural objects and customs, such as Arab food stores and restaurants:There are many such cultural markersin the stories. In 'How We are Bound', the Lebanese brothers set up a Lebanese food store and bakery. In 'The New World', Nader and Siham go to a Lebanese restaurant on South Street on their wedding anniversary. These culturally specific markers succeed, moreover, at being novel attractions to most of the American population, yet they create a familiar cultural ground for the diasporans. This makes diaspora a fruitful space for exchanging cultures, but with mixed results. In 'Fire and Sand',to her surprise, Khadija's American friend likes the Palestinian traditional meal '*muskhan*'.Distastefor American food, on the other hand, can be seen in Manar's complaint of tasteless vegetables and lack of pepper in 'Manar of Hama'.

The burden of living in diaspora together with feelings of alienation has produced disastrous consequences in the diasporans' lives. The homesick exile might reach an extreme in his/her feelings of displacement and deteriorate,'distancing oneself from […] all connections and commitments'(Said 1995, 439–442). Estrangement and economical disappointment lead Khadija's father in 'Fire and Sand' to heavy drinking, violence against his family, and eventually imprisonment. Moreover, his children are taken away by child welfare services. His inability to manage the pressures and inner conflicts of not living in his own 'place' is due to experiences of 'loss, marginality, and exile [which] are often reinforced by systematic exploitation and blocked advancement' (Clifford 1995, 454).

On the other hand, the second type of exile is one who does not fall prey to the cynical thinking that his situation is temporary (Said 1995, 441) and makes the best of his experience and imagines the diasporic setting to be his home. In 'A Frame for the Sky', the protagonist has to live in continuous displacements, changing from one country to another. He accepts the essentially diasporic situation of being a Palestinian, and lives his life fruitfully wherever his new home comes to be. In some stories, the protagonists' 'constitutive suffering coexists with the skills to survive'in the process of forming a cultural identity. Therefore, the positive type of exile defines himself/herself through the consciousness of diaspora where'one has to live loss and hope' (Clifford 1995, 454). This does not mean, however, that this type is distant from their original home in the cultural and psychological senses. In 'A Frame for the Sky', nostalgic memories of the protagonist's life in Palestine with his family recur constantly in his mind. His memories

are set as a background against which habits, expression, and activities of the new life happen, much as a frame around a picture. The same process of juxtaposition of nostalgia and assimilation is experienced by all characters in exile (Said 1995, 442).

The protagonist of 'A Frame for the Sky' exists between two worlds, namely two cultures and two languages, with'simultaneous awareness'. He continues comparing his poor childhood circumstances to his children's privileged ones in the US. His experience is, marked, thus, by ambivalence. The story is like a memoir in which the protagonist, an old Palestinian man living in Manhattan, views the worst days of his life in a retrospective manner. The days he remembers are those marked by his experience of displacement. In its natural setting, the protagonist is a man at peace with his new country. Yet, his recollections together with his wish to tell his son his story attests to the fact that he has not assimilated completely to the American life. The murky state of exilic situation applies to the protagonist: 'It is nomadic, decentred, contrapuntal; but no sooner does one get accustomed to it than its unsettling force erupts anew' (Said 1995, 442), thus alluding to his forced state of constant displacement.

In 'How We Are Bound', two Lebanese brothers, Adel and Amin, and their families flee from the civil war in Lebanon to the US. The sense of alienation and displacement is felt by Amin although he lives next to his brother and works for him. This can be attributed to the different assimilation experienced by both brothers; Adel and his wife have assimilated quite well to the American life and started a business, whereas Amin and his wife are still bound to nostalgic memories of home. Amin would talk about the political situation and war in Lebanon, whereas Adel would speak of making more money. The statement in the title 'How We Are Bound' is suggestive of the gap between brothers who are only bound by blood and family name. Adel and his wife are able to come out of their cultural shell and cross over to the culture of the American society. Their diasporic experience is dynamic rather than static.In contrast, Amin and his spouse could not reach an in-between space between Arab and American cultures. They hold on to the culture of their homeland for the first half of their hyphenated identity. Therefore, their diasporic experience is marked by a severe sense of alienation.

The situatedness and cultural embeddedness of Arab immigrants in the US is intricate, as exemplified in some stories. Some Arab characters have been manipulated by the American characters to legalize their stay in the US. In 'The New World', Nader has to marry an American girl and give her six thousand dollars in order to get 'the green card' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 29). Due to the terrible political situation in Palestine, he is forced to do whatever it takes to remain in the US. A number of stories chronicle the gain of American citizenship with the loss of original identity. In 'My Elizabeth', for instance, forsaking Arabic names is necessary for some characters to pass off as real Americans. Ironically, their complexion gives away their Arab identity beneath the mask of 'Americanness', as in the case of Estelle in 'My Elizabeth'.

Diaspora identities exist in an in-between space negotiating similarities and differences between two cultures. The 'third space' is reflected upon as the author/protagonist's attempts to reach it in 'It's Not About That', while the characters' search for the 'third space' is examined in 'Manar of Hama' and 'My Elizabeth'. In 'It's Not about That', the protagonist/narrator enters the 'third space' through binding her past and present. She recalls memories of her past war life in Egypt, the 1967 Egyptian–Israeli war, and the 1973 Ramadan war as well as other conflicts in the Middle East, yetshe continues living in the US byassimilating wonderfully into the American culture: '[A]nd me? The years passed and I blended into my new environment like a perfect chameleon. My sons grew up engrossed in Ninja Turtles cartoons [...] and played hockey in Michigan. There was no room in this brave new world for memories of Egypt' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 164).

Her childhood in wartime Egypt made Serageldin shun the world for a long time,but her writing made her realize that she is 'recovering [her] lost voice, finally trying to reconcile [her] present with [her] past'. Glimpses of her recovered voice are clear in the story, not merely in a nostalgic form, but rather in a dialogic one. In the story 'It's Not About That', the protagonist becomes defensive against her American husband's accusations. The rift between them marks the beginning of this voice. Thus, the protagonist—who resembles Serageldin in many ways—brings her past into a dialogue with the present, and together with her author, they enter the 'third space'. However, their entrance is contextualized by Arab-American political conflict. The 'I' of the story speaks in touching frankness and truthfulness of having to deal with the political and social 'storm'. Her children are targeted on the Arab part of their hybrid Arab-American identity, especially during the 1990 Gulf war and the 9/11 bombings of the World TradeCenter in 2009: '[D]uring Desert Storm, I thought, for the first time of leaving the States. My children, all of a sudden, became "Arabs" at school. It didn't matter that the Egyptians were fighting on the same side as the Allies'

(Kaldas and Mattawa 2004,166).The homogeneous classification and prejudicial treatment of the different nationalities from the Arabian peninsula are results of uninformed or misinformed perceptions of 'Arabs' by the American public, which deteriorated after the 9/11 events. Herein, the diaspora consciousness of Arab Americans is formed either positively or negatively. In terms of a negative constitution, diaspora enforces a sense of discrimination and marginalization embedded in the barriers facing the racialized immigrant, whereas positive constitution is about 'feeling global' and having a 'sense of attachment elsewhere, to different temporality and vision' (Clifford 1995, 454).

In 'It's Not about That', the protagonist's entrance into the 'third space' is marked by ambivalence. At the beginning of the story, she affirms that her marital conflict is not about '[her] being from Egypt and [her husband] being American, but about their coming from opposite ends of the spectrum on almost every issue' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 161). Paradoxically, at the end, she affirms the opposite of what she has stated in the beginning: '[B]ut try to understand. We have nothing left to talk about. This time, it is about that', namely, her Arab identity (169). Although cultural difference does not seem to affect their marriage at the beginning, their relationship gap widens especially after the events of 9/11, and they stop having common things to talk. Prior to the 1990 Gulf War and the subsequent events, cultural difference is not a problem: '[A] few months after I met you, I wrote to you: "It's a miracle that we come from worlds so far apart, and met the way we did, and connect the way we do"' (161). However, this difference begins to be a problem after the 9/11 events: '[Y]ou responded with a reductionist diatribe against all Muslims everywhere' (168–69).

Unlike other writers, the Syrian-American poet and short story writerKhaf tries to principally negotiateher Muslim identity in a world full of hatred and racial slur against Muslims. In 'Manar of Hama',Kahf reflects the sense of longing and belonging simultaneously through images of food. Manar, the protagonist, does not hide her distaste of American food: '[T]he food here is terrible. The meat smells disgusting. I don't know what they eat in America'. Her feeling of estrangement is combined by another of longing: '[T]here is no real bread, or coffee, or olives, or cheese' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 129). In diaspora, Manarsearches fora 'community whom she identifies with and who identifies with her' (Abdurraqib 2007, 450).

Kahf's struggle is reflected in the story through constant juxtapositions of images of home in Syria and America in which 'both the new and the old environments are vivid, actual, occurring together contrapuntally' (Said 1995, 442).Manar says, 'whether I was in my hometown of Hama or in Damascus, it didn't matter. The ground knew my feet. Here I get lost if Khalid isn't with me' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 129). Moreover, her Islamic beliefs disagree with 'American schools that mix up girls and boys'. Her search for her 'community of people' (Abdurraqib 2007) finds expression in her search for items of Arab food: fresh mint, allspice, and cardamom. She finds a community of 'pseudo-Sufi hippies' she can identify with through their shared Eastern cuisine, such as 'hummus' and 'Chapatti', as well as their religion (humming '*La ilahaillaallah*') (135). Her identification with the community is reciprocated through their hospitality toward her.

It is through food that Manar approached the 'third space', giving Arabic food in diaspora a new meaning. It is given extra importance, as it is a component of the culture of origin. Therefore, food can be seen as a cultural symbol thatacquires 'anew, appropriated and rehistorici[z]ed' meaning in place of its 'primordial unity or fixity' in the home country context (Bhabha 1995, 157). The significance of Arabic food springs from the 'third space': it belongs to the home culture, but it is recreated in the host setting.

Efforts toward absolute assimilation in'My Elizabeth' range from changing names to adopting another identity to replace the Arab half of the Arab-American identity, especially because the Arab identity is Palestinian: Estelle says, 'my aunt gave me a lot of advice on how to attract friends and said "never, ever, speak Arabic. Wipe it out of your brain. You won't need it anymore. And if anyone asks—she paused a moment sighing over my brown skin—you say you are a Mexican, no, Italian, or Greek, anything but Palestinian"' (Kaldas and Mattawa 2004, 297). Young Estelle finds a sense of home in her friendship with a 'Sequoyan', an American Indian girl named Elizabeth. They share many similarities: 'We both had doubled languages, a public one we spoke in common, and a private language that haunted us. We were descended from nations that no map had names or boundaries for' (298).

This friendship between two girls from different cultures demonstrates a form of ethnic solidarity in the American society. Abu-Jaber transcends the issue of Arab American identity by connecting Arab Americans with other minority groups in America. The term 'ethnic borderland' applies to friendship between these people of colour and

is defined as ‘a constructive space in which interethnic ties between and within different communities of colour could be established and maintained’(Fadda-Conrey 2006).In this friendship, Estelle found an imaginary home, as‘home is not only a place, it is also a community’ (Abdurraqib 1995, 451). In this respect, the title of the story ‘My Elizabeth’ stands for ‘my home’.

Conclusion:-

Diasporic journeys lead inevitably to hybridity. The majority of critics quoted in this researchagree with this premise, albeit with slight variations, to reach the meaning and formation of the cultural identity of diasporans. In short, Said's contrapuntal awareness of home and exile, Clifford's ‘diasporist discourses’,Salhi's‘third culture’ and Bhabha's concept of ‘third space’ all revolve around the hybrid nature of diasporic culture. The analysis of the short stories in *Dinarzad’s Children* shows the different ways through whichArab Americans reconcile with their hybridized cultural identity in diaspora.Although many obstacles have confronted them, Arab Americans could eventually manage to survive. As a result, the meaning of home for Arab Americans goes beyond the material land, asthe sense of home has been creatively approximated through symbols, items, and communities.

References:-

1. Abdurraqib, Samaa. 2007. “Making it Survive Here and Dreams of Return: Community and Identity in the Poetry of MohjaKahf.” In *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*,edited by Layla al Maleh. New York: Rodopi.
2. Bhabha, Homi. 1995. “Cultural Diversity and Cultural Differences.” In*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*,edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. New York: Routledge.
3. Brah, Avtah. 1995. “Thinking through the Concept of Diaspora.” In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*,edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. New York: Routledge.
4. Clifford, James. 1995. “Diasporas.” In*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*,edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. New York: Routledge.
5. Fadda-Conrey, Carol. 2006. “Arab American Literature in the Ethnic Borderland: Cultural Intersectionsin Diana Abu-Jaber’s “Crescent,” *MELUS* 31(4):187–205.doi: 10.1093/melus/31.4.187.
6. Hall, Stuart. 1995. “Cultural Identity and Diaspora.” In*The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*,edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. New York: Routledge.
7. Kadi, Joanna. 1994. *Introduction. Food for Our Grandmothers: Writings by Arab-American and Arab-Canadian Feminists.* Boston: South End Press.
8. Kaldas, Pauline and Khaled Mattawa, eds. 2004. *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Arab American Fiction*. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press.
9. Said, Edward W. 1995. “The Mind of Winter: Reflections on Life in Exile.” In *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader.* Edited by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen. Tiffin. New York: Routledge.
10. Salhi, ZahiaSmail and Ian Richard Netton, eds. 2006. *The Arab Diaspora: Voices of Anguished Scream*. New York: Routledge
11. Wikipedians, eds. 2011. *Anthropology.* Mainz, GE: PediaPress.
12. Yegenoglu, Meyda. 1998. *Colonial Fantasies: Towards a Feminist Reading of Orientalism.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
13. Young, Robert. 1995. *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race*. London: Routledge.