

# UNIVERSITÉ FRANÇOIS – RABELAIS DE TOURS

*ÉCOLE DOCTORALE « Sciences de l'Homme et de la Société »*

ÉQUIPE de RECHERCHE : ICD

## THÈSE en Co-tutelle présentée par :

**Abir TAHSILDAR**

soutenue le : 5 Octobre 2013

pour obtenir le grade de : **Docteur de l'université François – Rabelais de Tours**

Discipline/ Spécialité : Anglais

## CROSS- CULTURAL MARRIAGE AND HYBRID IDENTITIES OF CHARACTERS IN THREE ANGLOPHONE NOVELS

### THÈSE dirigée par :

M. PIER John  
M. BADAWI Muhamad

Professeur, Université François-Rabelais de Tours  
Professeur, Université Libanaise, Liban

### RAPPORTEURS :

Mme BRIAULT MANUS Vicki  
Mme AL-KHATIB Hayat

Maître de conférences, HDR, Université de Grenoble 3  
Professeure, Arab Open University, Liban

---

### JURY :

Mme BRIAULT MANUS Vicki  
M. WHYTE Philip  
M. PIER John  
Mme AL-KHATIB Hayat  
M. FADDUL Atif  
M. BADAWI Muhamad

Maître de conférences, HDR, Université de Grenoble 3  
Professeur, Université François-Rabelais de Tours  
Professeur, Université François-Rabelais de Tours  
Professeure, Arab Open University, Liban  
Professeur, Université Libanaise, Liban  
Professeur, Université Libanaise, Liban

To my little princess NOUR

# Acknowledgment

Completion of this doctoral dissertation would not have been possible without the help and support of those around me. Beginning with my two supervisors, I express my sincere gratitude to Professor John Pier for his valuable guidance, endless patience, consistent encouragement, and unconditional kindness. Equally, I thank Professor Muhamad Badawi for his helpful advice, remarks, and suggestions.

I would also like to acknowledge all of the jury members including the two reporters, Professor Vicki Briault Manus and Professor Hayat Al-Khatib, for agreeing to read my work and the three jury members, Professor Muhamad Badawi, Professor Atif Faddul, and Professor Hayat Al-Khatib, who have agreed to travel overseas to participate in the thesis defense.

Special thanks go to the Lebanese University for providing me with a fellowship for five years, without which I would not have been able to pursue my higher studies in France and obtain my Master's and Doctoral degrees. I also appreciate the financial support provided by the University of Tours, which has covered the transport and accommodation expenditures of the jury members who came from abroad. I extend my gratitude to Professor Trevor Harris for providing me with the chance to present my work before the doctoral students of the English department as well as to the library staff at the University of Tours who have been very helpful regarding resources.

I am extremely grateful to my friends, Hiba Androon, Zainab Al-rez, Rokaya Baytiyeh, Cécile Merceron, Safaa Al-Sayed, Suzanne Muhammad, Nora Mahrawi, Samia Bouhassoun, Boutaina Brouzi and Muhammad Hawash who constantly asked about how my dissertation was progressing and who were always there in times of need.

I owe a lot to my parents, Riad and Salam, whose prayers brought me success in life and who longed to see the achievement of my dream, to my sisters Zeina, Amal, Rawaa and to my brothers Ahmad and Muhamad for their support and encouragement.

Last but not least, I express my utmost love, respect, and gratitude for my husband, Haydar Abdel Hamid, to whom I feel very much indebted. He endured my absence for two years, offered me help in finding resources, initiated discussions which were the spark of my thesis, showed endless patience, believed in my abilities, and provided great support throughout those five years of study.

Finally, I owe an enormous thanks to my innocent angel, my little princess, Nour, who brightened my life and gave me hope and strength to go on and achieve my dream in obtaining my PhD diploma.

## Summary

This dissertation studies the subject of cross-cultural marriage and hybrid identities of characters in three Anglophone novels: Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001), Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999), and Safi Abdi's *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds* (2002).

The study seeks to find out how the cultural identities of the protagonists in the novels change when they marry across cultures and face new traditions and beliefs. Hybridity theory, which is developed by Homi Bhabha and other hybridity theorists such as Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse, and Marwan Kraidy, can be a relevant tool for analysis of the characters' identities. Bhabha contends that those who cross cultures live in an "in-between space" or "third space" in which they oscillate between their native culture and the host culture. However, results show that fictional characters present cases which have not been explored by hybridity theorists. Although most of the protagonists' experiences illustrate Bhabha's notion of the "in-between," as in Julie's, Abdu's, and Mike's cases, other protagonists show a counter-reaction to hybridity, as in Sammar's "ghettoisation and enclavisation" experience and in Anisa's "return to religion."

In addition, it is stressed that various factors of a cultural, religious, personal, and social nature affect the protagonists in the novels to either develop a hybrid identity or maintain their native way of life. It is also found that cross-cultural marriage and hybridity are correlated. The former can be both a manifestation of hybridity, where the protagonists' cross-cultural marriage is seen as an assertion of their hybrid experience, as in the case of Julie, Rae, and Anisa, and as a means to hybridity, as in Abdu's and Mike's cases. Contrary to expectations, it is observed that cross-cultural relationships lead to an anti-hybrid reaction as in Sammar's and Anisa's situations.

Key words: Cross-cultural marriage, Hybrid identities, Cultural hybridity, Linguistic hybridity, Homi Bhabha, Nadine Gordimer, Leila Aboulela, Safi Abdi.

# Résumé

Cette thèse étudie le thème du mariage interculturel et des identités hybrides de personnages dans trois romans anglophones: *The Pickup* (2001) de Nadine Gordimer, *The Translator* (1999) de Leila Aboulela et *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds* (2002) de Safi Abdi.

L'étude cherche à explorer comment les identités culturelles des protagonistes changent lorsqu'ils se marient avec une personne d'une culture différente des leurs et qu'ils rencontrent de nouvelles traditions et de nouvelles croyances. La théorie de l'hybridité développée par Homi Bhabha et par d'autres théoriciens de l'hybridité tels que Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse et Marwan Kraidy peut être un outil pertinent pour analyser l'identité des personnages. Bhabha soutient que ceux qui traversent les cultures vivent dans un « in-between space » ou un « third space » fluctuant entre leur culture d'origine et leur culture d'accueil. Cependant, les conclusions de l'étude montrent que ces personnages de fiction présentent des cas qui n'ont pas été explorés par les théoriciens de l'hybridité. Bien que la plupart des expériences des protagonistes illustrent la notion d'« in-between space » développée par Bhabha, comme Julie, Abdu ou Mike, par exemple, d'autres protagonistes, notamment Sammar, évoluent dans un sens qui va l'encontre de l'hybridité par le biais de l'expérience de la « ghettoisation » et de « l'enclavement » ou, encore comme Anisa, avec son « retour vers la religion ».

On s'aperçoit d'autre part, que plusieurs facteurs de nature culturelle, religieuse, personnelle ou sociale influencent les protagonistes dans les romans : soit ils leur identité hybride s'affirme, soit ils conservent la façon de vivre de leur pays d'origine. On remarque aussi que les mariages interculturels et l'identité hybride sont liés entre eux. Le mariage interculturel peut être à la fois la manifestation de l'hybridité, et dans ce cas il est perçu comme une affirmation du vécu hybride (Julie, Rae et Anisa) servant du même coup de moyen d'aller vers l'hybridité (tel est le cas d'Abdu et de Mike). Contrairement à ce à quoi on pourrait s'attendre, on observe que parfois, comme le montre Sammar et Anisa, les relations interculturelles entraînent une réaction anti-hybride.

Mots clés : Mariage interculturel, Identités hybrides, Hybridité culturelle, Hybridité linguistique, Homi Bhabha, Nadine Gordimer, Leila Aboulela, Safi Abdi.

# Table of Contents

|                                                                  |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Acknowledgment.....                                              | 3   |
| Summary .....                                                    | 5   |
| Résumé .....                                                     | 6   |
| Table of Contents .....                                          | 7   |
| List of annexes .....                                            | 10  |
| Introduction.....                                                | 11  |
| General Introduction.....                                        | 12  |
| Background of the Subject.....                                   | 15  |
| Literature Review .....                                          | 18  |
| Choice of Corpus.....                                            | 23  |
| Thesis.....                                                      | 25  |
| Theoretical Framework.....                                       | 27  |
| Development of the Notion of Hybridity .....                     | 28  |
| Theorists of Cultural Hybridity .....                            | 31  |
| Theorists of Linguistic Hybridity .....                          | 44  |
| Criticisms of Cultural Hybridity .....                           | 50  |
| Definition of Key Terms .....                                    | 53  |
| Cross-cultural Marriage: .....                                   | 54  |
| Hybrid Cultural Identity:.....                                   | 55  |
| Methodology of Research.....                                     | 63  |
| Organization of Thesis.....                                      | 64  |
| Chapter One: Nadine Gordimer's <i>The Pickup</i> .....           | 67  |
| Introduction to Chapter One .....                                | 68  |
| I.a. Part One: The Protagonists' Hybrid Cultural Identities..... | 70  |
| Introduction to Part One .....                                   | 71  |
| I.a.I. Section One: Julie's Hybrid Identity .....                | 75  |
| I.a.I.a. Julie's "In-between" Space or "Third Space" .....       | 76  |
| I.a.I.b. Julie's Third Space.....                                | 95  |
| I.a.I.c. Julie's Unhomeliness .....                              | 98  |
| I.a.I.d. Factors Affecting Julie's Hybridity .....               | 100 |

|                                                                                       |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| I.a.I.e. Conclusion to Julie's Hybrid Identity .....                                  | 112 |
| I.a.II. Section Two: Abdu's Hybrid Identity.....                                      | 115 |
| I.a.II.a. Abdu's Hybrid Identity from Bhabha's and Pieterse's Viewpoints .....        | 115 |
| I.a.II.b. Factors Affecting Abdu's Hybridity.....                                     | 131 |
| I.a.II.c. Conclusion to Abdu's Hybrid Identity.....                                   | 136 |
| I.b. Part Two: Linguistic Hybridity .....                                             | 137 |
| Introduction to Part Two.....                                                         | 138 |
| I.b.I. Polyphony.....                                                                 | 143 |
| I.b.II. Heteroglossia .....                                                           | 152 |
| I.b.III. Intertextuality .....                                                        | 156 |
| I.b.IV. Conclusion to Part Two: Linguistic Hybridity .....                            | 162 |
| I.c. Conclusion to Chapter One .....                                                  | 164 |
| Chapter Two: Leila Aboulela's <i>The Translator</i> .....                             | 166 |
| Introduction to Chapter Two.....                                                      | 167 |
| II.a. Part One: The Protagonists' Hybrid Cultural Identities .....                    | 170 |
| Introduction to Part One .....                                                        | 171 |
| II.a.I. Section One: Sammar's Anti-Hybrid Identity .....                              | 176 |
| II.a.I.a. Living in a "Time Warp" .....                                               | 176 |
| II.a.I.b. Sammar's "Ghettoisation" .....                                              | 179 |
| II.a.I.c. The Evolution of Sammar's Identity through Intercultural Relationship ....  | 185 |
| II.a.I.d. The Hindering Factors to Sammar's Cross-Cultural Marriage .....             | 188 |
| II.a.II. Section Two: Rae's Hybrid Identity from Hall's Viewpoint .....               | 198 |
| II.a.II.a. Rae's Interest in Islam (his interaction with the periphery).....          | 199 |
| II.a.II.b. Rae's Cross-cultural Relationship with Sammar .....                        | 202 |
| II.a.II.c. Rae's Conversion to Islam .....                                            | 203 |
| II.b. Part Two: Linguistic Hybridity.....                                             | 206 |
| Introduction to Part Two.....                                                         | 207 |
| II.b.I. Intertextuality .....                                                         | 209 |
| II.b.II. Heteroglossia.....                                                           | 212 |
| II.c. Conclusion to Chapter Two .....                                                 | 216 |
| Chapter Three: Safi Abdi's <i>A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds</i> .....              | 219 |
| Introduction to Chapter Three.....                                                    | 220 |
| III.a. Part One: The Female Protagonist's Hybrid Identity and Religious Rebirth ..... | 222 |



|                                                                                    |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Introduction to Part One .....                                                     | 223 |
| III.a.I. Anisa’s “In-between” Space.....                                           | 226 |
| III.a.II. Anisa’s Assimilationist Hybridity .....                                  | 229 |
| III.a.III. Anisa’s Religious Rebirth through Intercultural Marriage .....          | 231 |
| III.a.IV. Factors Causing Anisa’s Hybridity and Return to Religious Practice ..... | 235 |
| III.a.V. Intertextuality.....                                                      | 243 |
| III.b. Part Two: The Male Protagonist’s Hybrid Case.....                           | 254 |
| Introduction to Part Two.....                                                      | 255 |
| III.b.I. Mike’s In-between Space.....                                              | 255 |
| III.b.II. Mike’s Destabilizing Hybridity .....                                     | 259 |
| III.b.III. Factors Affecting Mike’s Hybridity.....                                 | 261 |
| III.c. Conclusion to Chapter Three .....                                           | 268 |
| General Conclusion .....                                                           | 269 |
| Résumé .....                                                                       | 321 |
| Summary .....                                                                      | 321 |

## List of annexes

|                                                                   |     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Annex 1: Fictional and Real-life works on Cross-cultural Marriage | 314 |
| Annex 2: Author Index                                             | 315 |
| Annex 3: Index of Notions                                         | 318 |

# Introduction

## General Introduction

The love story of Princess Miriam Al-Khalifa and the U.S. Marine Jason Johnson that was covered by worldwide media and was made into a film entitled *The Princess and the Marine*<sup>1</sup> is not a fairy tale; the story did actually take place.

Princess Miriam is one of five daughters of Sheik Abdullah Bin Ibrahim Al-Khalifa, a relative of Bahrain's present King, Sheik Hamad Bin Isa Al-Khalifa. The Princess has become well known since her love affair with Jason Johnson, an American Marine who was stationed in Bahrain in 1999. The couple met at a shopping mall in Bahrain, where they fell for one another. The American was dazzled by the Princess's Oriental beauty without realizing that she was a member of the Bahrain royal family, and the Princess, in turn, fell in love with him without thinking of his cultural and religious ties. Although Princess Miriam knew that her love for Johnson would be completely rejected by her royal family, she defied all boundaries to be with him. She fled with him to the United States where they got married. She abandoned her aristocratic life as a royal Princess to live as a homemaker in Nevada. At the same time, he risked his career as a U.S. Marine over their illicit love affair.

The Princess faced charges of illegal entrance to the United States and confronted with deportation procedures. She applied for political asylum, stating that she would face persecution if she returned to her country, Bahrain, because of her marriage to a non-Muslim. In May 2001, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service granted her permanent residency status. However, her love for Johnson was not permanent and it did not last long. Some say that Johnson could not bear Miriam's change after marriage, particularly her immersion in night life, partying with friends and ignorant attitude. Although their love defied all cultural and religious boundaries, the couple could not have been more different. She was Muslim, and he was Mormon; she was rich and privileged, and he was a commoner. The couple filed for divorce as tension in the marriage mounted, and their romantic relationship ended after five years of union.

The cross-cultural relationship and marriage of the Eastern Muslim Princess and the Western Mormon Marine reflects what I am going to deal with in my dissertation. Cross-

---

<sup>1</sup> The film starring Mark-Paul Gosselaar and Marisol Nichols in the roles of Jason and Miriam is directed by Mike Robe and was released in 2001.

cultural marriage between Muslims and Westerners in fiction rather than in real life and identity change in such types of marriages are the subject of my doctoral research.

Cross-cultural marriage has become more prevalent in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries with the increase of international contact through travel and migration, mostly from Third-World countries to the West. Various factors, not only migration, are grounds for people from different parts of the world to meet and marry across cultures. International trade, military service abroad, student exchange programs, employment opportunities, tourism, political asylum, technology development, internet chatting, and the evolution of transport; all these factors, under the umbrella term “globalization,” have increased the chances for people to get together and exchange cultural, economic, and religious ideologies. One of the significant consequences of these encounters is marrying across cultures, i.e. across racial, social, cultural, and religious boundaries. The number of people engaging in cross-cultural marriage is increasing as globalization continues, and it may prove that such marriages constitute one of the most significant effects of globalization in present society.

Anyone who engages in cross-cultural marriage is confronted with new beliefs and practices of a different culture. These beliefs might differ from and perhaps oppose those of the native culture. The confrontation, and sometimes struggle, between these different beliefs stirs the concerned partners’ identities and their sense of belonging. The latter’s reaction toward the new situation varies. They either develop a sense of “culture-clash,” a term that denotes the “weakening of norms derived from membership in a particular cultural group when the members of this group are brought into close contact with the contrasting norms of a different cultural group, and are unable to integrate the two sets”<sup>2</sup>; or reveal an inclination to accept the new culture and adapt to the new beliefs. The integration of new elements of a different culture into one’s own culture develops a new hybrid identity comprising the beliefs of two different cultures, the native culture and the host one. Hybrid identities have been the focus of research since the last decade of the twentieth century particularly in diaspora and trans-cultural studies. However, few studies have been done on the subject of hybrid identities that evolve through inter-cultural marriage.

---

<sup>2</sup> Dorothea Cross Leighton, *The Character of Danger*, New York: Basic Books, 1963, cited in Eva Pataki, “Caught between Two Worlds: The Confusion of Cultural Identity in Three British Asian Novels,” University of Debrecen, Hungary, accessed July 28, 2011, <[http://www.theroundtable.ro/Archive/literary\\_studies/eva\\_pataki\\_caught\\_between\\_two\\_worlds.doc](http://www.theroundtable.ro/Archive/literary_studies/eva_pataki_caught_between_two_worlds.doc)>.

Although there is a wide corpus of novels and even autobiographies which deal with cross-cultural marriage,<sup>3</sup> this thesis focuses on three novels for reasons that should be mentioned later. The three novels that I have chosen for analysis are Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*,<sup>4</sup> Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*,<sup>5</sup> and Safi Abdi's *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*.<sup>6</sup> The works are written by three Anglophone authors. Two of them are Arab-Muslim female authors, Leila Aboulela and Safi Abdi, originating from Sudan and Somalia respectively, while the third is Nadine Gordimer, a white South African writer. In addition, the three novels were published at roughly the same period (around the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first): *The Translator* was published in 1999, *The Pickup* in 2001, and *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds* in 2002.

Having lived in post-colonial South Africa and witnessed the various stages of its apartheid regime, Gordimer, the Nobel Prize winner in 1991, made it one of her tasks to analyze what this system did to people and their cultures, particularly the development of racist ideology and class distinction. Nearly all of her published novels and most of her short stories deal with these topics. Taking the present “New South Africa” as its point of departure, *The Pickup* continues to deal with problems of race and class, but it lifts these problems from a local to a global level. The novel is set in the social mix of the new South Africa and an Arab village in the desert. It is a story of love and marriage between an Arab illegal immigrant desperate to evade deportation to his impoverished desert village and a white South African businessman's daughter trying to escape a privileged background she despises.

Aboulela, winner of the Caine Prize for African Writing in 2000, admits that she writes fiction that reflects Islamic logic; fictional worlds where cause and effect are governed by Muslim rationale. However, she asserts that her characters do not necessarily behave as “good” Muslims; they are not ideals or role models. They are, as she sees them, flawed characters trying to practice their faith or make sense of God's will in difficult circumstances.<sup>7</sup> In this context, Aboulela's *The Translator* portrays the life of a young Sudanese widow who is torn between conflicting pressures, beliefs and desires. Sammar, the female protagonist in the novel, who works as a translator at a university in Scotland finds her friendship with her Scottish employer turning into love. However, she cannot turn her back on her home, her

---

<sup>3</sup>A more extensive list of Anglophone and Francophone novels and autobiographies on cross-cultural love relationships and marriage is included at the end of this study.

<sup>4</sup>Nadine Gordimer, *The Pickup*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002.

<sup>5</sup>Leila Aboulela, *The Translator*, Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1999.

<sup>6</sup>Safi Abdi, *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*, Bloomington: 1<sup>st</sup> Books, 2002.

<sup>7</sup>Leila Aboulela, *British Council Literature*, accessed Jan. 2, 2013, <<http://literature.britishcouncil.org/leila-aboulela>>.

culture or her faith. This makes her struggle between her personal desire for love and her religious teachings which prevent her from pursuing this relationship.

In Abdi's novel, which is her first published novel, conflicts pile up between two culturally and religiously different people who engage in a cross-cultural marriage without giving much thought to the obstacles that are coming. Anisa is black, hails from Rako Island, a place in the East, and is raised in the Islamic faith; while Mike is a white American who has no particular religious feelings. The two tie the knot, and it is only after the birth of their second child that the barriers between the couple are really felt.

Each of the protagonists in the three previous novels reacts differently to the changes that face them when they move to a new culture and marry inter-culturally. Some develop a hybrid identity, while others experience an anti-hybrid reaction.

This dissertation seeks to answer three questions: Firstly, how do the protagonists' identities change when they encounter a new culture and marry inter-culturally? Secondly, what are the factors that play a role in the evolution of this change? Thirdly, what is/are the relation(s) between cross-cultural marriage and hybridity?

## Background of the Subject

Marriage between people across nations became noticeable after World War II due to the flow of immigrants all over the world, particularly from Third-World countries to the West. After the end of the War, the majority of Western countries encouraged immigration from their (former) colonies and elsewhere, especially from Third-World countries in the Caribbean, Latin America, South Asia, the Middle East and other areas, to fill a labor shortage, particularly in manual and unskilled occupations. The United Kingdom, for example, received immigrants from all over the British Empire: Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and others. France attracted immigrants mainly from North Africa (or the Maghreb area as they call it), from francophone countries in black Africa, and from the Caribbean region. The United States, Canada, Australia, Belgium, and Germany, and several other Western countries opened their gates for foreigners from all over the globe to get in.

The lack of job opportunities and political instabilities in Third-World countries made the West a primary destination for people who belonged to these areas. The majority of these people were seeking a decent life shaped by a financial, political, and social stability, which

their home countries lacked. They emigrated in large numbers to new destinations where they settled and sought to establish a new beginning. Despite the restrictions on immigration over time, immigrants continued to flow to the West through family reunifications and political asylum. In 2003, it was estimated that the United States accounted for twenty-five million immigrants, Germany for five, France and the United Kingdom for four each.<sup>8</sup>

The flow of immigrants all over the world and their settlement in new countries resulted in encounters between native populations and newcomers. Many of these contacts developed into marriage between individuals who belonged to different races, cultures, and ethnicities. As a result, cross-cultural marriage has become widespread and, to a certain extent, popular. It has been observed that while cross-cultural marriage in the past was mostly between immigrants and nationals, wartime soldiers, or international travelers, today it is more prevalent among people who pursue higher studies abroad, tourists, and internet chatters.

Inter-cultural marriage has become more extensive with globalization and the increase in international mobility. In addition, advancements in technology and transport have made contacts between people easier and more widespread than in the past. This is evident in the following examples, which demonstrate that cross-cultural marriage is increasing over time in different countries. In Germany, for instance, 19,458 German citizens married a non-citizen in a state-registered ceremony in 1960; by 1995 that number increased to 50,686. Another sharp increase in cross-cultural marriage can be observed in Japan, where 3,500 marriages between Japanese citizens and non-citizens took place in 1965; by 1997, the number rose to 27,000. In addition, in Australia, it has been noticed that 22 % of the Australian population claimed more than one ancestry in the 2001 national census—a figure that reflects the high rate of inter-marriage among previous generations; presumably, the numbers are significantly higher today.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, in the United States, 128,396 immigrants were admitted as spouses of U.S. citizens in 1992. By 2002, that number skyrocketed to 294,798 spouses.<sup>10</sup> Demographers in the U.S. observed that the number of inter-racial married couples rose from 150,000 to more than 1.1 million between 1960 and 1990. It has been also noticed that the number of mixed

---

<sup>8</sup> Marwan Kraidy, *Hybridity, or the Cultural Logic of Globalization*, New Delhi: Temple University Press, 2005, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Ingrid Piller, “Cross-cultural Communication in Intimate Relationships,” Basle University, 2007, accessed Jan. 5, 2011, p. 3, <[http://languageonthemove.com/downloads/PDF/piller\\_2007\\_intercult%20comm%20intimate%20relationships.pdf](http://languageonthemove.com/downloads/PDF/piller_2007_intercult%20comm%20intimate%20relationships.pdf)>.

<sup>10</sup> Piller, 2007, p. 4.



race children in the United States has quadrupled since 1970, and that there were six times as many inter-marriages in the mid-90s as there were in the 1960s.<sup>11</sup> The rise in inter-cultural marriages in the United States probably goes back to religious institutions which exert little influence on marital choice due to the fact that marriages have witnessed change since the 1980s from being performed in a religious setting to be carried out in a secular civil ceremony. Thus, it is now easier for individuals in the United States to marry someone from a different religion and even have the freedom of choice to convert to the spouse's religion.<sup>12</sup>

It is not only because of religious institutions that mixed-marriage increased in the U.S., but also because of acculturation variables which Andrzej Kulczycki and Arun Peter Lobo assert that these played the most important role in increasing out-marriage.<sup>13</sup> It was observed that rates of out-marriage were particularly high among Arab Americans: In 1990, 79% of men and 73% of women had a non-Arab spouse. Individuals who were part Arab, native born, and with strong English-language ability were found to have significantly higher rates of inter-marriage. Structural assimilation, as measured by education, was also significantly and positively associated with inter-marriage, especially among younger age groups. The high proportion of exogamous marriages indicated that Arab Americans were assimilating quickly.<sup>14</sup>

Milton Gordon sees inter-marriage as the ultimate form of assimilation, the step by which a minority group finally loses its distinct ethnic identity and is obliterated in a mass of homogeneous Anglo-American culture.<sup>15</sup> In addition, assimilation theory posits that the acculturation and socioeconomic integration of newly arrived groups can lead to further assimilation in the form of inter-marriage with more established groups.<sup>16</sup>

Being assimilated in a new culture means being adjusted to the cultural traits of the host culture; this in turn signifies having an identity that comprises aspects of two cultures, the native culture and the host culture, i.e. having a hybrid identity. Hence, we can deduce that having a hybrid identity leads to cross-cultural marriage, and I would add marrying across

---

<sup>11</sup> Amitai Etzioni, "Other' Americans Help Break Down Racial Barriers," *International Herald Tribune*, May 10, 1997, Cited in Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "Hybridity, So What? The Anti-Hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 18. 2-3 (2001): p. 15.

<sup>12</sup> Norval Glenn, "Interreligious Marriage in the United States: Patterns and Recent Trends," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 44.3 (1982): p. 564.

<sup>13</sup> Andrzej Kulczycki and Arun Peter Lobo, "Patterns, Determinants, and Implications of Inter-marriage among Arab Americans," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64.1 (Feb. 2002): p. 209.

<sup>14</sup> Kulczycki and Lobo, 2002, p. 209.

<sup>15</sup> Milton Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1964, cited in Paul Spickard, *Mixed Blood: Inter-marriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America*, London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989, p. 10.

<sup>16</sup> Kulczycki and Lobo, 2002, p. 208.

cultures also leads to developing a hybrid identity or even to the opposite of hybridity as we will see later on.

Terri Karis and Kyle Kilian assert that individuals with assimilated, bicultural, or marginal identities have a greater tendency to date and/or marry out of their own groups than those who view their ethnic identities and traditions as very important aspects of their self-concept.<sup>17</sup> The latter group subscribe to the traditional-based or ethnic-oriented identity option, for they identify strongly with ethnic traditions and values and weakly with the values of the dominant culture. They are least likely to date or marry out of their own ethnic groups.<sup>18</sup>

The unprecedented growth of cross-cultural marriage and the development of hybrid identities are frequently debated issues today. Considering the significance of the subject, not only in real life, but also its reflection in literary works, makes the phenomenon worth examining. The topic has been examined through fieldwork; however, my interest lies more in literary works, particularly in fiction. Therefore, I have chosen to examine the subject of cross-cultural marriage and hybrid identities in three Anglophone novels written by three female authors.

## Literature Review

Searching through library books, doctoral research, databases, search engines, and electronic resources reveals a substantial number of works published on the subject of cross-cultural marriage and on the topic of hybridity. However, few studies have been done on combining the two issues except for a doctoral dissertation, entitled “Identity Negotiations and Third Culture Building in Intercultural Marriages.”<sup>19</sup> However, the study is performed on real-life people through qualitative interviews rather than on fictional characters. In addition, the theoretical positions guiding this research do not include the viewpoints of Bhabha and the other hybridity theorists that will be integrated into this study, but form a selection of several theories including symbolic interactionism, identity negotiation theory, social

---

<sup>17</sup> Terri Karis and Kyle D. Killian, *Intercultural Couples: Exploring Diversity in Intimate Relationships*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 43.

<sup>18</sup> Karis and Killian, 2009, p. 43.

<sup>19</sup> MaryAnn Seward, “Identity Negotiations and Third Culture Building in Intercultural Marriages,” PhD Thesis, Carbondale: Southern Illinois University, 2008.

constructionism, and third culture building, which is developed by Fred Casmir in his main works on third culture building.<sup>20</sup>

Existing studies on cross-cultural marriage are mostly sociological, probably because the subject in itself is sociological in nature rather than literary. Jill Bystydzienski's book *Intercultural couples: Crossing Boundaries, Negotiating Difference*<sup>21</sup> (2011) provides a comprehensive understanding of how inter-cultural couples negotiate their identities as individuals and as couples in relation to the outside world drawing mainly upon in-depth interviews with persons living in domestic partnerships-heterosexual and same-sex-representing a broad spectrum of ethnic, racial, religious, socioeconomic, and national backgrounds. My dissertation, however, does not conduct an empirical study but rather uses fictional novels to examine the subject of cross-cultural marriage.

Rosemary Anne Breger and Rosanna Hill's *Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice*<sup>22</sup> (1998) is considered one of the essential sociological books dealing with inter-cultural marriage. It is a unique collection of chapters written by fifteen contributors, most of whom have had a personal experience with mixed marriages. The book examines several aspects that underlie cross-cultural marriage such as introducing this type of marriage, studying women in cross-cultural marriages, dealing with the offspring of cross-cultural marriage, examining national legislations and religious doctrines which regulate this kind of marriage in certain countries and which can place constraints on marriage to foreigners seen as too different. One of the pertinent chapters to the subject at hand is "Cross-cultural Marriage within Islam: Ideas and Reality"<sup>23</sup> by Mai Yamani. Yamani examines the story of a couple who wish to marry but are from two different cultures. Although they both share the same religion (both are Sunni Muslims), the female's Saudi Arabian family were more concerned with the lineage of their daughter's partner who came from Pakistan. I found the chapter particularly useful because it clarifies Islamic teachings and rules concerning cross-cultural marriage, which can contribute to understanding the novels under study since they

---

<sup>20</sup> Fred Casmir, "Third Culture Building: A Paradigm Shift for International and Intercultural Communication," *Communication Yearbook* 16 (1993): pp. 407-428; Fred Casmir, "Foundations for the Study of Intercultural Communication based on a Third Culture Building-Model," *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23.1 (1999): pp. 91-116.

<sup>21</sup> Jill M. Bystydzienski, *Intercultural Couples: Crossing Boundaries, Negotiating Difference*, New York and London: New York University Press, 2011.

<sup>22</sup> Rosemary Anne Breger and Rosanna Hill (eds.), *Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice*, Oxford: Berg, 1998.

<sup>23</sup> Mai Yamani, "Cross-Cultural Marriage within Islam: Ideas and Reality," in Breger and Hill, 1998, pp: 153-168.

deal with cross-cultural marriage between characters who belong to Muslim faith and culture and others who belong to Anglo-American culture.

Augustin Barbara's doctoral dissertation "Mariage Mixtes"<sup>24</sup> (1978) is also considered one of the founding works on the subject. Although the study is quite old, the issues it raises bring out a number of interesting ideas that are worth examining in the novels under study. Barbara's dissertation examines the topic of mixed marriage in France, mostly between people of the Maghreb (North African countries) and the French. In 1985, Barbara published a book on the same subject entitled *Mariage sans Frontières*, and in 1989 it appeared in English under the title *Marriage across Frontiers*.<sup>25</sup> The book covers the experiences of various couples who had married across cultures and who agreed to share their stories with the public. It also explains several aspects related to cross-culturally married couples: their integration into the host society; the reaction of their surroundings to their relationship; and the difficulties experienced by their children in finding their own identities— issues that highlight the protagonists' lives in the novels chosen for the present analysis. In 1993, the author published an additional book on the subject entitled *Les Couples Mixtes*.<sup>26</sup>

Another beneficial work on cross-culturally married couples is *Cross-Cultural Marriages and the Church: Living the Global Neighborhood*.<sup>27</sup> The book records case studies of inter-racially married couples from thirteen different countries. Most of the stories demonstrate how an inter-racial marriage might succeed or fail by highlighting problems that need to be overcome and pitfalls to be avoided if such a marriage is to work. It is remarkable to note that the author declares in his book that the strongest bond in international and inter-racial marriages is a mutually shared faith. He states:

Anecdotal evidence would indicate that interracial marriages which are also religiously mixed marriages are more problematic than those where a common faith is shared across ethnic or racial boundaries. This would indicate that religion is a more important factor than race in such marriages.<sup>28</sup>

The fact that inter-racial marriages which are also inter-religious are more problematic than those where a common faith is shared is demonstrated in the novels under study. The essential point of disagreement between the female and male protagonists in the two novels

---

<sup>24</sup> Augustin Barbara, "Mariage Mixtes," thèse de doctorat, Paris: École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1978.

<sup>25</sup> Augustin Barbara, *Marriage across Frontiers*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1989.

<sup>26</sup> Augustin Barbara, *Les Couples Mixtes*, Paris: Bayard, 1993.

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence Driskill, *Cross-cultural Marriages and the Church: Living the Global Neighborhood*, Southern California: Hope Publishing House, 1995

<sup>28</sup> Driskill, 1995, p. X.

*The Translator* and *A Mighty Collision of Two worlds* is religion, perhaps because the female protagonists in the two novels are Muslims and Muslim women are not allowed to marry non-Muslims.

While the previous works focus on empirical methods and real-life people to study inter-culturally married couples, my analysis relies mainly on theory, particularly hybridity theory, rather than experiments and observations, and on fictional characters rather than real-life characters.

In my literature review on hybridity, I have found a number of doctoral dissertations which proved to be pertinent to my study such as, for instance, Marilyne Brun's "Playful Ambiguities: Racial and Literary Hybridity in the Novels of Brian Castro" (2010).<sup>29</sup> Brun's research examines Brian Castro's novels, a contemporary Australian writer born in Hong Kong in 1950, and focuses on the theme of hybridity in his work. Although Brun deals with hybridity in fiction, her work differs from mine in that the novels she adopts do not revolve around cross-cultural marriage. In addition, her dissertation focuses on racial hybridity, while I am more concerned with cultural hybridity.

Veda Laxmi Khulpateea's "State of the Union: Cross-Cultural Marriages in Nineteenth Century Literature and Society",<sup>30</sup> (2007) revolves around inter-racial marriage and hybrid offspring in Britain in nineteenth-century fiction. The study examines how works of fiction illustrate the choice of couples who were forced to privilege one single ethnic identity over the other and the difficulties involved in simplifying complex identities at the time. The dissertation also argues that colonial contexts made ethnic hybridity untenable in the middle to late nineteenth century in contrast to the early decades of the century as well as the eighteenth and twentieth centuries which seemed comparably indifferent to the idea of racial heterogeneity. Though Khulpateea's doctoral research deals with inter-racial marriage and hybridity, it focuses on nineteenth century fiction whose context differs from fiction of the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries in which I am more interested. In addition, the research does not adopt Homi Bhabha's hybridity theory or the other hybridity theorists that I will consult in order to analyze the protagonists' identities in the novels. Gema Ortega also examines the concept of hybridity in his doctoral work "Writing Hybridity: Identity, Dialogics

---

<sup>29</sup>Marilyne Brun, "Playful Ambiguities: Racial and Literary Hybridity in the Novels of Brian Castro," PhD Thesis, Toulouse: Université Toulouse-le Mirail and the University of Melbourne, 2010.

<sup>30</sup>Veda Laxmi Khulpateea, "State of the Union: Cross-Cultural Marriages in Nineteenth Century Literature and Society," PhD Thesis, Binghamton: State University of New York, 2007.

and Women's Narratives in the Americas" (2011).<sup>31</sup> The research critically engages with the intellectual and political discourses that have attempted to define the meaning of hybridity from the time of the Spanish Empire to the postmodern era. The dissertation then argues how the three women writers, Toni Morrison, Rosario Ferré, and Marysé Condé, re-evaluate theories of hybridity challenging the claim that hybridity has provided a site of resistance to hegemonic and monologic forces. While Ortega's dissertation examines contemporary notions of hybridity in fiction, the work does not relate the notion of hybridity to cross-cultural marriage which is the concern of my doctoral research.

Another doctoral study I found pertinent to my work is Hussein Hasan Zeidanin's "Rethinking Hybridity from a Pluralistic Perspective in Selected Twentieth-Century Multiethnic American Fiction and Criticism" (2011).<sup>32</sup> Zeidanin's dissertation considers shortcomings and faults with multiculturalism and hybridity; it reproaches Bhabha's theory of hybridity for signifying internationalism, reproducing ambivalence and nurturing the nihilistic values of absolutism and ethnocentrism, and it aims to reconstruct hybridity on the values of diversity, interdependence and impartiality. While Zeidanin's work criticizes Bhabha's hybridity theory, I adopt the latter's theory despite its shortcomings to analyze the hybrid identities of the protagonists in the novels under study. In addition, Zeidanin explores the issue of hybridity in twentieth-century novels whose context is not necessarily one of cross-cultural marriage and which reflect on the multicultural and hybrid identities of American Indians, African Americans, Arab Americans, Asian Americans and Latino/Latina Americans; my study, in contrast, revolves around novels that deal with cross-cultural marriage, particularly between characters who belong to the Muslim faith.

This review of a number of relevant works on the subject of cross-cultural marriage and hybridity does not constitute an exhaustive survey of research that has been done on these topics. In fact, a fair number of studies and articles have been published on each of these issues. For the purposes of the present study, it is neither possible nor necessary to discuss them all here.<sup>33</sup>

The value of my dissertation lies in the contributions it hopes to have achieved. On the one hand, it relates the subject of cross-cultural marriage to the theory of hybridity and

---

<sup>31</sup>Gema Ortega, "Writing Hybridity: Identity, Dialogics, and Women's Narratives in the Americas," PhD Thesis, Urbana: University of Illinois, 2011.

<sup>32</sup>Hussein Hasan Zeidanin, "Rethinking Hybridity from a Pluralistic Perspective in Selected Twentieth-Century Multiethnic American Fiction and Criticism," PhD Thesis, Pennsylvania: Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2011.

<sup>33</sup> Numerous references on cross-cultural marriage and hybridity are given in the bibliography.

examines the relation(s) between the two in fictional works rather than in empirical studies. On the other hand, it examines novels which have not been analyzed yet from the viewpoint of Bhabha's hybridity and other hybridity theorists, such as Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse, and Marwan Kraidy, whose viewpoints I will employ in order to analyze the protagonists' identities. Thus, the proposed study can further contribute to understanding the chosen novels.

## Choice of Corpus

There exists a wide corpus of fictional works and autobiographies that deal with cross-cultural marriage; I have chosen to work on novels rather than real-life stories. Porter Abbot distinguishes between narrative nonfiction and narrative fiction and declares that the two differ in their referential function. He states that narrative fiction has no constraints that narrative nonfiction shows:

It can record with confidence and exactitude the inner thoughts of its characters. It can also plunder our world in the construction of its world, changing our world at will, adding and subtracting. It can also plunder all the devices of nonfiction narrative and add a whole cluster of its own. It can look just like an historical document or it can look utterly bizarre. It can arouse great feelings of approval or disapproval in its treatment of historical matters. But in so doing it will not have in any way violated its status as fiction.<sup>34</sup>

In fiction, the author often explores the experience of several characters, conveying events from different points of view; whereas in autobiographical works, the reader is exposed to only one version of the truth: the author's version. Since the story revolves around the life of one character, the reader is made aware of only one side of the story and is not acquainted with how the other characters feel. Hence, fictional works are more open for analysis, and readers might present various reactions to the same text. This is why my interest lies more in studying fiction than autobiographical real-life works.

I have looked into a fair number of novels which deal with cross-cultural marriage,<sup>35</sup> and I have observed that the nationalities/cultures of the authors of these novels are widely varied: Indians, Asians, Arabs, Africans, and Westerners, and that the context of the novels is not restricted to only one area or culture since it mostly revolves around marriage between individuals who belong to Third-World countries particularly from the Far East, the

---

<sup>34</sup> Porter Abbott, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 153.

<sup>35</sup> A list of these novels is found in the appendix.

Caribbean, and black Africa and those who belong to the West. Thus, a selection has to be made from this wide corpus.

Due to the fact that Arab-Islamic culture is more familiar to me than any other culture (Chinese, Indian, or Caribbean, etc.), novels on cross-cultural marriage whose context involves this culture are clearly more pertinent for this study. Not only that, but also the constant projection on the relationship between the West and the East, particularly between Muslims and Westerners, by the media and by every means of communication has led me to choose novels whose context revolves around cross-cultural marriage between those who embrace the Muslim faith and culture and those who belong to Anglo-American culture, regardless of the authors' belongings and nationalities.

The selected works meet the following criteria: first, their context revolves around a cross-cultural marriage between a character who belongs to the Muslim faith and culture and another character that belongs to Anglo-American culture. *The Pickup* deals with an inter-cultural marriage between a white South African female protagonist and an Arab-Muslim male character. *The Translator* is based on an inter-cultural love relationship between an Arab-Muslim female protagonist and a Scottish male character. *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds* examines cross-cultural marriage between a non-Arab Muslim female protagonist and an American male character. Hence, the variety of couples in the three novels enables us to see how Muslims' and Westerners' cultural identities interact and evolve when engaged in a cross-cultural love relationship or marriage.

In addition, the three novels make a perfect match and complement each other, for each one throws light on a specific issue. They make an interesting set that opens up dimensions Bhabha and other hybridity theorists have not taken into account, particularly when the Muslim female protagonists experience an anti-hybrid reaction. Julie, in *The Pickup*, for instance, although being a hybrid character, experiences a new type of hybridity when she marries Abdu and moves to his Arab-Muslim village. In contrast, Sammar, in *The Translator*, lives in "ghettoisation and enclavisation" when she faces new cultural beliefs and practices, which are represented by her partner Rae and his Scottish culture, and she rejects taking any step toward a hybrid identity. In Abdi's novel, Anisa's experience of repentance marks the Muslim heroine off from the other characters in my study. After developing a hybrid identity by integrating into the American culture, she experiences a religious awakening when she engages in an inter-religious and inter-cultural marriage, leading her to abandon a hybrid way of life and to return to her religion.



Most of the studies done on the novels are either articles or book chapters; however, no study so far, as far as I know, has analyzed the three novels together or even related the theme of cross-cultural marriage in the novels to the concept of hybridity. Thus, the aim of this dissertation is to fill this gap by analyzing the three novels in relation to one another through the thematic thread of cross-cultural marriage and from the perspective of hybridity theory.

## Thesis

Displaced subjects, immigrants, refugees, exiles and all diasporic groups face cultural dilemma. When they move into a new culture, especially if they are members of a minority culture, they sense the cultural differences that exist between them and the host culture. Their reaction toward these differences would vary depending on various factors of a political, social, religious, historical, and racial nature. On the one hand, some might identify with the new cultural values and even choose to translate themselves culturally. If they make this choice, they would have to form their identity in the tension between the already known and the new culture. They would struggle between maintaining their original cultural heritage while at the same time becoming assimilated into the dominant culture. Thus, they are said to possess a “hybrid” identity or experience what Homi Bhabha calls “in-between” space or “third space,” in which the migrant lives in-between his cultural and religious beliefs and those of the new culture.

On the other hand, others might reject the cultural values of the host culture, for they sense that their cultural identity deviates considerably from that of the host culture. They identify strongly with their ethnic tradition. They live in ghettos and enclaves, establish their own communities, and live by their own rules away from the dominant culture. As Anthias acknowledges: “Through migration and diasporisation, the opposite of hybridity can occur: a ghettoisation and enclavisation process, a living in a ‘time warp,’ a mythologising of tradition.”<sup>36</sup>

Although Bhabha’s notion of “in-between” space and Anthias’ notions of “ghettoisation and enclavisation” are applied to migrants who encounter a new culture

---

<sup>36</sup> Floya Anthias, “Diasporic Hybridity and Transcending Racism: Problems and Potentials,” in Floya Anthias and Cathie Lloyd (eds.), *Rethinking Anti-Racism: From Theory to Practice*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 32.

through crossing cultural boundaries, I suggest applying these notions to inter-culturally married couples even if they are not migrants because they, too, encounter a new culture through their partnership with someone from another culture, as Jill Bystydzienski asserts:

Those who cross cultures (e.g. move from one country to another or establish personal relationships with people of different social backgrounds) or who embody multiple differences (e.g. biracial or multiracial/ ethnic individuals) often do not see themselves as “belonging” to specific groups but rather as residing in “in-between” or “third” spaces from which they develop new hybrid identities and establish innovative sites of collaboration and contestation. This perspective is highly useful for understanding intercultural couples whose identities are constructed subjectively by the partners out of the interrelations among gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, and nationality and the blurring of boundaries between them. Intercultural couple partnerships can thus be conceived as border crossing between multiple categories of social difference.<sup>37</sup>

In the three novels that I have chosen for analysis, the protagonists face new cultural beliefs and practices through their move to a new culture and through their relationship with someone from another culture. Their reaction toward the new situation varies from one character to another. Some develop a hybrid identity when they display a sense of acceptance and adaptation to the partner’s beliefs. This leads them in turn to struggle “in-between” their native beliefs and the new cultural aspects that confront them, while others remain attached to their homeland and live in a state of “ghettoisation and enclavisation.”

Thus, I will study the nature of change (which also comprises the non-change or maintenance of identity) that occurs to the protagonists’ identities through inter-cultural contact within the framework of hybridity theory. In other words, I will investigate the extent to which the protagonists’ identities become hybrid as a result of their encounter with new cultural beliefs and practices. Then, I will analyze the factors which cause this change and which vary from one protagonist to the other depending on the cultural and religious background and on the individuality of each character. Finally, I will examine the role of cross-cultural marriage in the evolution of the protagonists’ identities; thus, determining the relation between cross-cultural marriage and hybridity, or in other words, to see whether the development of hybrid identities occurs due to inter-cultural marriage.

---

<sup>37</sup> Bystydzienski, 2011, p. 10.

## Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by a theoretical framework that depends mainly on hybridity theory. This includes cultural hybridity, which is developed by Homi Bhabha and other notable scholars such as Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse, and Marwan Kraidy, and linguistic hybridity, which is developed by Mikhail Bakhtin and Wolf Schmid; in addition are the notions that oppose cultural hybridity and which are developed by Floya Anthias. The two different forms of hybridity are chosen for they are pertinent to the analysis of the novels under study. On the one hand, most of the protagonists in the novels develop a hybrid cultural identity when encountering someone from another culture. On the other hand, the presence of linguistic hybridity in the novels complements the cultural question for it sheds light on the protagonists' cultural experience since language constitutes a part of cultural identity.

I will adopt different notions developed by the hybridity theorists mentioned above in order to analyze the protagonists' identities. These notions are as follow: Bhabha's "in-between" space or "third space" and "unhomely" aspect; Hall's "periphery and center" metaphor; Pieterse's "assimilationist and destabilizing hybridity"; Kraidy's "cultural chameleons"; together with Floya Anthias' notions of "ghettoisation and enclavisation." Bhabha argues that migrants live in an "in-between" space or "third space" for they oscillate between their native culture and the host culture. They experience the "unhomely" state since they feel that they do not belong to one culture only; in other words, they feel "culturally" homeless. Hall contends that hybridity occurs through the constant exchange between the "center" and "periphery"; the center being the dominant power which is represented by the West and the periphery is represented by Third-world countries. According to Pieterse, "assimilationist hybridity" is when one leans over toward the center and adopts the canon, while "destabilizing hybridity" signifies moving away from the center and reversing the current. Kraidy's "cultural chameleons" means that identifying with a certain culture is context-bound and relational; one identifies with a certain culture or dissociates from another depending on the situation in which he is present. In contrast to the above notions, Anthias argues that hybridity is not always the reaction developed by migrants when encountering a new culture. According to her, the opposite of hybridity can occur; she calls this "ghettoization" and "enclavization," where migrants remain at a distance from the host community and live according to their native beliefs and traditions. Bakhtin's and Schmid's viewpoints will also be consulted in order to analyze the presence of polyphony,

heteroglossia, and intertextuality in the novels. The multiplicity of individual voices, the difference between and within languages, and the presence of intertexts in the novels create several layers of interpretations and meanings of the text, which, in turn, highlight the hybrid issue on the discourse level.

The theory of hybridity will prove to be revealing when analyzing the three novels. As explained previously, people may develop a hybrid identity when they encounter a new culture not only due to migration but also through inter-cultural relationships. Thus, there is a great likelihood that the protagonists in the novels will develop a hybrid identity because of their constant contact with the new culture. Note here that hybridity as a body of principles and concepts should be distinguished from the hybrid identity of individuals. In order to deal with hybrid identities, we have to explain what the theory of hybridity is about. In addition, it is important to draw attention to the fact that the protagonists in the novels are treated as fictional characters rather than real-life characters since fictional characters are more open for analysis; hence, classifying the protagonists into real-life categories would place constraints on the narrative analysis.

Each of the above aspects of hybridity will be explained in more detail in the following sections. The first section seeks to give a definition of the notion of hybridity and set out the development of the concept. The evolution of the term is necessary to understand what type of hybridity will be adopted in the analysis of the novels. The second section considers the concepts of the main theorists I will refer to in the course of my analysis. Finally, the third section discusses the main criticisms directed toward cultural hybridity.

## Development of the Notion of Hybridity

The notion of hybridity, which provides the central approach in this thesis, is a very complex and ambiguous concept. The denotations and connotations of the word have been evolving for centuries. The concept has been used in biology, science, and ethnic studies, and it has been employed in other fields of study such as anthropology, sociology, history, cultural studies, literary and postcolonial studies.

The origin of the word “hybrid” goes back to the seventeenth century. It evolved from the Latin word *hybrida*, referring to the offspring of a tame sow and wild boar. In language, hybrid refers to “a word composed of elements from different languages, for example,

*television* (*tele-* from Greek, *vision* from Latin).<sup>38</sup> The term was later used, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in botany and animal science to refer to the mating of any two plants or animals of different species or varieties. The most common example of hybrid is that of the mule, the result of a cross between a horse and a donkey.

The notion took on a racist element, during the Victorian era, designating individuals who were born to parents of different races. This use of the word was often seen as offensive and abusive at the time for those who were descendants of miscegenation, or mixed races. They were referred to as the “children of freemen and slaves.”<sup>39</sup> In addition, the term “hybrid” was seen as a challenge to the purity and supremacy of the white race. As the American paleontologist and evolutionist E.D. Cope stated:

The highest race of man cannot afford to lose or even to compromise the advantages it has acquired by hundreds of centuries of toil and hardship, by mingling its blood with the lowest. It would be a shameful sacrifice, fraught with evil to the entire human species.<sup>40</sup>

Similarly, Robert Knox, in 1850, argued that hybridity was regarded as “a degradation of humanity and... was rejected by nature.”<sup>41</sup> As can be seen, hybrid people or racially mixed offspring were rejected by early societies and were referred to as morally degenerate and considered a shame to all human beings.

Over time, the notion of hybridity has developed from being associated with racial discourse to refer to a cultural discourse, especially with the rise of postcolonial criticism and ethnic nationalism that prevailed in the twentieth century. Robert Young pointed out that “hybrid” is the word used during the nineteenth century to refer to a physiological phenomenon, while during the twentieth century it came to describe a cultural phenomenon.<sup>42</sup> The association of the word has shifted from being morally degenerate to mixed-race breeds to become a positive label to culturally hybrid people in our global era. This is asserted by the current definition of the word in Merriam Webster dictionary in which the hybrid is defined as a “person whose background is a blend of two diverse cultures or traditions.”<sup>43</sup> As we can notice, a hybrid person nowadays is the product of two diverse cultures and not of two diverse races or a mixed breed as the word used to signify. In addition, as Brian Stross, in his article on the evolution of the term “hybrid,” asserts: “a cultural hybrid... can be a person who

---

<sup>38</sup> “Hybridity,” *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>39</sup> “Hybridity,” *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

<sup>40</sup> Cited in Brun, 2010, p. 33.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Knox, *The Races of Men: A Fragment*, London: Renshaw, 1850, cited in Marwan M. Kraidy, “Hybridity in Cultural Globalization,” *Communication Theory* 12.3 (Aug. 2002): p. 319.

<sup>42</sup> Robert Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture, and Race*, London: Routledge, 1995, p. 6.

<sup>43</sup> “Hybrid,” *Merriam Webster*, accessed Dec. 2, 2011, <<http://www.merriam-webster.com>>.

represents the blending of traits from diverse cultures or traditions, or even more broadly it can be a culture, or element of culture, derived from unlike sources; that is, something heterogeneous in origin or composition.”<sup>44</sup> This shift in meaning that has occurred to the word hybrid is related to globalization and to the increase in international mobility. Boundaries that used to separate cultures in the past have become blurred since the mid-twentieth century. Boundary crossings have led in turn to the establishment of hybrid societies, which are more open to mixture and to the emergence of culturally hybrid people.

It will be seen in the course of this study that hybrid societies and hybrid identities are related issues, although they remain distinct in a number of ways. A hybrid society is a society which involves people from different ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. This does not mean, however, that people in such a society necessarily possess a hybrid identity. On the contrary, these people might develop an anti-hybrid reaction to preserve and maintain their identities. Thus, a hybrid society, on the one hand, can be a rich experience for those who wish to appropriate aspects from different cultures while, on the other hand, it may cause people to desire to preserve their ethnic, racial, and cultural identities and to refuse hybridity. The focus of this dissertation will be the analysis of the protagonists’ identities rather than the societies they are living in. Nevertheless, hybrid society must be reckoned with, as in *The Pickup*, for example, where the female protagonist’s identity evolves against the backdrop of a society where apartheid had been prevalent only a few years earlier.

Keeping in mind the distinction in the association of “hybridity” with racial discourse and mixed breeds during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and its attachment to cultural discourse since the mid-twentieth century leads us to adopt the latter use of the word in examining the novels forming the object of this study. Although the question of race cannot be ignored, for it is part of cultural identity especially among older generations in Gordimer’s *The Pickup*, the protagonists in the novels are culturally hybrid characters rather than racially hybrid breeds. They are not descendents of miscegenation but are engaged in a cross-cultural love relationship and marriage, which play a role in exposing them to a different culture and hence of becoming culturally hybrid. The presence of hybridity in the novels is thus a consequence of cross-cultural marriage and of moving to a new culture rather than of mixed parentage.

---

<sup>44</sup> Brian Stross, “The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture,” *The Journal of American Folklore* 112.445 (summer 1999): p. 245.

Since cultural hybridity is going to be the main type of hybridity and the form of hybridity most relevant to analyze the protagonists' identities, the following section will set forth the main theorists who have studied this type of hybridity.

## Theorists of Cultural Hybridity

In today's globalised and multicultural world, hybridity is an issue often dealt with and argued about. Again, one is struck by the diversity of disciplines that have employed the notion to study mixed-race breeds, trans-cultural mixes, diasporic or postcolonial identities, and even artistic blends. The following sections focus on the works of major theorists—Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse, and Marwan Kraidy—whose diverse contributions are beneficial to address the notion in its cultural context.

### *Bhabha's Concept of Hybridity*

Homi K. Bhabha is regarded as one of the founding scholars of the concept of hybridity. His book *The Location of Culture* (1994) was, and still is, considered one of the most influential works in English to introduce the notion. Bhabha's hybridity was initially used to expose the conflicts in colonial discourse, and it was later extended to address both the heterogeneous array of signs in modern life and the various ways of living with difference.<sup>45</sup>

In most of his writings, Bhabha acknowledges the relation of mutual dependence and interchange between the British colonizers and their Indian subjects during the colonial period. Although both the colonizers and the colonized were mutually affected by this exchange, it was frequently the colonizers who imposed their cultural values and practices on the colonized. Their aim was to transform the identities of the colonized subjects to that of colonial authorities in order to control them. This was usually done through "mimicry," to use Bhabha's term, where the colonized Indians were made to imitate the culture and adapt language of colonial authority. This resulted in a drastic change in the ideology of colonized people that became a mere imitation of the "original."

---

<sup>45</sup> Nikos Papastergiadis, "Tracing Hybridity in Theory," in Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood (eds.), *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*, London: Zed Books, 1997, p. 275.

Ironically, however, the cultural imposition that was practiced on colonized subjects resulted in changes to Indian identity, a hybrid position involving aspects of two different cultures, the home culture, and that of the colonizers. This situation was later employed as a resistance strategy to write against the Empire in postcolonial times. By “imitating” the English language, for instance, many of the once colonized writers have adopted the language to negatively address various aspects of the “imperial” culture. The process of mimicry is thus hybrid to the extent that “two cultural identities tend to adopt features one of the other.”<sup>46</sup> As Bhabha states: “hybridity is the process by which the colonial governing authority undertakes to translate the identity of the colonized (the Other) within a singular universal framework, but then fails producing something familiar but new.”<sup>47</sup>

As can be seen from the example of India, colonialism was one of the factors leading to dual identities. In addition, the colonization and exploitation of people led to the migration of people from colonial countries in large numbers to countries where they could settle safely. In a sense, these immigrants became “citizens” of two countries, their native country and the host one.<sup>48</sup>

Bhabha believes that the postcolonial world should valorize spaces of mixing, for these spaces of hybridity offer the most profound challenge to colonialism. For him, hybridity represents the triumph of the postcolonial or the subaltern over the hegemonic. He states:

Hybridity subverts the narratives of colonial power and dominant cultures. The series of inclusions and exclusions on which a dominant culture is premised are deconstructed by the very entry of the formerly-excluded subjects into the mainstream discourse. The dominant culture is contaminated by the linguistic and racial differences of the native self.<sup>49</sup>

As the quote reveals, hybridity’s aim is to destabilize power, eliminate binaries, and provide voice to the subaltern. This is asserted in the following quote:

[...] the hybrid strategy or discourse opens up a space of negotiation where power is unequal but its articulation may be equivocal. Such negotiation is neither assimilation nor collaboration. It makes possible the emergence of an “interstitial” agency that refuses the binary representation of social antagonism. Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give

---

<sup>46</sup> Monika Fludernik, “Hybridity,” in David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan (eds.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, New York: Routledge, 2005, p. 228.

<sup>47</sup> Bhabha cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 279.

<sup>48</sup> Bahareh Bahmanpour, “Fluid Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri’s *Interpreter of Maladies*,” p. 4, accessed Sep. 30, 2010, <<http://dalea.du.se/theses/archive/169a2ec1-c26e-4ac6-8173-6f525b263a2c/bf9ee670-23dc-42d7-a6e9-5c7138204168.pdf>>.

<sup>49</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994, cited in Abdennebi Ben Beya, “Mimicry, Ambivalence and Hybridity,” accessed Sep. 25, 2011, <<http://english.emory.edu/Bahri/1WEBPAGE.HTML>>.



narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part in the whole.<sup>50</sup>

Bhabha introduces the notion of “cultural translation” as a way of negotiation between two cultures. This translation is a way of imitating an original which can be “simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum.”<sup>51</sup> Translation is the passage between the original and the simulacrum. Thus the original is always being created again and again, just like the simulacrum itself.

It is in the concept of “negotiation” that Bhabha differs from Edward Said, whose work *Orientalism*<sup>52</sup> (1979) constitutes the stepping stone for Bhabha to theorize his concept of hybridity. While Said suggests that “colonial power and discourse is possessed entirely by the colonizer,” Bhabha emphasizes “the mutualities and negotiations across the colonial divide.” However, in his later work, *Culture and Imperialism*<sup>53</sup> (1994), Said shifted his view from seeing an unbridgeable gap between West and East to expressing approval of the interaction and exchange between the two polarities. “All cultures,” he writes, “are involved in one another, none is single and pure, all are hybrid, heterogeneous, extraordinarily differentiated, and unmonolithic.”<sup>54</sup>

In his later work, Said focuses on non-western literary and cultural creativity and acknowledges resistance against dominant power. In a similar manner, Bhabha discusses subaltern resistance which threatens colonial authority. He talks about a number of mechanisms which may threaten colonial domination such as fetishism, sly civility, and paranoia. He suggests that colonial power could be discussed and negotiated, and he goes beyond Said’s work to establish his own theoretical position based on the notion of “hybridity.” He posits hybridity as “a form of liminal or in-between space, where the cutting edge of translation and negotiation occurs and which he terms the ‘third space.’”<sup>55</sup> This notion of “third space,” as Gema Ortega<sup>56</sup> asserts in his PhD thesis, lies in his development of Edward Said’s idea of vacillation that is mentioned in his most famous work, *Orientalism*. According to Said:

---

<sup>50</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “Culture’s In-Between,” in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*, London: Sage Publications, 1996, p. 58.

<sup>51</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, “The Third Space,” in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p. 210.

<sup>52</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, London: Penguin Books, 1979.

<sup>53</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, New York: Random House, 1994.

<sup>54</sup> Said, 1994, p. xxv.

<sup>55</sup> Bhabha, in Hall and du Gay, 1996.

<sup>56</sup> Ortega, 2011, p. 57.

What gives the immense number of encounters [between East and West] some unity however is the vacillation I was speaking about earlier. Something patently foreign and distant acquires, for one reason or another, a status more rather than less familiar. One tends to stop judging things either as completely novel or as completely well known; a new median category emerges, a category that allows one to see new things, things seen for the first time, as versions of a previously known thing. In essence such a category is not so much a way of receiving new information as it is a method of controlling what seems to be a threat to some established view of things.<sup>57</sup>

Said's passage plants the seed for the rest of Bhabha's work. The "third space" Bhabha speaks of is the new median category that Said refers to in his passage. Bhabha adds: "The importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the third space which enables other positions to emerge."<sup>58</sup> In other words, hybridity does not necessarily lie in the combination of two original identities or cultures; rather, it emerges in a "third space" that allows various elements of different cultures to interact. As Nikos Papastergiadis suggests:

The positive feature about hybridity is that it invariably acknowledges that identity is constructed through a negotiation of difference, and that the presence of fissures, gaps, and contradictions is not necessarily a sign of failure. In its most radical form, the concept also stresses that identity is not the combination, accumulation, fusion or synthesis of various components, but an energy field of different forces. Hybridity is not confined to a cataloguing of difference. Its 'unity' is not found in the sum of its parts, but emerges from the process of opening what Homi Bhabha has called a third space within which other elements encounter and transform each other.<sup>59</sup>

Thus, Bhabha asserts the formation of hybridity "from the interweaving of elements of the colonizer and colonized, challenging the validity and authenticity of any essentialist cultural identity."<sup>60</sup> This hybrid identity is positioned within a "third space" which emerges from the tension between two different cultures and which functions as a "lubricant" in the conjunction of cultures.<sup>61</sup> In describing this situation, Papastergiadis states:

The interaction between the two cultures proceeds with the illusion of transferable forms and transparent knowledge, but leads increasingly into resistant, opaque and dissonant exchanges. It is in this tension that a 'third space' emerges which can effect forms of political change that go beyond antagonistic binarisms between rulers and ruled.<sup>62</sup>

Bhabha likens the "third space" or "in-between" space to the metaphor of the stairwell,

---

<sup>57</sup> Said, 1979, p. 58.

<sup>58</sup> Bhabha, in Rutherford, 1990, p. 211.

<sup>59</sup> Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 258.

<sup>60</sup> Bhabha, cited in Paul Meredith, "Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-cultural Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand," conference paper, Massey University, July 7-9, 1998, p. 2

<sup>61</sup> Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997.

<sup>62</sup> Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 279.

which represents connection between disparate cultures, and in which interaction takes place:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.<sup>63</sup>

The so-called “third space” is thus produced in the process of translation and negotiation which “opens up the possibility of articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities.”<sup>64</sup> Bhabha’s “third space” is “the ‘inter’—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the in-between space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture or the politics of polarity by which we emerge as the others of ourselves.”<sup>65</sup>

Bhabha has extended the use of the concept of hybridity from its colonial context to celebrate cultural blends, identities’ reconstruction, and border crossings in our global era. He used the concept of “borderland” in his cultural studies to interpret the emerging postcolonial societies of the modern world. While identity change was often imposed by colonial power during colonial times, a more voluntary change of identity occurs nowadays through migration, political displacement, economic necessity, or inter-cultural relationships. Bhabha contends that just like subordinate subjects challenge colonial authorities by their hybrid position, so do the diasporic voices from the margins by interrupting national cultural homogeneity, creating an ambivalent, liminal, third space that disrupts national grand narratives.<sup>66</sup> He sees the transgression of national or ethnic borders as a pre-condition to the occurrence of hybridity. He states: “Persons who have lived in more than one culture or who straddle two or more cultures are ‘hybrids’ who create ‘counter-narratives’ that both evoke and erase cultural boundaries.”<sup>67</sup>

The notions of “third space” and “in-between space” have emerged to describe positions which fall on the border, neither completely inside nor completely outside. It is in this space that the migrant oscillates between the two cultures and out of which he/she will develop a new identity.

---

<sup>63</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>64</sup> Bhabha, in Rutherford, 1990, p. 210-211.

<sup>65</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 38-39.

<sup>66</sup> Bhabha, 1994, cited in John Scott, *Sociology: The Key Concepts*, New York: Routledge, 2006, p. 83.

<sup>67</sup> Bhabha, 1994, cited in Bystydzienski, 2011, p. 50.

Moreover, Bhabha stresses the notion of “unhomeliness” of the migrant when cultural boundaries become blurred. He explains:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres... In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. In the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world.<sup>68</sup>

Jonathan Friedman explicates Bhabha’s notion of “unhomeliness,” stating:

Bhabha stresses the importance of the position of the migrant (like himself, of course), a person who is somehow in two places and maintains a double perspective on reality... The argument is that the migrant must not be placed in one cultural space. This would be tantamount to essentialism, racism, nationalism... all the same. Instead, there is fluidity and an essential (if you will) instability of boundedness. He uses the word ‘unhomely’ to refer to this situation.<sup>69</sup>

As we can see from the above quotations, unhomeliness signifies “the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations”;<sup>70</sup> it is the situation where migrants live in a sort of displacement. It occurs when the private becomes public and the public becomes private and when migrants discover that their identity is not stable but is constructed in a continuous process. This is how the hybrid is formed out of a dual process of “displacement and correspondence in the act of translation.”<sup>71</sup>

Bhabha goes on to state that the space in which cultural hybridity is constituted is a place of fluidity and movement, as Anthias and Lloyd assert: “It is clear that this does not occur out of a simple process of accretion nor it is ever complete; it is full of discontinuities and ruptures.”<sup>72</sup> In addition, Bhabha and Spivak point out: “subjectivity is no longer monolithic, and hybrid identities are never complete in themselves. Rather they are composed

---

<sup>68</sup> Homi Bhabha, “The World and the Home,” *Social Text* 10.2-3 (1992): p. 141.

<sup>69</sup> Jonathan Friedman, “Global Crises, the Struggle for Cultural Porkbarrelling: Cosmopolitans versus Locals, Ethnicity and Nationals in an Era of de-Hegemonisation,” in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 78.

<sup>70</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>71</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 219.

<sup>72</sup> Floya Anthias and Cathie Lloyd (eds.), *Rethinking Anti-Racism: From Theory to Practice*. London: Routledge, 2002, p. 30.

from different sources and many locations and remain open to alteration and reinscription.”<sup>73</sup> Hence, hybrid identities, despite being hybrid, remain open to change and alteration.

Having introduced Bhabha’s concept of hybridity and the evolution in the use of the term from colonial discourse to inter-cultural context, I will refer to the basic notions used in this theory to analyze the protagonists’ inter-cultural identities in the novels under study. These notions are the following: “in-between” space or “third space,” and “unhomely” lives. Just like the migrants who face new aspects of a different culture when they move into a new environment, so do the protagonists in the novels when they enter into a cross-cultural marriage or move to a new culture.<sup>74</sup> They are confronted with new beliefs and cultural practices of a different culture. Note that the previous notions are not the only ones that will serve the analysis of my novels, for various concepts developed by other theorists will be adopted in the course of the study to better understand the change (or non-change) that occurs in the protagonists’ identities.

### *Hall’s Concept of Hybridity*

In addition to Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall is considered one of the important scholars contributing to the concept of hybridity. The concept has elaborated on Hall’s evocation of “new ethnicities.”<sup>75</sup> With the term “new ethnicities,” Hall suggests that the category “black” is often essentialised so that critics should consider the complexity of any form of identity or ethnicity. “New ethnicities” allows the restructuring of identities and cultures, which opens up a space for translation and negotiation, hence a space for hybridity. Anthias and Lloyd assert: “whilst the new ethnicities, it is argued, involve a search for roots and grounding, they are not stymied by a search for identity on the basis of origin. Ethnicity, in this case, relates both to the homeland, and to the society of settlement, and is reconfigured within a diasporic space.”<sup>76</sup> Hall also argues that diasporic identity is always hybrid, always in process and is not stable.

In addition, Hall contends that the term hybridity refers to “the constant process of

---

<sup>73</sup> Cited in Joseph Raab and Martin Butler (eds.), *Hybrid Americas: Contacts, Contrasts, and Confluences in New World*, Berlin: Bilingual Press, 2008, p. 58.

<sup>74</sup> Note that I am dealing with narrative characters rather than real life people.

<sup>75</sup> Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities,” in David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge, 1996, pp: 441-449.

<sup>76</sup> Anthias and Lloyd, 2002, p. 29.

differentiation and exchange between the centre and the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions.”<sup>77</sup> This means that the constant exchange between the center (the dominant position) and the peripheries (the margins) brings about a hybrid position which connects the two positions together.

For Hall, the role of the hybrid position is to “undermine dominant formations by insisting on the presence of otherness within the dominant centre.”<sup>78</sup> This does not mean, however, that the Others have occupied the place of the center; for Hall maintains, on the contrary, that the role of the hybrid position lies in “decentering” the center. In other words, there is no dominant position which takes the place of the center, for every position is a center in itself. Hall states: “We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always ‘in context’, positioned.”<sup>79</sup> Hence, the point of argument according to Hall as Frello suggests lies in the potential of a specific marginal position for displacing the centered perspective and thereby undermining the taking-for-grantedness of the perspective of the center.<sup>80</sup>

The hybrid position is thus understood in terms of “displacement” rather than in terms of “blending”:

What is at issue is not some ‘happy mixture’ of cultures but the ‘double consciousness’ of the exile. That is, focusing on hybridity involves focusing on ‘positioning’, rather than on ‘mixing’ of cultural forms. It involves focusing on the relation between the ‘centre’ and the ‘margin’ in one way or the other – be it the relation between the West and the rest or between majority and minority. And it involves focusing on how the penetration of the centre by the marginalized undermines the naturalized dominant position of the centre. Hybridity is about the introduction of ‘otherness’ – in terms of an ‘impurity’ that contaminates, disturbs and displaces the idea of purity. And the migrant’s insistence on belonging in the centre is a very concrete example of this.<sup>81</sup>

In short, when talking about hybridity theory and transgression concepts, Hall argues that it is about “displacement” rather than about “mixture,” and what is being displaced is not cultures but naturalized categories.

---

<sup>77</sup> Hall, “New Ethnicities,” cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274.

<sup>78</sup> Hall cited in Birgitta Frello, “Cultural Hybridity– Contamination or Creative Transgression?” Department of Culture and Identity, Roskilde University, AMID Working Paper Series 54/2006, p. 7, accessed Jan. 5, 2012, <[http://www.amid.dk/pub/papers/AMID\\_54-2006\\_Birgitta\\_Frello.pdf](http://www.amid.dk/pub/papers/AMID_54-2006_Birgitta_Frello.pdf)>.

<sup>79</sup> Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” accessed Dec. 19, 2011, p. 222, <[http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall\\_cultural\\_identity.pdf](http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall_cultural_identity.pdf)>.

<sup>80</sup> Frello, 2006, p. 7.

<sup>81</sup> Birgitta Frello, “Essentialism, Hybridism, and Cultural Critique,” p. 3, accessed Jan. 5, 2012, <<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ccsr/documents/FrelloEssentialism.pdf>>.

Moreover, Hall as opposed to Ulf Hannerz, a professor in social anthropology, believes that migrants and refugees are the ones who are capable of occupying a transgressive position vis-à-vis conventional cultural categories, and are the ones who face cultural challenges as they move to new cultures. He states:

You have to be familiar enough with it [the centre] to know how to move in it. But you have to be sufficiently outside it so you can examine it and critically interrogate it. And it is this double move or, what I think one writer after another have called, the double consciousness of the exile, of the migrant, of the stranger who moves to another place, who has this double way of seeing it, from the inside and the outside.<sup>82</sup>

On the contrary, Ulf Hannerz believes that migrants are likely to avoid cultural challenges because of their vulnerable position. He regards diplomats and intellectuals as more cosmopolitans than migrants, and believes that their knowledge can be easily re-contextualized in different settings. He defines cosmopolitans as “a certain meta-cultural position, which implies a detachment from the culture of origin and a willingness to engage with the other—that is, an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences.”<sup>83</sup>

Although Hannerz and Hall differ in the ways they grant the position of hybridity to various groups of people, they agree on the fact that hybridity applies to displaced people. According to Hall, displaced people and diasporas “are obliged to inhabit at least two identities, to speak at least two cultural languages, to negotiate and ‘translate’ between them.” In addition, he states that these hybrids

retain strong links to and identifications with the traditions and places of their origin. But they are without the illusion of any actual ‘return’ to the past. Either they will never, in any literal sense, return or the places to which they return will have been transformed out of all recognition by the remorseless processes of modern transformation. In that sense there is no going home again.<sup>84</sup>

Stuart Hall notes that cultural identity, “far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, [is] subject to the continuous ‘play’ of history, culture and power.” Such identities are never complete and are always in flux. Echoing Bhabha, Hall explains that such a cultural identity “belongs to the future as much as to the past” and that it “undergoes

---

<sup>82</sup> Stuart Hall and Naoki Sakai, “A Tokyo Dialogue on Marxism, Identity Formation and Cultural Studies,” in Kunan-Hsing Chen, *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 364.

<sup>83</sup> Ulf Hannerz, *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*, New York: Columbia University, 1992, p. 252.

<sup>84</sup> Stuart Hall, “Culture, Community, Nation,” in David Boswell and Jessica Evans (eds.), *Representing the Nation: A Reader*, New York: Routledge, 1999, p. 43.

constant transformation” in tandem with historical changes.<sup>85</sup> He further explicates:

I think cultural identity is not fixed, it's always hybrid. But this is precisely because it comes out of very specific historical formations, out of very specific histories and cultural repertoires of enunciation, that it can constitute a 'positionality', which we call, provisionally, identity. It's not just anything. So each of those identity-stories is inscribed in the positions we take up and identify with, and we have to live this ensemble of identity-positions in all its specificities.<sup>86</sup>

Hence, identities are not stable and are in continuous fluidity, revealing the hybrid nature of one's identity. Nikos Papastergiadis synthesises the work of Hall and Bhabha and discusses how Hall's theories of cultural identity are relevant to hybridity. Papastergiadis writes: “According to Stuart Hall, cultural identity is always hybrid, but he also insists that the precise form of this hybridity will be determined by specific historical formations.”<sup>87</sup> Hybridity is consequently a result of historical encounters between groups either through colonial settlement or interaction between diverse populations in countries of migration.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to Bhabha's hybridity notions, I will refer to Hall's theory of hybridity in the analysis of the novels, particularly his contention that hybridity is formed out of the constant exchange between the center and periphery. As we shall see with Rae's case in Aboulela's novel, the protagonist's hybrid identity is developed out of his exchange with the “periphery” which is represented by Islamic faith and culture.

### *Pieterse's Notion of Hybridity*

Nederveen Pieterse distinguishes between hybridity as a notion of syncretism or the fusion of religious forms and hybridity as a result of migration. He also argues that hybridity has been a prominent theme in cultural studies where “it denotes a wide register of multiple identity, cross-over, pick-n-mix, boundary-crossing experiences and styles, matching a world of growing migration and diaspora lives, intensive inter-cultural communication, everyday multiculturalism and erosion of boundaries.”<sup>89</sup> Exposure to global communication and cross-

---

<sup>85</sup> Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.), *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p. 236.

<sup>86</sup> David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds.), *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 504.

<sup>87</sup> Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity*, Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2000, p. 189.

<sup>88</sup> Papastergiadis, 2000, p. 189.

<sup>89</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “Hybridity, So What? The Anti-hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition,” *Theory, Culture & Society* 18. 2-3 (2001): p. 3.



cultural contact, according to Pieterse, plants the seed for a hybrid culture to take root. To him, hybrid identity allows the globe to unite in its differences, to be a truly multicultural society that is able to recognize and reconcile diversity.

At a general level, Pieterse argues, hybridity concerns the mixture of phenomena which are held to be different, separate; hybridization then refers to a cross-category process. The categories can be cultures, nations, ethnicities, status groups, classes, genres, and hybridity, by its very existence, blurs the distinctions among them. Hybridity functions, next, as part of a power relationship between center and margin, hegemony and minority, and indicates a blurring, destabilization or subversion of that hierarchical relationship.<sup>90</sup> Thus, Pieterse, like Bhabha, believes that hybridity is a means of subverting binaries. In addition, he contends that once hybridity becomes the “new norm,” the components lose dissimilarity through their merger in the new compound. Newcomers or a new generation may no longer be aware that it is a hybrid, or if it is, that it matters.<sup>91</sup>

Moreover, Pieterse suggests that we can construct a continuum of hybridities in view of cultural hegemony, particularly the hegemony of the West. He states: “On one end an assimilationist hybridity that leans over towards the center, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony and, at the other end, a destabilizing hybridity that blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center.”<sup>92</sup> The center, according to Pieterse, is the hegemonic dominant culture which is now represented by the West. He remarks:

European and Western culture are part of the global *mélange*. This is an obvious case if we reckon that Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from ‘the Orient.’ The hegemony of the West dates only from very recent times, from around 1800, and, arguably, from industrialization.<sup>93</sup>

Hence, an assimilationist hybridity is the one in which the center predominates. Manuel Vasquez and Marie Marquardt explain that “assimilationist hybridity encourages immigrants to become part of mainstream multicultural America, while destabilizing hybridity provides them with tools for diverting the current and staying outside of the mainstream.”<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *Globalization and culture: Global Mélange*, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield publishers, 2009, p. 78.

<sup>91</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 92.

<sup>92</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

<sup>93</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 76.

<sup>94</sup> Manuel A. Vasquez and Marie F. Marquardt, *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion Across the Americas*, Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003, p. 169.

Pieterse's two notions of "assimilationist hybridity" and "destabilizing hybridity" will be consulted in the analysis of the novels. On the one hand, Julie, in Gordimer's *The Pickup*, experiences an "assimilationist hybridity" in which she leans over toward the center when she moves to Abdu's village by assimilating into the dominant culture, which is in our case the Arab-Muslim culture. On the other hand, Rae in Aboulela's novel and Mike in Abdi's novel, experience a "destabilizing hybridity" when they reverse the current and move away from the center, which is represented by their American and Scottish cultures, by converting to Islam, a religion that is abhorred and marginalized in their countries.

### *Marwan Kraidy's Concept of Hybridity*

Another noteworthy contribution to the field of hybridity has been made by Marwan Kraidy. Kraidy considers "hybridity as a cultural effect of globalization caused by voluntary and forced migration, wars, invasions, slavery, intermarriages, and trade."<sup>95</sup> He states:

Hybridity is one of the emblematic notions of our era. It captures the spirit of the times with its obligatory celebration of cultural difference and fusion, and it resonates with the globalization mantra of unfettered economic exchanges and the supposedly inevitable transformations of all cultures. (p. 1)

In addition, Kraidy believes that the notion of hybridity "invokes the fusion of two (or more) components into a third term irreducible to the sum of its parts. By unhinging the identities of its ingredients without congealing into a stable third term, hybridity enters a vicious circle where its condition of existence is at the same time its kiss of death" (p. 66).

Kraidy contends that cross-cultural contact is essential for hybridity to take place; this recalls Bhabha's argument which states that the transgression of national or ethnic borders is a pre-condition to the occurrence of hybridity. Kraidy notes that "since hybridity involves the fusion of two hitherto relatively distinct forms, styles, or identities, cross-cultural contact, which often occurs across national borders as well as across cultural boundaries, is a requisite for hybridity" (p.5). For him, cross-cultural contact involves movement which occurs in international communication, either through media or through migration. I find myself in agreement with Kraidy's point that cross-cultural contact is necessary for hybridity to occur. I would add that not only through migration can hybridity evolve, but also through cross-cultural marriage or inter-cultural love relationships.

---

<sup>95</sup> Kraidy, 2005, p. 46. Further reference to this source will be provided parenthetically in the body of the text to avoid citing the reference in consecutive footnotes.

Kraidy studied Maronite society in Lebanon with the aim of understanding the possession of hybrid cultural identity. His study is worth looking at, for it highlights a certain aspect of hybrid identity: the sense of belonging to two cultures, yet to none. He states:

An overriding concern among young Maronites was their inability and unwillingness to exclusively belong to one or the other of what they perceived as two irreconcilable worldviews... Simultaneously identifying with Western and Arab cultures and rejecting parts of both of them, young Maronites embody hybridity in that they live simultaneously on two sides of a symbolic fault line without full allegiance to either. (p.128)

As the previous quote reveals, the Maronites in Lebanon identify with both Western and Arab cultures, yet they belong to neither. This position is adopted by many of those who were interviewed by Kraidy who explain their stand:

Most readily acknowledged themselves as Arabs or “similar to Arabs” because they spoke Arabic and lived in the Arab world and embraced values such as hospitality and social compassion that they perceived as typically Arab, but most also declined to identify with social and religious conservatism, authoritarianism, and anti-Western attitudes that they associated with Arab societies. Simultaneously, young Maronites identified with western commitments to individual freedom and civil liberties but criticized Western individualism and sexual mores. (p.128)

Hence, the majority of Maronites in Lebanon, according to Kraidy’s study, feel confused about their identity. They desire to live a Western lifestyle, but at the same time are bound to eastern values, resulting in a hybrid identity, which is a blend of both Arab and Western cultures.

Furthermore, Kraidy states that Lebanese Maronites are referred to as “cultural chameleons” (p.139) in the sense of possessing a relational identity. In other words, they identify with Westerners or Arabs according to the context in which they are present. For example, one of the interviewees in Kraidy’s sample admitted his reluctance to identify himself as an Arab when he is among Westerners because of his weariness of being associated with Western stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims (p.139). Another interviewee confessed that he would deny his Arab identification when a Muslim asks about his belonging because, he asserts: “if you are a Christian in an Arab country, you lose your rights and freedom... you are rated as second class citizen” (p.139). Thus, Lebanese Maronites’ identification as Westerners or Arabs is context-bound.

Following Bhabha’s position concerning hybridity and mimicry, Kraidy believes that the hybridity of Lebanese Maronites is achieved through mimicry. An impression adopted by several interviewees in Kraidy’s study which reveals that, “the social life of the Maronites has a very non-Lebanese face. They like to live the European way, or the American way. Maybe

because of all these programs on television, maybe because they travel a lot... They brought different lifestyles with them or got them from television” (p.137). One of the interviewees provided examples such as the “torn jeans fashion,” and the word “man” as a greeting device as instances of this mimicry. However, the interviewee asserts: “imitation occurred mostly at the superficial level of appearances rather than in mentalities and actions.” He further explains that what this means is that “they look western, but they have the same old archaic mentality” (p.138).

In summary, the study of hybridity in Lebanese Maronite society by Kraidy highlights different aspects worthy of investigation while analyzing the characters in the novels under study, particularly Abdi’s novel. First, the idea of identifying with two cultures at the same time; the notion of identity being context-bound or relational; and the superficial imitation of a new culture, while at the same time attempting to preserve one’s own native beliefs and traditions. I will refer to the notions of “cultural chameleon” and “relational identity” when analyzing Safi Abdi’s novel, for the female protagonist, Anisa, denies her Muslim identity when she settles in American society, in order to avoid being an underrated citizen; however, on returning to her homeland, she asserts her religious belonging in order to gain her family’s and society’s acceptance.

## Theorists of Linguistic Hybridity

Language is considered a basic criterion in determining a person’s sense of cultural belonging and identity. It helps situate people in a social group or as outsiders of this group. Howard Giles and Kimberly Noels justify why language is so important for inter-ethnic relations and cultural identity. They state:

Language serves to classify people as members of a particular ethnic group; language is believed to be an important element of ethnic identity; probably more so than cultural background for many ethnic groups; language can be used to enhance solidarity between ingroup members and to exclude outgroup members from interacting with people who belong to the ingroup.<sup>96</sup>

Bearing in mind that language constitutes an essential part of one’s cultural identity, it would be appropriate to examine the language through which the characters of the three

---

<sup>96</sup> Howard Giles and Kimberly Noels, “Communication accommodation in intercultural encounters,” in J. Martin, T. Nakayama and L. Flores (eds.), *Readings in cultural contexts*, Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1998, pp: 139-149, cited in Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 58.

novels are presented and to trace the hybrid aspect of this language. For Mikhail Bakhtin, form and content in discourse are one and the same, and they are both instrumental in bringing out a certain ideological component. Hence, in addition to studying the scope and nature of hybridity on the content level, examining it on the discourse level, particularly from Bakhtin's and Wolf Schmid's viewpoints of hybridity, will help us back up the main thesis of this study.

### *Bakhtin's Concept of Hybridity*

Hybridity in language was first theorized by Mikhail Bakhtin, who viewed language as inherently dialogic. He used the term to characterize the novel as an inherently hybrid genre since it involves double or several voices as opposed to lyrical poems that possess a single voice. For Bakhtin, hybridization "is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation, or by some other factor."<sup>97</sup> Hybridization "delineates the way in which language, even with a single sentence, can be double voiced— one voice ironising and unmasking the other within the same utterance."<sup>98</sup> In other words, it implies a situation where "there is a mixture of the authorial language with tracers, or influences, of the other language/voice with which it has dialogized."<sup>99</sup> For Bakhtin all utterances are multivoiced, "filled with dialogic overtones," and are "overpopulated" with the meanings and intentions of others.

In addition, the concept of hybridity, according to Bakhtin, is linked to the notions of heteroglossia and polyphony. On the one hand, heteroglossia, as Bakhtin asserts, is characterized by "the recognition of difference, multiplicity, or stratification both within and between languages."<sup>100</sup> It is used to refer to the diversity of language within a single text. In relation to narrative, heteroglossia "stands as the appearance in real life of that plurality of

---

<sup>97</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, Michael Holquist (ed.), trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four essays*, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981, p. 358.

<sup>98</sup> Philipp Wolfgang Stockhammer (ed.), *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization: A Transdisciplinary Approach*, Berlin: Springer, 2012, p. 12.

<sup>99</sup> Sabine Mabardi, "Encounters of a Heterogonous Kind: Hybridity in Cultural Theory," in Rita De Grandis and Zilâ Bernd (eds.), *Unforeseeable Americas: Constructing Cultural Hybridity in the Americas*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000, p. 5, cited in Jopi Nyman, *Reconstructing Hybridity: Postcolonial Studies in Transition*, Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007, p. 6.

<sup>100</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 272.

languages of class, gender, region, or ideology which enter the novel in the form of dialogism, resulting in a polyphonic narrative.”<sup>101</sup> The so-called dialogized heteroglossia:

involves the quoted verbal speech of characters... the relationship between the characters’ discourses and the author’s discourse (if represented in the text) and between all these discourses and other discourses outside the text, which are imitated or evoked or alluded to by means of doubly-oriented speech.<sup>102</sup>

Bakhtin defines the dialogic nature of language as a chess game: “Every word is directed towards an answer and cannot escape the profound influence of the answering word that it anticipates.”<sup>103</sup> He calls this process “internal dialogism of the word.”

On the other hand, polyphony describes texts or utterances in which more than one voice can be heard. Bakhtin identifies, in the novels of Dostoevsky, whom he considers the creator of polyphonic novels, “a plurality of independent and equally valid voices which are not subordinated to any single authorial hierarchy.”<sup>104</sup> He adds that, “this allows a free play between character consciousnesses and points of view in which the judgments of the narrator are afforded no special privilege and the narrator counts merely as one voice in a dialogue of many.”<sup>105</sup> It is important to note here that Bakhtin’s idea of polyphony is often mistaken for dramatic dialogue of different voices in a novel. Polyphony is rather a mixture of various stylistic components within the speech that “belongs” to a certain persona.

Furthermore, Bakhtin differentiates in his book, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays* (1981), between two types of linguistic hybridity: unconscious, organic hybridity, and conscious intentional hybridity. On the one hand, unconscious organic hybridity is a product of the historical development of all languages. In other words, it is a product of borrowings, appropriations, imitations, exchanges, and inventions that have occurred in any language over a period of time. As Pnina Werbner puts it: “despite the illusion of boundedness, cultures evolve historically through unreflective borrowings, mimetic appropriations, exchanges and inventions,” implying that there is no culture in and of itself.<sup>106</sup> This type of hybridity is

---

<sup>101</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 300.

<sup>102</sup> D. Lodge, “The Novel Now: Theories and Practices,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 21. 2-3 (1988): 136, cited in Dilek Kantar, “Bridging the Gap between Literature and Linguistics: A Bakhtinian Approach to Orhan Pamuk’s *White Castle*,” *Septet* 1.1: n.d., p. 3.

<sup>103</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 280.

<sup>104</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, trans. by Caryl Emerson (ed.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984, p. 6.

<sup>105</sup> Bakhtin, 1984, p. 7.

<sup>106</sup> Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 4-5.

“natural” and does not “disrupt the sense of order and continuity: new images, words, objects, are integrated into language or culture unconsciously.”<sup>107</sup>

On the other hand, conscious intentional hybridity, or what Bakhtin calls “intentional artistically oriented hybridization,” implies “the literary production of textual hybridity as a complex network of inter-cultural tensions affecting languages, cultures, genders, religions, and history. In this case, there is no assimilation, or fusion, but rather, the collision between different points of view on the world.”<sup>108</sup>

The first type of hybridity, “organic hybridity,” reflects the unconscious fusion and merging of different cultural elements to produce a new language or worldview. As Bakhtin asserts, unconscious hybrids “are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new internal forms for perceiving the world in words,”<sup>109</sup> a position that reflects social change. In contrast, the second type, “conscious intentional hybridity,” reflects resistance to change by deploying different social languages, points of view, or literary traditions in the same text. It sets different points of view against each other in a conflictual structure. With intentional hybridity, two points of view are not mixed but are set against each other dialogically. This can be used for example in the aesthetic domain, “to shock, change, challenge, revitalize, or disrupt through deliberate, intended fusions of unlike social languages and images,”<sup>110</sup> thus creating an ironic double consciousness, a collision between different points of view on the world.

As we have seen so far, organic and intentional hybridity are the two different types of linguistic hybridity that are distinguished by Bakhtin. Whereas organic hybridity is characterized by unconscious fusion, intentional hybridity is marked by conscious employment of cultural differences set against each other in a dialogical mode. Robert Young admits that Bakhtin’s doubled form of hybridity offers a particularly significant dialectical model for cultural interaction: fusion as opposed to difference.<sup>111</sup>

Applying Bakhtin’s theory of hybridity to the novels under study necessitates examining the two different kinds of linguistic hybridity: unconscious and intentional. First, I will examine the unconscious hybridity that is present in the language of the novels, i.e. the presence of different words and expressions whose origin is borrowed from other languages

---

<sup>107</sup> Cited in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 5.

<sup>108</sup> Cristina Garrigos, “The Dynamics of Intercultural Dislocation: Hybridity in Rabih Alameddine’s *I, The Divine*,” in Layla Al Maleh (ed.), *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspective*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009, p. 190.

<sup>109</sup> Bakhtin, quoted in Wolfgang Stockhammer, 2012, p. 12.

<sup>110</sup> Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 5.

<sup>111</sup> Robert Young, 1995, p. 20.

such as Arabic, French, and Turkish. Second, I will study the conscious employment of different textual strategies that reflect a hybrid reality such as polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality.

I will demonstrate how the question of hybridity in Gordimer's novel *The Pickup* is displayed by the use of unintroduced citations and multiplicity of voices or polyphony. Hybridity in the novel is also demonstrated by the use of the first-person pronoun and third-person singular alternately in certain parts of the novel, the effect of which is to blur the lines of thought between the different characters in the novel. The employment of polyphonic technique helps in giving voice to the other which goes along with cultural hybridity in the text. This is how linguistic and cultural hybridity can be related, since both seek to give voice to the other. The presence of foreign words, particularly in Arabic, and the abundance of intertextual elements such as quotes from various poets and verses from the Koran will also be analyzed.

In addition, I will examine the employment of intertextuality, which is considered a form of literary hybridity in Aboulela's *The Translator*. Intertextuality in the novel lies in intertextual characterization between the female protagonists, Sammar and Jane of *Jane Eyre*. Aboulela admits that the two female protagonists in the two novels resemble each other since both prioritize their religion over their personal desire. Jane refuses to marry Mr. Rochester since he is a married man, and polygamy goes against her Christian beliefs. Similarly, Sammar rules out marrying a non-Muslim, for this is not allowed by her Islamic faith.

Moreover, linguistic hybridity is also evident in *The Translator* through the presence of the Arabic language which is visible when reading the English text of the novel in the form of word-to-word translation of Arabic expressions into English. This practice is called "interlanguage," a form of discourse through which the writer's mother tongue can often be heard. Commenting on this point, Peter Burke states that, "Some non-Western novelists have gone so far in the direction of the West as to write in English... their English interacts with their own mother tongues, producing what has been called a literary 'palimpsest', yet another metaphor for hybridity."<sup>112</sup>

In Abdi's novel, linguistic hybridity lies in the presence of Arab-Islamic words and expressions and in the abundance of verses from the Koran which are mostly presented as an introduction to the chapters of the novels. The verses reflect what the female protagonist goes through in the novel, and they serve as a resistance strategy to the concept of hybridity.

---

<sup>112</sup> Peter Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009, p. 19.



In addition to Bakhtin, Wolf Schmid has discussed linguistic hybridity which, he contends, appears in the novel in the form of text interference:

Text interference is a hybrid phenomenon, in which *mimesis* and *diegesis* (in the platonic sense) are mixed, a structure that unites two functions: the reproduction of the character's text (*mimesis*) and the actual narration (*diegesis*). The text interference which is characteristic of narrative prose, with its two components, appears in various forms, of which the so-called *free indirect discourse* (...) has most often been the subject of academic study.<sup>113</sup>

Text interference or the interference of narrator's text and characters' text results from the way that, in one and the same segment of the narrator's discourse, certain features refer to the narrator's text and others, in contrast, to the characters' text. Text interference appears in various forms as in: direct discourse and direct interior monologue; quoted figural designation; indirect representation of speech, thought, and perception; autonomous indirect discourse; free indirect discourse; free indirect perception; free indirect monologue; and figurally colored narration. Free indirect discourse has been the most studied form in academic study.<sup>114</sup>

Bakhtin had already pointed out the double structure of text interference, which he called a "hybrid construction":

What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two "languages," two semantic and axiological belief systems.<sup>115</sup>

We can say that Schmid's text interference parallels Bakhtin's hybrid construction. In addition, Malcolm Jones and Garth Terry admit that Schmid's "text interference" performs two informative-aesthetic functions:

By its complication of information, the contrast between text-characteristics and text-content, it necessitates that 'active cooperation' of the reader to define the point of view expressed. And, by focusing this ambivalence within key words and phrases shared by narrator and character, textual interference creates semantic polyvalency in which meanings are divided [...].<sup>116</sup>

---

<sup>113</sup> Wolf Schmid, *Narratology: An Introduction*, Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010, p. 137.

<sup>114</sup> For further information about each form, refer to Schmid, 2010, pp. 137-174.

<sup>115</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 304.

<sup>116</sup> Malcolm V. Jones and Garth M. Terry, *New Essays on Dostoyevsky*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1983, p. 206.

One way of approaching the semantic polyvalence, as Carol Adlam argues, is to study the meaning of relationships between narrator and character and between narrator and fictive reader. Such relationships are examples of what Schmid calls interference.<sup>117</sup>

In addition to Bakhtin's notions of polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality, Schmid's "textual interference" will be referred to when analyzing Gordimer's *The Pickup* in order to point to the polyphonic aspect in the novel and analyze the type of discourse when the narrator's text interferes with the character's text.

## Criticisms of Cultural Hybridity

Like any other theory that attracts support or criticism, hybridity theory has its supporters as well as its critics. Different theorists have different views of the concept of hybridity. Supporters of the theory focus on cultural enrichment through synthesis and fusion of different forms, whereas critics of the theory emphasize what is being lost in the process of cultural change. They stress "chaos," "cultural disintegration," and "fragmentation."<sup>118</sup>

One of the essential criticisms directed against hybridity is the futility of the theory. This position is adopted by several scholars such as Nederveen Pieterse, Marwan Kraidy, Jonathan Friedman, and Pnina Werbner. These scholars consider that cultures have always been hybrid, and thus the assumption of a former purity is indefensible. As a result, the theory of hybridity is pointless since it based its identification on essentialist notions of culture and identity.

Jonathan Friedman, one of the most outspoken critics of hybridity suggests that speaking of mixture presupposes the existence of something which can be mixed. Cultures were never pure, and all of us are and have always been cultural hybrids. Hence, the concept of hybridity adds nothing new to our knowledge.<sup>119</sup> Werbner agrees with Friedman's point when she writes that "All cultures are always hybrid... Hybridity is meaningless as a description of 'culture,' because this 'museumizes' culture as 'thing'... Culture as an analytic concept is always hybrid... since it can be understood properly only as the historically

---

<sup>117</sup> Carol Adlam, *The Annotated Bakhtin Bibliography*, London: Maney Publishing, 2000, p. 102.

<sup>118</sup> Burke, 2009, p. 113.

<sup>119</sup> Frello, "Essentialism, Hybridism, and Cultural Critique," p. 2, accessed Jan. 5, 2012, <<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ccsr/documents/FrelloEssentialism.pdf>>.

negotiated creation of more or less coherent symbolic and social worlds.”<sup>120</sup> In addition, according to Kraidy, hybridity’s appropriation in several fields is another reason for regarding the theory as futile. He states that, “When a concept means so many different things to so many different people in so many different fields and so many different contexts, it ceases to have any meaning whatsoever.”<sup>121</sup> One possible defense against hybridity’s futility is that although hybridity has always existed, there are particular forms and modalities of this that differ since, for example, WWII and now with globalization. While hybridity was imposed by force by the colonizers on their subjects and was resisted by the colonized, it is now embraced willingly and celebrated with the advance in technology and increasing transnational movements.

Moreover, Friedman criticizes the elitist approach of Bhabha’s work, pointing out that Bhabha uses many literary, artistic, and theoretical texts in support of his theory in his major work *The Location of Culture*. The interweaving of all these sources gives the impression of addressing an elite condition rather than the daily experiences of displacement. He argues that hybridity “has little to do with everyday problems of identity in the streets, even as it is part of the same world.”<sup>122</sup> Friedman rhetorically asks:

[...] for whom, one might ask, is such cultural transmigration a reality? In the works of the post-colonial border crossers, it is always the poet, the artist, the intellectual, who sustains this displacement and objectifies it in the printed word. But who reads the poetry [...]?<sup>123</sup>

He believes that the privileged elite are the ones who celebrate hybridity, for they take advantage of the potentials of border crossing. However, migrants and refugees have not chosen the life of “in-between cultures,” and attributing hybridity to them is an act of power on the part of the cosmopolitan elite as a way of depriving them of their right to assert their cultural identity by classifying them as essentialists and nationalists.<sup>124</sup> Pascal Sayegh comments on Friedman’s viewpoint of hybridity: “He [Friedman] concludes that the theory is in fact a political endeavor representative of the postmodern condition of the world: the discourse of a new cosmopolitan elite looking for an overarching identity; in other words, looking to establish its discursive hegemony.”<sup>125</sup> Contrary to Friedman’s view, John Hutnyk

---

<sup>120</sup> Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 15.

<sup>121</sup> Kraidy, 2005, p. 66.

<sup>122</sup> Friedman, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 74.

<sup>123</sup> Friedman, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 79.

<sup>124</sup> Cited in Frello, 2006, p. 4.

<sup>125</sup> Pascal Sayegh, “Cultural Hybridity and Modern Binaries: Overcoming the Opposition between Identity and Otherness?” paper presented at *Cultures in Transit Conference*, Liverpool, 2008, p. 6.

sees hybridity as politically void.<sup>126</sup> Another critic, Benita Parry, shares Friedman's view that hybridity relates merely to the privileged elite. She states: "Hybridity is not everywhere. It is only the elite who can afford to talk about hybridity. For others, there is no investment in such a concept. It applies more to metropolitan elite émigrés and far less to migrant diasporas and even less to those who have 'stayed behind' in the (ex) colony."<sup>127</sup>

Defending his argument against the claim that hybridity concerns only the privileged elite, Bhabha states: "There is a damaging and self-defeating assumption that theory is necessarily the elite language of the socially and culturally privileged. It is said that the place of the academic critic is inevitably within the Eurocentric archives of an imperialist or neo-colonial West."<sup>128</sup>

Moreover, a counterargument against the previous critiques, as Frello states, could be that hybridity is not about mixture per se, since purity never existed anyway. Rather, hybridity is about displacement. This is also what is at issue in Stuart Hall's argument:

What is at issue is not some 'happy mixture' of cultures but the 'double consciousness' of the exile. That is, focusing on hybridity involves focusing on 'positioning,' rather than on 'mixing' cultural forms. It involves focusing on the relation between the 'center' and the 'margin' in one way or the other – be it the relation between the West and the rest or between majority and minority. It involves focusing on how the penetration of the center by the marginalized undermines the naturalized dominant position of the center. Hybridity is about the introduction of 'otherness' in terms of an 'impurity' that contaminates, disturbs and displaces the idea of purity. And the migrant's insistence on belonging in the center is a very concrete example of this.<sup>129</sup>

Another point of critique directed toward Bhabha is his conceptualization of the third space as a place, where marginals can alter identity and power relations. Karin Lkas and Gerhard Wagner believe that Bhabha is being too idealistic when he states that marginals really have the chance to "set up new structures of authority." They refer to the question raised by Spivak in 1998, namely: Can the subaltern speak? Although Bhabha searched for possibilities and ways for marginals to get heard; yet he forgot to prove whether marginals,

---

<sup>126</sup> John Hutnyk, "Adorno at Womad: South Asia Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-talk," in Werbner and Modood, 1997, pp: 106-138.

<sup>127</sup> Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review* 9.1 (1987): 27-58, cited in Anjali Prahbu, *Hybridity: Limits, Transformations, Prospects*, Albany: State University of New York, 2007, p. 12.

<sup>128</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 19.

<sup>129</sup> Frello, "Essentialism, Hybridism, and Cultural Critique," p. 3, accessed Jan. 5, 2012, <<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ccsr/documents/FrelloEssentialism.pdf>>.

once they enter the third space, have a chance to be heard or not. Bhabha does not pay enough attention to aspects of power and the unequally distributed chances of articulating one's very own interests.<sup>130</sup>

Moreover, Floya Anthias criticizes Bhabha's "third space" and believes that hybridity is not always the response developed through transnational movements. She states:

Bhabha's idea of the 'in-between space' constructs a 'third space' inhabited by the cosmopolitan who lacks a central cultural narrative. However, cosmopolitanism may not be the primary condition produced through transnational movements. Through migration and diasporisation, the opposite to hybridity can occur: a ghettoisation and enclavisation process, a living in a 'time warp', a mythologising of tradition.<sup>131</sup>

Anthias' notions of "ghettoisation and enclavisation" will be employed when analyzing Sammar's case, for the protagonist develops an anti-hybrid reaction when she faces a new culture. She lives in a state of alienation and homesickness and refuses to translate herself culturally.

In summary, we have seen two types of hybridity: cultural hybridity developed from the viewpoints of Bhabha, Hall, Pieterse, and Kraidy, and linguistic hybridity as theorized by Bakhtin and Schmid. We have discussed Bhabha's notions of "third space" or "in-between" space and "unhomely lives"; Hall's "center and periphery" metaphor; Pieterse's "assimilationist hybridity" and "destabilizing hybridity"; Kraidy's "cultural chameleons"; Bakhtin's "polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality"; and Schmid's "text interference." We have also mentioned the main criticisms directed toward hybridity theory, particularly cultural hybridity. The theory has been criticized for being inauthentic, without roots, for the elite only, and for not reflecting social realities on the ground.

## Definition of Key Terms

Since the concepts of cross-cultural marriage, identity, and particularly hybrid cultural identity are complex, we will have to settle for working definition of these terms as they are employed in this study.

---

<sup>130</sup> Karin Lkas and Gerhard Wagner (eds.), *Communicating in the Third Space*, New York: Routledge, 2009, p. 39.

<sup>131</sup> Anthias, in Anthias and Lloyd, 2002, p. 32.

## Cross-cultural Marriage:

My purpose in discussing the term cross-cultural marriage is to clarify what kind of marriage I am going to deal with in the novels under study. The term is an umbrella term that comprises various types of marriages: inter-racial, inter-ethnic, inter-religious, or inter-class. Cross-cultural marriage, which is also synonymous with the terms “inter-cultural marriage,” and “inter-marriage,” is marriage between two persons who have different cultural backgrounds. Cultural background refers to racial, ethnic, religious, national, linguistic, social and class-related features that contribute to cultural identity. One might pose a question here: At what point does marriage become inter-cultural? Is it about race, ethnicity, religion, culture, nation, or class?

It should be noted that a marriage which is considered cross-cultural does not necessarily have to be inter-ethnic, inter-racial, inter-religious, or inter-class. For example, a marriage between a white American and a third-generation Asian American whose family has been thoroughly assimilated into American culture is considered an inter-racial marriage, but it is hardly inter-cultural. Conversely, a marriage between an Indian Muslim man and an Indian Buddhist woman is considered an inter-religious marriage but not inter-racial. To provide another example: a marriage between a Muslim Arab and a Christian Arab is an inter-religious union but not an inter-cultural union. Moreover, a marriage between two persons who belong to the same culture but are of different social class is regarded an inter-class marriage but not inter-cultural, as for instance the royal marriage of Prince William with Kate Middleton.

As we have seen, it is possible to distinguish various combinations between different subsets of inter-cultural marriage using the following variables: race, nationality, religion, ethnicity, language, and class.

What has led me to mention the different instances of when marriage can be considered inter-cultural, inter-racial, inter-religious, or inter-class is to better clarify the type of marriage I am going to address in the novels under investigation. The cross-cultural couples in the three novels belong to different cultures, races, ethnicities, religions, and nations. Hence their marriage is considered inter-cultural and at the same time inter-racial, inter-ethnic, and inter-religious.

Another important factor to be pointed out is the evolution of the term “cross-cultural marriage” or “mixed marriage” from being concerned with social class during the eighteenth

and nineteenth centuries to being related with culture in the era of globalization and industrialization in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In other words, marriage during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in different parts of the world was considered cross-cultural if the partners involved in this marriage belong to different social classes, since societies at the time were mostly based on hierarchical social classes. Veda Khulpateea asserts: “Certainly when placed in the colonial framework, inter-racial marriages after 1830 seem to be master-servant relationships, carrying the commonwealth model of marriage to a logical extreme.”<sup>132</sup> This reminds us of Samuel Richardson’s *Pamela* (1741), for instance, a novel that is considered one of the most established works in English fiction during the eighteenth century. The novel is the story of a girl who attempts to cross social boundaries and who climbs the social ladder by marrying her master. Her marriage was considered inter-class at the time although she and her master both belonged to the same English culture; her master belonged to the upper class while she belonged to the working class.

However, during the era of globalization and the digital revolution, from the mid-twentieth and twenty-first centuries, boundaries that used to separate cultures have become blurred, and contact between different parts of the world has become easier than it was in the past. As a result, marriage across cultures has become more prevalent, and the notion “cross-cultural” has come to signify a union between individuals who belong to different races, ethnicities, religions, and nations rather than classes, for social class is not given such great importance nowadays as compared to the past. Therefore, marrying cross-culturally these days is more often about crossing ethnic, racial, and religious boundaries than it is about stepping over class boundaries.

### Hybrid Cultural Identity:

The term “identity” is inherently ambiguous and hard to define. The ambiguity that surrounds the subject of identity can be attributed in part to the variety of definitions and uses the term receives in everyday language. The uses of the word reflect the indistinctness of the concept, a problem that is amplified when it is employed to perform analytical work.

Identity is a broad concept and one of the issues most studied in the social sciences, spanning in fields as diverse as: psychoanalysis, sociology, phenomenology, anthropology,

---

<sup>132</sup> Khulpateea, 2007, p. 11.

cultural studies and several other domains of study. Part of the difficulty stems from how identity has been studied: it was an early topic of interest in the fields of psychology and sociology, and only later did it become a subject of investigation for inter-cultural communication scholars, who began to examine the cultural components of identity. As a result, some definitions address “identity” while others speak of “cultural identity.” However, I am not in a position to cover identity from all of the various fields in which it is studied. My focus will be on cultural identity and how this identity becomes hybrid. In this section, I will provide working definitions of the concept of identity, cultural identity, and hybrid cultural identity for the purpose of this specific study.

### *Definition of Identity*

Identity is about saying who one is. However, one strives to express what he or she is, what one believes and desires, especially when the beliefs, needs, and desires are in conflict within oneself.<sup>133</sup> This is asserted by Stuart Hall, who argues that the self is fragmented and does not contain one identity but several and often contradictory identities. The subject’s identity is not given, but the subject occupies different identities at different points of time and in different situations. For Hall, identity is historically rather than biologically defined.<sup>134</sup>

To help reduce some of the complexity associated with defining people’s identities, some researchers have constructed categories to classify the different kinds of identities. As we know, identity is dynamic and multiple; in other words, it is not stable, but changes as a function of one’s life experiences. In addition, one has several identities which are integrated and do not work in isolation, but instead operate in combination based on the situation. For instance, when one is in the classroom, that person’s identity as a student is salient, but that individual is still a male or female, a friend, a part-time employee, a son or daughter, and perhaps even a wife or a husband, to list just a few identities. Turner suggests three categories to classify identities: human identities; social identities; and personal identities. Human identities are “those perceptions of self that link to the rest of humanity and set one apart from other life forms.”<sup>135</sup> “Social identities are represented by the various groups one belongs to,

---

<sup>133</sup> Jeffrey Weeks, “The Value of Difference,” in Rutherford, 1990, p. 89.

<sup>134</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Question of Cultural Identity,” in Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson (eds.), *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p. 598.

<sup>135</sup> Turner, cited in Larry A. Samovar, Richard E. Porter, and Edwin R. McDaniel (eds.), *Communication between Cultures*, Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010, p. 155.



such as race, ethnicity, occupation, age, hometown, and others. Social identity is a product of the contrast between membership in some social groups and non-membership in others (i.e., the in-group/out-group dichotomy).<sup>136</sup> As Kath Woodward states: “Identity is marked by similarity that is of the people like us and by difference, of those who are not.”<sup>137</sup> It is also about social relationships and complex involvement with others. And finally, “personal identity arises from those things that set one apart from other in-group members and mark him as special or unique.”<sup>138</sup>

Hall offers a similar categorization of identity. According to him, “Each of us has three levels of identity that, depending on the context, may or may not be salient in our interactions with others. These three levels are personal, relational, and communal.”<sup>139</sup> Personal identities are those that make one unique and distinct from others. Relational identities are a product of one’s relationships with other people, such as husband/wife, teacher/student, or executive/manager. Communal identities are “typically associated with large-scale communities, such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, or religious or political affiliation.”<sup>140</sup>

Moreover, one might wonder how identity is formed. Identity is shaped according to the social, cultural, economic, political and religious norms of the environment in which the individual lives. It is nearly impossible for a person not to be influenced by his/her surroundings while growing up. Stuart Hall states that, “The construction of one’s identity is affected by political, historical, and social dimensions as well as personal ones.”<sup>141</sup> The influence exerted by one’s environment results in what the sociologist N. Jayaram calls “the socio-cultural baggage”<sup>142</sup> that is carried about by the individual wherever he goes. However, this does not mean that the individual is a passive recipient of what he/she is surrounded by. People engage in the construction of their own identities whatever the social environment. They are capable of choosing the groups they want to identify with and the groups from which they want to distance themselves from. “Although society may try to impose identity in

---

<sup>136</sup> Turner, cited in Samovar et al., 2010, p. 155.

<sup>137</sup> Kath Woodward, *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation*, London: Routledge, 2004, cited in Ulla Ambursely, “The Search for Identity in *Anita and Me* and *The Buddha of Suburbia*,” 2006, p. 8, accessed Nov. 10, 2011, <<http://epubl.ltu.se/1402-1552/2006/127/LTU-DUPP-06127-SE.pdf>>.

<sup>138</sup> Turner, cited in Samovar et al., 2010, p. 155.

<sup>139</sup> Hall, cited in Samovar et al., 2010, p. 155.

<sup>140</sup> Hall, cited in Samovar et al., 2010, p. 155.

<sup>141</sup> Hall cited in Jonna Holopainen, “He Worshipped Elephants and Wore Turbans: The Construction of Cultural Identities in Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*,” 10/5/2010, accessed Nov. 5, 2011, <[https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/24210/holopainen\\_jonna.pdf?sequence=1](https://jyx.jyu.fi/dspace/bitstream/handle/123456789/24210/holopainen_jonna.pdf?sequence=1)>.

<sup>142</sup> N. Jayaram, “Introduction: The study of Indian Diaspora,” in *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004, cited in Ashalata Kulkarni, “English Indian Women Fiction,” *Muse India* 40 (Nov.-Dec. 2011), accessed Jan. 10, 2012, <<http://museindia.com/regularcontent.asp?issid=38&id=2747&title=articles>>.

an absolute way, individuals often differ in how they define group boundaries and how strongly they identify with their own and other groups.”<sup>143</sup>

Defining one’s identity is a central question for every individual, especially if placed in a new environment or in unfavorable circumstances. It is only through confronting difference that one’s identity emerges and becomes essential. As William Connolly states: “Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty.”<sup>144</sup> Thus, to understand one’s identity and acquire its true meaning, one has to confront the other and identify differences in order to realize one’s own individuality and sense of belonging. This is what is experienced by the protagonists in the three novels: issues that concern their cultural belonging come to the fore when they are confronted with changes brought about by a new environment and when they become involved in a cross-cultural relationship. Although we have different subcategories of identity such as ethnic, religious, linguistic, collective, individual, I am interested in cultural identity of the characters. Since the protagonists’ cultural identity will be at the center of analysis in the three novels, a definition of this notion will be provided in the following paragraphs.

### *Definition of Cultural Identity*

Cultural identity is about how one defines oneself as belonging to a particular social group and how one feels within and without that group. This is asserted by Teresa La Fromboise et al., who refer to cultural identity as “the evolution of a sense of self in relation to a culture of origin and who one is within and without that cultural context.”<sup>145</sup> In addition, Jean Phinney defines cultural identity as “an individual’s self-concept related to membership in a particular social group(s) and the behaviors, roles, norms, values, and emotional

---

<sup>143</sup> Maria P.P. Root (ed.), *The Multicultural Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*, London: Sage, 1996, p. 115.

<sup>144</sup> William Connolly, “Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox,” in Apud Rajchman (ed.), *The Identity in Question*, New York: Routledge, 1995, p. 222, cited in Ana Cristina Gil, “Cultural Identity and Globalization,” p. 2, accessed Nov. 12, 2011, <[http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/ana-gil\\_paper.pdf](http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/ana-gil_paper.pdf)>.

<sup>145</sup> Teresa LaFromboise, Hardin Coleman, and Jennifer Gerton, “Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory,” *Psychological Bulletin* 114.3 (Nov. 1993): 395-412, cited in Jonathan Peter Rust, *Biculturalism, Cultural Identity, Self-esteem, and Academic Achievement of African-American High School Students*, PhD Thesis, Fordham University: New York, 2007, p. 25.

significance associated with that group membership.”<sup>146</sup> A further clear and detailed definition of cultural identity as follows:

Cultural identity is defined in terms of (i) attachment to one’s heritage-culture group (e.g., country, cultural group, religious group) and to the larger society in which one resides; (ii) engagement in practices reflecting one’s heritage culture, the larger society in which one resides, or both; and (iii) value orientations referring to how the individual and the group should be prioritized.<sup>147</sup>

In addition, Mary Fong contends that “culture and cultural identity in the study of intercultural relations have become umbrella terms that subsume racial and ethnic identity.” She defines cultural identity as:

The identification of communications of a shared system of symbolic verbal and nonverbal behavior that are meaningful to group members who have a sense of belonging and who share traditions, heritage, language, and similar norms of appropriate behavior. Cultural identity is a social construction.<sup>148</sup>

According to Fern Johnson, the locus of cultural identity can be national, regional, or sometimes racially or ethnically based. Cultural identity also resides in gender, lifestyle choices, organizations, age, class, and group membership.<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, Stuart Hall, one of the notable scholars in the field of cultural identity defines cultural identity as follows: “Cultural identities— those aspects of our identities which arise from our ‘belonging’ to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national cultures.”<sup>150</sup>

Hall views identity as either a series of essentialist static elements or, conversely, as a series of constructed fluid elements. The first view defines cultural identity based on the following features:

One, shared culture, a sort of collective ‘one true self’ hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed ‘selves’ which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, our cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide us, as “one people,” with

---

<sup>146</sup> Jean Phinney, “The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A New Scale for Use with Adolescents and Young Adults from Diverse Groups,” *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7 (1992): p. 156, cited in Rust, 2007, p. 12.

<sup>147</sup> Seth J. Schwartz, Byron L. Zamboanga, and Robert S. Weisskirch, “Broadening the Study of the Self: Integrating the Study of Personal Identity and Cultural Identity,” *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2.2 (March 2008): p. 637.

<sup>148</sup> Mary Fong and Rueyling Chuang, *Communicating Ethnic and Cultural Identity*, New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004, p. 6.

<sup>149</sup> Fern L. Johnson, *Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1999, p. 53.

<sup>150</sup> Stuart Hall, David Held, and Tony McGrew (eds.), *Modernity and its Futures*, London: Polity Press, Open University, 1992, p. 274.

stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history.<sup>151</sup>

This view of identity presupposes inherent and essential elements to any identity. It reflects the cultural heritage and the cultural codes we share, and which remain stable over time and successive generations. The understanding of identity as fixed was the prevailing one in the second half of the twentieth century, but it has been replaced nowadays by various approaches that suggest that identity is part of an ongoing process and consequently something unfixed and variable. This is affirmed by Hall's second view of cultural identity:

Cultural identity... is a matter of "becoming" as well as "being." It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities... have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power. Far from being grounded in a mere "recovery" of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which, when found, will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within, the narratives of the past.<sup>152</sup>

Thus, cultural identity is not a fixed essence; it is not permanent and enduring, but tends to undergo changes and transformations with time and place. Chris Barker also emphasizes the fact that identity is not "a fixed thing to be found" but it is "constituted through descriptions of ourselves with which we identify."<sup>153</sup> Identity is shaped and reshaped in interaction and thus it has an "emergent quality."<sup>154</sup> A new sense of identity starts to emerge that may transcend national and racial boundaries. This emerging identity is not static and ascribed to predetermined group membership.<sup>155</sup>

Hall's two views of cultural identity seem pertinent to keep in mind when analyzing the identities of fictional characters, for such identities fit in with the view of cultural identity being fixed and undergoing change and transformation.

Moreover, Mary Jane Collier notes that one of the major premises of the cultural identity theory is that cultural identities are "historical, contextual, and relational constructions."<sup>156</sup> In other words, the prominence of personal identity rises and falls

---

<sup>151</sup>Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," accessed Dec. 19, 2011, p. 223, <[http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall\\_cultural\\_identity.pdf](http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall_cultural_identity.pdf)>.

<sup>152</sup>Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," accessed Dec. 19, 2011, p. 225, <[http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall\\_cultural\\_identity.pdf](http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall_cultural_identity.pdf)>.

<sup>153</sup>Chris Barker, *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999, p. 9.

<sup>154</sup>Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 52.

<sup>155</sup>Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 52.

<sup>156</sup>Mary Jane Collier, "Researching Cultural Identity: Reconciling Interpretive and Postcolonial Perspectives," in Dolores V. Tanno and Alberto Gonzalez (eds.), *Communication and Identity across Cultures*, Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, 1998, p. 131.

relationally, depending on the context. Our identity is dependent on the relationships we have with other people. For example, a young African American woman may use Black vernacular when she speaks to her close friends who are also African Americans to solidify their cultural identity; but, when she is conducting business meetings, she may choose to speak Standard English to present her professional image.<sup>157</sup> Such an example can be found in Gordimer's *The Pickup*, where Julie tries to communicate in Arabic with Abdu's family members in order to solidify her belonging to Abdu's culture. Thus, there is a strong connection between identity and social interaction, where identity is shaped and formed through social interaction.

In addition, the fact that identity is "contextual" signifies that it is affected by the environment in which we are present. Fong believes that certain parts of our cultural identity may be permanent, such as our national origin and mother tongue. However, cultural identity can also be ephemeral and transient. As we go through changes in life, such as moving from one place to another, we may adapt to the new environment and take on a whole new identity.<sup>158</sup> Here comes the necessity to define hybrid cultural identity which is one form of change that occurs to one's identity.

### *Definition of Hybrid Cultural Identity*

Based on Hall's conception of identity as fluid, we can argue that people's cultural identity has a tendency to change. As we go through changes in our lives, or as we move from one place to another, our cultural identity is subject to new aspects of the host environment. Note here that the relation between personal identity and cultural identity is that personal identity represents the answer to the question "Who am I?" whereas cultural identity represents an answer to the question "who am I as a member of my group and in relation to other groups?" Thus, our cultural identity might adapt and even totally change to suit the new surroundings. This conception of cultural identity as being fluid has become quite significant in our modern times, especially with the rise of globalization, increasing waves of migration, and the spread of inter-cultural marriage all over the world. The fluid nature of identity is an important element in understanding immigrants' experiences because their identities are continuously renegotiated in their attempt to adapt to and integrate the host culture.

---

<sup>157</sup> Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 52.

<sup>158</sup> Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 53.

The change caused by globalization, that is to say, the world as a single place for interactions, has brought forward a wider range of “sources and resources available for identity construction, allowing for the production of *hybrid* identities” (emphasis in the original).<sup>159</sup>

As cultures blend, boundaries between self and other become blurry, and people no longer have a clear sense of their cultural identities. As Rueyling Chuang notes: “Cultural identity becomes blurry in the midst of cultural integration, bicultural interactions, inter-racial marriages, and the mutual adaptation processes.”<sup>160</sup> The most conventional accounts assert hybridity as the process of cultural mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform, and reconfigure this by producing a new hybrid culture or hybrid identities. Chris Barker also addresses the concept of hybridity by arguing that hybridity refers to “multiple, shifting, fragmented identities that can be articulated together.” That is to say, one can sustain one’s cultural heritage and be influenced by another culture, thus combining two sets of cultural traditions into one.<sup>161</sup>

Stuart Hall contends that cultural identity is always hybrid, but he also insists that the precise form of this hybridity will be determined by specific historical formations and cultural repertoires of enunciation.<sup>162</sup> He also believes that hybrid identities are relational, incomplete, and always in a process of becoming without aspiring to a sense of wholeness.

Similarly, Bhabha argues that identity is never fixed once and for all, never coheres into an absolute form. For him, identity always presupposes a sense of location and a relationship with others. However, this attention to place does not presuppose closure, for the representation of identity most often occurs precisely at the point when there has been a displacement.<sup>163</sup> In addition, Bhabha argues that hybrid identity is not formed in an accumulative way in which the essence of one identity is combined with another; instead, the hybrid is formed out of dual process of “displacement and correspondence in the act of translation.”<sup>164</sup> To understand the formation of hybridity, Bhabha refers to a “third space” where the interaction between two different cultures takes place.

---

<sup>159</sup> Barker, 1999, p. 68.

<sup>160</sup> Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 65.

<sup>161</sup> Chris Barker, *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), London: Sage Publications, 2005, p. 232.

<sup>162</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Formation of a Diasporic Intellectual: An Interview with Stuart Hall by Kuan-Hsing Chen,” in Stuart Hall, David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (eds.), *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, London: Routledge, 1996, p. 504.

<sup>163</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 185.

<sup>164</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 219.

Bhabha's and Hall's concepts of hybrid identities as fluid will be taken into consideration when analyzing the protagonists' hybrid identities since these are negotiated and re-shaped in an attempt to adapt to the new cultural and religious practices that face them when they engage in a cross-cultural marriage.

## Methodology of Research

As already mentioned, cross-cultural marriage and hybridity are not restricted to one field of study. Each can be studied from the perspective of various disciplines. However, my dissertation focuses on the study of cross-cultural marriage in fiction rather than in real life; it emphasizes the relations between two particular types of hybridity— cultural and linguistic— which necessitates taking account of viewpoints developed by different scholars to address this intricate subject.

The main theorists whom I will consult to analyze the novels under study are thus Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse, Marwan Kraidy, Floya Anthias, Mikhail Bakhtin and Wolf Schmid. The basic notions developed by each of these scholars will be adopted to analyze the protagonists' identities. These notions are Bhabha's "in-between" space or "third space" and the "unhomely"; Hall's "periphery and center" metaphor; Pieterse's "assimilationist and destabilizing hybridity"; Kraidy's "cultural chameleons"; and Floya Anthias' notions of "ghettoisation and enclavisation." I will also consult Bakhtin's and Schmid's viewpoints in order to analyze the presence of polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality in the novels. Thus, the study does not focus on one central theorist or one critical tradition, but rather aims to combine notions from various scholars to address the different responses developed by the protagonists when experiencing an inter-cultural encounter.

A qualitative method of textual analysis will be applied. In doing so, I conduct close reading to gain understanding of the literary text and to collect textual data which is useful in answering the research questions. The textual data are derived from the utterances, expressions, attitudes, and thoughts of the main protagonists in the novels.

It is perhaps useful to specify some of the limits of this study. First, the framework of the thesis concerns cultural and linguistic hybridity. Racial hybridity, which mainly concerns those of mixed-race parentage, is not going to play a part in this thesis despite the fact that the

cross-cultural marriages in the novels are also considered inter-racial marriages. However, the protagonists in the novels are not mixed-race and their hybridity is a result of their cross-cultural encounters rather than a product of miscegenation.

In addition, while it may have been interesting to consider studying more novels that revolve around the subject of cross-cultural marriage in different countries and contexts, my study concentrates on only three novels which form a complementary set demonstrating various reactions that can be developed by those who encounter newness through inter-cultural marriage. Adding more novels would run the risk of falling into the problem of repetition. However, one of the advantages of my study is that studying the hybrid identities of fictional characters opens up dimensions hybridity theoreticians did not explore or observe in real-life characters. Fiction opens up a space for characters to react in different ways real-life people may not experience.

Moreover, the factors that cause one to develop a hybrid identity are not discussed by Bhabha or any other hybridity theorist. Developing a full social theory that includes all the factors I believe can affect one's evolution of a hybrid identity such as family, friends, host/native culture with which to complete the hypotheses I am working with would involve a mass of research exceeding the aims and possibilities of this research. Nevertheless, the present work opens up the scope of topics for post-doctoral research projects, involving the study of the social and psychological aspects of characters in narrative contexts and their effect on the characters' evolution in terms of hybrid identity. The study of hybrid identity of the offspring of cross-culturally married couples from the viewpoint of Bhabha's hybridity theory constitutes another interesting subject for future investigation.

## Organization of Thesis

This dissertation is divided into five parts. In addition to the introduction and the conclusion, three chapters will be devoted to analysis of the three novels, one novel being studied in each chapter. The present introduction focuses on the background of the subject of cross-cultural marriage and consists of a literature review on cross-cultural marriage, mainly in sociological works and on the topic of hybridity; the choice of the corpus and thesis statement; it also presents the theoretical framework spelling out the essential elements of the theory of hybridity including the origin and evolution of the notion from biology to racial



classifications and trans-cultural forms, the major theorists in the field, and the criticisms directed at this theory and finally definitions of the key terms and the methodology of research.

Chapter one is an analysis of Nadine Gordimer's novel *The Pickup*. The chapter is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the protagonists' hybrid cultural identities, while the second part examines the linguistic hybridity in the novel. To study the protagonists' hybrid identities, I shall examine the evolution of their cultural identities throughout the novel from the viewpoint of Homi Bhabha's hybridity theory, particularly, by applying the notions of "in-between" space or "third space" and "unhomely" aspect. In addition, the factors that play a role in the protagonists' development of hybridity will be analyzed in order to find out the role of cross-cultural marriage in the evolution of this hybridity. As for Julie, the factors are as follow: her partner, living in a post-apartheid society, her integration into the new culture, the host society's reaction to her presence, and her relationship with the desert. As for Abdu, the questions dealt with are: Julie and his contempt for his country. To gain further insight into these various points, the linguistic hybridity in the novel, conveyed by the presence of polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality will be studied with reference to Bakhtin's and Schmid's theories of hybridity.

Chapter two deals with Leila Aboulela's novel *The Translator*. The steps followed in our study of the protagonists' cultural hybridity in *The Translator* differ from those applied in the analysis of *The Pickup*. Instead of studying the protagonists' hybrid identities from the viewpoint of Bhabha's hybridity theory, this chapter looks at the protagonists' identities from different viewpoints. On one hand, it is noticed that the female protagonist's experience is quite different from that of hybridity. Her case will be studied from the perspective of what Floya Anthias calls a "ghettoisation and enclavisation" process. Several factors play a role in Sammar's rejection of crossing cultural and religious boundaries: a personal factor that concerns her love for her late husband and the persistent memory of him; a cultural factor that relates to Sammar's cultural principles and traditions; and family and friend factors that influence Sammar's decision and affect her thinking. On the other hand, the male protagonist's change fits in with the terms proposed by Stuart Hall, who contends that the term hybridity is a result of the constant process of exchange between the center and the periphery. While part one of this chapter deals with the protagonists' cultural hybridity, part two examines the role of linguistic hybridity which is conveyed by the presence of

heteroglossia and intertextual relations with other literary works, such as Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1966).

Chapter three explores Safi Abdi's novel *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*. The chapter is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the female protagonist's hybrid experience, while the second studies the male protagonist's case. The female protagonist's case will be studied from the viewpoints of Bhabha's "in-between" space, Pieterse's "assimilationist hybridity," and with regard to the Islamic notion of "repentance." In order to find out the relation between Anisa's cross-cultural marriage and her hybrid experiences and "repentance process," several factors will be studied. In the assimilation stage, the hybrid society of Rako Island in which Anisa is living plays a role in her integration into the new culture. In the "repentance" stage, several factors spark Anisa's religious awakening: her conservative and religious family; the person in charge at the Islamic community's office, Yusuf; and her converted husband, who is unable to embrace and practice the Muslim faith and religion. In addition, there exist interesting intertextual elements in the novel, mostly verses taken from the Koran, which will also be studied, as they play a role in highlighting Anisa's repentance. With regard to the male protagonist, his hybrid identity will be examined from the perspective of Bhabha's "in-between" space and from Pieterse's "destabilizing hybridity." Two factors motivate Mike's crossing of cultural and religious boundaries: his love for Anisa; his "unbelonging" to his Western culture and being "unhomely" in his religion.

Chapter One:  
Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*

## Introduction to Chapter One

Chapter one analyzes Nadine Gordimer's novel *The Pickup*. The chapter is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the protagonists' hybrid cultural identities, while the second part examines the linguistic hybridity in the novel.

It is noticed that the protagonists' cultural identities undergo change when they encounter a new culture and engage in a cross-cultural marriage by developing a hybrid identity. The first part of this chapter studies this change from the viewpoint of Homi Bhabha's hybridity theory. In particular, I will show how Bhabha's notions of "in-between" space or "third space" and "unhomely" aspect apply to the protagonists' hybrid identities. A definition of each of these notions will be provided in the introduction to "The protagonists' hybrid cultural identities" part.

Bearing in mind that one of the main aims of this dissertation is to find a/the relation(s) between hybridity and cross-cultural marriage, it is essential to study the factors which have affected the construction of the protagonists' hybridity. It is most likely, as we will notice in the novel, that the protagonists' hybridity occurred before their union. Thus, it is appropriate to study all the factors that have a role in the protagonists' evolution of hybridity in order to find out the role of cross-cultural marriage in this hybridity. The factors to be examined differ from one protagonist to the other. For Julie, the factors are: her love for Abdu, living in a post-apartheid society, her integration into the new culture, the host society's reaction to her presence, and her relationship with the desert. Whereas for Abdu, the factors are: his love for Julie and his contempt for his country.

The second part of this chapter deals with the linguistic hybridity that is present in the novel, for this will support our debate on cultural hybridity. Linguistic hybridity in the novel is conveyed by the presence of polyphony and heteroglossia which are, according to Mikhail Bakhtin, forms of hybridity. To study the polyphonic aspect, which is defined as the multiplicity of individual voices, I will show how the characters' voices emerge through the narrator's voice according to the typology of Wolf Schmid's text interference and Bakhtin's double-voiced discourse.

In addition, the presence of heteroglossia, defined as the multiplicity of social voices which vary according to age, social class, cultural group, and profession, throws light on the cultural hybridity in the novel. The presence of a diversity of social voices asserts the hybrid post-apartheid community in South Africa. To study heteroglossia in the novel, I will examine

how the language of the L.A. Café varies from that of Julie's upper-middle class family in the Suburbs, and how language differs from one culture to another, i.e. from Julie's culture to Abdu's culture. The insertion of foreign words and expressions in the novel will also be examined.

Linguistic hybridity in the novel is represented not only by the presence of polyphony and heteroglossia, but also by the presence of intertextuality. The most concrete intertextual elements are signaled by the presence of an epigraph (a poem), quotes from a number of poets and authors, and verses from the Koran. These intertextual elements have a deep significance and affect the overall organization of the novel as we will see later in our analysis. The epigraph, which is mentioned again in the middle of the novel in the form of a poem summarizes the whole novel. These play an important and even a central structuring role in the novel that seems to be a sort of "expansion" of them. "Let us go to another country... The rest is understood... Just say the word" reflects the protagonists' central aim in the novel. The protagonists move to another country which is supposed to be an ideal country where their cross-cultural marriage can find fulfillment. However, each ends up in two different countries, where they attain satisfaction and find a meaning of their existence.

I.a. Part One:  
The Protagonists' Hybrid Cultural Identities

## Introduction to Part One

As mentioned above, this part will be devoted to study the protagonists' hybrid identities from the viewpoint of Bhabha's hybridity theory, particularly through examining the concepts of "third space" or "in-between" space and "unhomely" aspect. But first it is necessary to explain what Bhabha means by these notions, and to demonstrate why they are relevant to apply them on *The Pickup* and how the novel illustrates, confirms, and perhaps modulates these notions.

Bhabha explains that the transgression of national or ethnic borders is an essential step for hybridity to occur. He states: "Persons who have lived in more than one culture or who straddle two or more cultures are 'hybrids' who create 'counter-narratives' that both evoke and erase cultural boundaries."<sup>165</sup> Once an individual crosses national and cultural boundaries, he/she finds that a new cultural space or context awaits him/her. In order to survive in the new environment, cultural translation maybe required. In other words, one may assimilate the cultural beliefs and practices of the host culture. Bhabha asserts: "[...] hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them."<sup>166</sup>

Bhabha introduces the notion of "cultural translation" as a way of negotiation between two cultures. He states: "Translation is the passage between the original and the simulacrum [...] Cultural translation opens up the possibility of articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities."<sup>167</sup> The so-called "third space" is produced in the process of translation, and identity can then be produced as a new site through the process of hybridization. Bhabha considers the "third space" as: "the 'inter'—the cutting edge of translation and negotiation, the *in-between* space—that carries the burden of the meaning of culture [...]. And by exploring this Third space, we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of our selves."<sup>168</sup>

Bhabha defines his notion of "third space" by explaining it in a number of ways such as the domain of the beyond, the liminal, or the borderland. He also names it the "interstices,"<sup>169</sup> which literally means a minute opening or crevice between things such as the

---

<sup>165</sup> Bhabha, 1994, cited in Bystydzenski, 2011, p. 50.

<sup>166</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 216.

<sup>167</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 210.

<sup>168</sup> Bhabha, 1994, pp. 38-39.

<sup>169</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 2.

space between adjacent atoms in a crystal lattice. Liminality is derived from the Latin word, *limen*, a threshold. Mazhar contends in his doctoral dissertation that liminality is a characteristic of the second stage of a ritual in the theories of Arnold van Gennep (1873-1957) and Victor Turner (1920-83); a ritual, especially a rite of passage that involves some changes to the participants' social status. This change, Mazhar argues, is achieved by separating the participants from the rest of their social group (the first or preliminary stage: separation); a period during which one is between neither one status nor the other (the liminal stage); and a period during which one's new social status is confirmed (the final, or postliminal stage: reincorporation).<sup>170</sup> Thus, liminality refers to the phase between separation and reincorporation. Mazhar adds: "The liminal state is characterized by ambiguity, openness and indeterminacy. One's sense of identity dissolves to some extent, bringing about disorientation. Liminality is a period of transition... opening way to something new."<sup>171</sup>

The tension lived by the migrants between their native culture and the new culture results in what is called the "third space."<sup>172</sup> It is in this space that the migrant oscillates between two cultures, and out of which he/she will develop their new identity. Bhabha adds:

For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'Third Space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.<sup>173</sup>

Thus, hybridity, according to Bhabha, lies in the "third space" in which various positions can interact together producing a third entity which is not necessarily the sum of the previous two. That is to say, hybrid identity is not formed in an accumulative way in which the essence of one identity is combined with another; instead, hybrid identity is formed out of something new that embraces diversity and accepts difference. This is confirmed by Bhabha who contends: "The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning and representation."<sup>174</sup>

Bhabha likens the "third space" or "in-between" space to the metaphor of the stairwell, which represents connection between disparate cultures, and in which interaction takes place:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and

---

<sup>170</sup> Syeda Faiqa Mazhar, "A Study of the Theme of Borderland in Nadine Gordimer's Fiction," PhD Thesis, University of Bedfordshire, 2007, p. 40-41.

<sup>171</sup> Mazhar, 2007, p. 41.

<sup>172</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 37.

<sup>173</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 211.

<sup>174</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 211.



lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.<sup>175</sup>

Thus, the “third space” or “in-between” space, like the stairwell, allows interaction between extreme polarities where difference is accepted, and prevents hierarchal imposition.

Moreover, Bhabha stresses the “unhomely” aspect that occurs to the migrant when cultural boundaries become blurred. He explains:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres...In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting. In the stirrings of the unhomely, another world becomes visible. It has less to do with forcible eviction and more to do with the uncanny literary and social effects of enforced social accommodation, or historical migrations and cultural relocations. The home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart. The unhomely is the shock of recognition of the world-in-the home, the home-in-the-world.<sup>176</sup>

The “unhomely” state is experienced when migrants feel “culturally” homeless rather than “physically” homeless. In other words, although migrants exist physically “somewhere,” they feel that they are “culturally” disoriented and unsettled. Jonathan Friedman also explicates Bhabha’s “unhomely” notion, he states:

Bhabha stresses the importance of the position of the migrant (like himself, of course), a person who is somehow in two places and maintains a double perspective on reality... The argument is that the migrant must not be placed in one cultural space. This would be tantamount to essentialism, racism, nationalism... all the same. Instead, there is fluidity and an essential (if you will) instability of boundedness. He uses the word ‘unhomely’ to refer to this situation.<sup>177</sup>

As we can notice from the above quotation, the “unhomely” aspect signifies “the condition of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations”;<sup>178</sup> it is the situation where migrants live in a sort of displacement. It occurs when the private becomes public and the public becomes private, and when migrants discover that their identity is not stable but is constructed in a continuous process.

The notions of “third space” or “in-between space” and “unhomely” state are relevant to apply to *The Pickup* for they fit the male and female protagonists’ case. First, the two

---

<sup>175</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>176</sup> Bhabha, 1992, p. 141.

<sup>177</sup> Friedman, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 78.

<sup>178</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 9.

protagonists' have crossed national borders by moving to another country other than their native one. Hence, the pre-condition to the occurrence of hybridity exists. In addition, it is noticed that the two protagonists live in an "in-between" space. On the one hand, Julie, in her native country, lives in-between her parents' upper-middle class lifestyle and the lifestyle of her friends at the L.A. Café. This "in-between" position provides Julie with an opportunity to raise her voice against racial segregation which still pervades her post-apartheid society at a subtle level. This hybrid position also provides a space for Julie and her friends to socialize across the racial spectrum as equals. According to Bhabha, "the most creative forms of cultural identity are produced on the boundaries "in-between" forms of difference, in the intersections and overlaps across the spheres of class, gender, race, nation, generation [and] location in the modern world."<sup>179</sup>

When she moves into Abdu's culture, Julie lives a new hybrid experience represented by her wavering in-between the new cultural beliefs and practices and her inherent ideologies. Living in an "in-between" space makes Julie experience the "unhomely" aspect, in which she feels that she belongs neither to her native culture nor to the new culture.

On the other hand, Abdu's constant attempts to leave his culture and his desire to live in the West places him in an "in-between" state, in which he oscillates between his cultural and religious principles and those of the West. Like Julie, his state between staying in his culture and leaving to the West, results in an "unhomely" life in which he neither belongs to his culture nor to Western culture.

Having defined Bhabha's notions of "third space" or "in-between" space and "unhomely" aspect, I will show how each notion applies to the protagonists' hybrid experiences. This part will be divided into two sections. In the first section, Julie's hybrid identity will be dealt with, taking into account Bhabha's definitions. In addition to examining Julie's hybrid identity, the factors which have played a role in the development and evolution of her hybridity will be analyzed in order to find out the relation between her cross-cultural marriage and her hybrid identity. In the second section, I will study Abdu's hybrid identity from the viewpoint of Bhabha's hybridity theory, and the factors which have played a role in his evolution of hybridity with the same aim of finding the relation between his hybrid identity and cross-cultural marriage.

---

<sup>179</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 1.

## I.a.I. Section One: Julie's Hybrid Identity

Julie undergoes two hybrid experiences: one in South Africa and the other in Abdu's country. In South Africa, she seeks to escape her inherited social status; whereas in Abdu's village, she seeks to integrate into a society that is characterized by a sense of community that she finds absent in her native country – even at The Table. Julie in South Africa is already far from her origins— at The Table; her identity oscillates “in-between” her parents' upper-middle class lifestyle and her friends' lifestyle at The Table. When she moves to Abdu's country, she changes considerably because she adopts a completely new culture, which causes a shift in her cultural identity and leads to the evolution of her hybridity. This asserts the importance of “place” and its role in identity construction.

In addition to Bhabha's “in-between” or “third space” and “unhomely” aspect, I find that Nederveen Pieterse's viewpoint of hybridity covers Julie's two hybrid experiences. Pieterse suggests that we can construct a continuum of hybridities: “On one end an assimilationist hybridity that leans over towards the center, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony and, at the other end, a destabilizing hybridity that blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center.”<sup>180</sup> According to Pieterse, the center is the hegemonic dominant culture which is now represented by the West. He remarks:

European and Western culture are part of the global *mélange*. This is an obvious case if we reckon that Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from ‘the Orient.’ The hegemony of the West dates only from very recent times, from around 1800, and, arguably, from industrialization.<sup>181</sup>

Julie, in South Africa, adopts a “destabilizing hybridity” in which she reverses the center, which is represented by rejecting her role in her traditional family, dissociating from the upper-middle class and joining the hybrid group of people at the L.A. Café. Once she is in Abdu's country, she adopts an “assimilationist hybridity” in which she attempts to enter the center, which is represented by Abdu's culture since it is the dominant culture, by assimilating the new cultural and religious principles.

Thus, how do Bhabha's hybridity notions and Pieterse's hybridity viewpoint apply to Julie's hybrid experiences?

---

<sup>180</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

<sup>181</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 76.

## I.a.I.a. Julie's "In-between" Space or "Third Space"

We notice that Julie was already living in an "in-between" state in her home country regardless of her relationship with Abdu and even before her move to Abdu's culture. She was torn between the lifestyle of the L.A. Café and the upper-middle class lifestyle of her parents in The Suburbs. The fact that Julie leaves the place where she grew up, The Suburbs, to live in a black neighborhood reflects her desire to separate herself from her family's upper-middle class way of life in post-apartheid South Africa. Instead, she chooses a bohemian lifestyle that embraces tolerance and heterogeneity. Thus, she tries to keep her upper-middle social class out of the public eye and appear as a working-class woman in public. This is also observed during her stay in Abdu's village where her lifestyle asserts her rejection of an upper-middle class lifestyle and her embrace of a working-class lifestyle. As Altnöder asserts:

[...] both the private place Julie inhabits and the public life-place of the EL-AY Café, shaped by their joint practices of habitation, initially appear to be located in-between two poles of a hierarchical dichotomy: their (White) families' bourgeois homes in The Suburbs and their (black) families' homes in the township "ghettos" to which the black population used to be confined during the apartheid era.<sup>182</sup>

In order to study Julie's "in-between" experience or "third space," I will analyze how she oscillates between two identities, and how she chooses to live in a "third space" that refuses all cultural belonging, yet exists in them all. Following Stuart Hall's definition of cultural identity: "Cultural identities— those aspects of our identities which arise from our 'belonging' to distinctive ethnic, racial, linguistic, religious and, above all, national cultures,"<sup>183</sup> I will show how each constituent of Julie's cultural identity: class, cultural group, race, language, religion, and gender, develops throughout the novel and undergoes a hybrid state. We should bear in mind that the line between these different constituents is blurred since all are related and there is no clear separation between race, culture, religion, and gender.

---

<sup>182</sup> Sonja Altnöder, *Inhabiting the "New" South Africa: Ethical Encounters at the Race-Gender Interface in Four Post-Apartheid Novels by Zöe Wicomb, Sindiwe Magona, Nadine Gordimer and Farida Karodia*, n.p.: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2008, p. 116.

<sup>183</sup> Hall, Held and McGrew, 1992, p. 274.

It is noticed throughout the novel that Julie's social class alternates between the "private" life of her upper-middle class descent and the "public" life of her adopted working-class lifestyle, which leads her to live a displaced life. This asserts Bhabha's argument: "In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting."<sup>184</sup>

There is evidence in the novel which shows Julie's rejection of exposing her "private" life as a well-off lady and her preference to embrace a bohemian lifestyle. Julie's father's old precious Rover, his luxurious house, and his career as an international financier, which Julie prefers to keep in private away from her friends' and partner's knowledge, point to her wealthy descent. However, Julie's possession of a second-hand car, her move from The Suburbs to live in a black neighborhood, and her refusal to have contact with her father assert her alienation from and rejection of her bourgeois life.

Julie's belonging to a rich family is hinted at from the beginning of the novel when she over-generously tips the black men for helping her push her broken down car into a loading bay: "An expert's quick glance at what she has put in his hand assures the street boss that it is more than adequate" (p. 3).<sup>185</sup> Julie does not mind how long her car will take in the garage to be repaired, for she has her father's third car. Her father seldom uses this car, because it is a unique Rover he had bought at a Sotheby's auction,<sup>186</sup> which shows his wealthy state for only unique and precious items are sold there. The uniqueness of the car is evident from the way people gaze at it as if it is a foreign millionaire coming from another world (p. 8).

Despite having her father's Rover, Julie denies that it belongs to her. She would not risk exposing the car in the quarter of EL-AY café, not because she is afraid that it would be stolen, but because she is uncomfortable at the idea of her friends seeing it (p. 8). She says to the garage mechanic, Abdu: "It's not mine! She claimed her identity: I'd like to have my own old one back! [...] It's borrowed, I don't own it, that's for sure" (p. 9). Julie's answer reflects her denial of and dissociation from the lifestyle her parents are living. She feels comfortable

---

<sup>184</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 13.

<sup>185</sup> Gordimer, 2002, (the page number of further references to *The Pickup* will be indicated in the text).

<sup>186</sup> Sotheby's is a multinational corporation, originally English but now owned and headquartered in the United States, which is one of the world's largest auctioneers of fine and decorative art, jewelry, and collectibles. Sotheby's is the world's fourth oldest auction house in continuous operation.

with the idea of owning a second-hand car rather than a Rover, as this would help to keep her well-off background in private.

In addition, Julie leaves her father's luxurious house in The Suburbs to live in a renovated cottage in a black neighborhood: "She did not live in The Suburbs, where she had grown up, but in a series of backyard cottages adapted from servants' quarters or in modest apartments of the kind they favoured, or had to, being unable to afford anything better" (p. 8). Although Julie lives in a black neighborhood, the description of her cottage reflects her well-off descent:

[...] her outhouse renovated as a cottage was comfortable enough, its under-furnishings nevertheless giving away a certain ease inherent in, conditioned by, luxuries taken for granted as necessities: there was a bathroom that dwarfed the living-cum-bedroom by comparison, and the cramped kitchen was equipped with freezer and gadgets. It was untidy; the quarters of someone not used to looking after herself [...]. (p. 18)

This shows the "in-between" life Julie is living: while her house as it appears to the public is located in a black neighborhood, the private space of the house reflects the luxurious life of its owner.

Moreover, Julie's rejection and willed denial of her cultural identity as a privileged lady is manifested by her hesitancy to introduce Abdu to her parents with whom she had not been in contact for months. Julie's father knows nothing about his daughter's life and the kind of friends she spends time with, although he could judge what sort of friends they might be (p. 39). Danielle, Julie's step-mother, is not surprised to see her turn up with anyone because she knows that her motivation is to distance herself from her father (p. 41). Julie feels humiliated when her "private" life and real origin is revealed in front of her boyfriend at her father's place. While she feels ashamed of her family and of what might come out of them, Abdu thinks that she is ashamed of him (p. 38, 45): "Neither knows either, about the other" (p. 38). This quote is a hint for further events that will show the incompatibility between the couple, since each one seeks to achieve what the other escapes from. It also reflects Bhabha's point: "[...] the borders between home and world become confused; and, uncannily, private and the public become part of each other forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting."<sup>187</sup> Julie becomes confused when her private life becomes part of her public life.

Although Julie is embarrassed of her father's wealthy descent and wishes to keep it in "private," she uses her father's name in "public" to solve her lover's deportation problem (p. 74).

---

<sup>187</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 13.

Julie's oscillation between rejecting her father's upper-middle class and her occasional exploitation of the fact being a member of it to achieve her goals persists even when she moves to Abdu's country. There is no evidence in Abdu's country that would reveal her wealthy descent except for the few dollars she brings with her to cover their expenditures during their temporary stay in the country. However, she seriously thinks about using the funds her father saved for her to grow plantations in the new country (p. 212). This question is left open at the end of the novel – like a number of others.

In short, Julie experiences Bhabha's "in-between" state in her home country before meeting Abdu. She lives "in-between" her "private" life as a member of the upper-middle class at The Suburbs and her "public" life as a working-class woman before who hung out at the L.A. Café. Her main desire is to escape her inherited social status. By doing this, she matches Pieterse's notion of a "destabilizing hybridity" that "blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center."<sup>188</sup> In other words, Julie subverts the center by refusing to associate herself with her upper-middle white class which is still considered the "center" in her post-apartheid South African society. Julie's denial of her belonging to an upper-middle class is not associated with her cross-cultural relationship with Abdu, for as we have seen Julie is already living a bohemian lifestyle even before she meets Abdu. In fact, Julie asserts her dissociation from her wealthy family in front of her partner as in the example of the Rover and in her reluctance to introduce him to her father.

### *Julie's Cultural Belonging*

The second main aspect of Julie's cultural identity that illustrates Bhabha's "in-between" space is her cultural belonging. While she is in South Africa, Julie alternates between being an insider and outsider to the country; when she moves to Abdu's country, her cultural tie oscillates between her national belonging and her new cultural tie which she develops with Abdu's society.

Julie feels that she is a member of South African society, yet an outsider to it since she is a descendent of immigrants who once ruled the country. In addition, she identifies with the group of people at the L.A. Café, but then no longer feels that she belongs to them, especially after her relationship with Abdu and her move to his country. Moreover, Julie, in Abdu's

---

<sup>188</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

country, integrates into the host culture, assimilates the new cultural beliefs and religious practices, and forms bonds with Abdu's family members and with people in Abdu's community. By doing this, she illustrates Bhabha's statement: "[...] hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them."<sup>189</sup> However, this state does not make her forget about her cultural roots in South Africa, which again shows the "in-between" life she experiences.

Julie's identification with South Africa at the beginning of the novel is acknowledged not only from her own perspective, but also from the narrator's and other character's perspectives. Julie asks Abdu: "Isn't this our country?" (p. 12). She further states: "Oh I thought you were—like me—this's home, but it's good to get out of it" (p. 12). Julie's question and comment reflect her sense of belonging and identification with South Africa as her home country. Yet, she admits to Abdu that she would prefer to live in another country, which is a hint for upcoming events that will take place when Julie moves to live in Abdu's country.

Moreover, the narrator's comment: "They talked until late; about him, his life, *hers was here*, where they were, *in her city [...]*" (p. 18, my emphasis), again points to Julie being a member of the South African city and her life as a South African citizen. Julie is also viewed by the black lawyer as a national citizen of South Africa who can provide her husband a permanent residence in the country (p. 77). The lawyer's internal thoughts that are depicted through an internal focalization technique reflect his belief in Julie's "belonging" to South Africa: "when he speaks it is only to the foreigner because it is to him that what he has to say applies—the girl is Nigel Ackroyd Summer's daughter, Motsamai informed—there is no threat to her, *she belongs*" (p. 84, my emphasis).

Although Julie considers South Africa her home country, she, her father, and their ancestors are regarded as immigrants in the country as the narrator believes (p. 10). Only the lawyer Motsamai is the exception, since he is a "black" South African whose name remains in unchanged identity with where his life began and continues to be lived (p. 48). Julie identifies the lawyer Motsamai as "Self," and she conceives as "Other" everyone else who settled in the country.<sup>190</sup>

---

<sup>189</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 216.

<sup>190</sup> Natividad Martinez Marin, "Nadine Gordimer's Later Novels: or the Fiction of Otherness," in Dunja M. Mohr (ed.), *Embracing the Other: Addressing Xenophobia in the New Literatures in English*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008, p. 163.



While at the beginning of the novel Julie tells Abdu that South Africa is her home (p. 12), at the end of the novel she declares that she does not belong there. When Abdu was trying to convince her that Australia is a good place to immigrate to, as it resembles her home place, “she shook her head, laughing. I’ve left that home place” (p. 147). Julie’s answer asserts that one’s cultural identity is not stable, but is subject to change. The change that has occurred to Julie’s feelings concerning her belonging to her native country took place after she moved to Abdu’s country and encountered “newness” there. Bhabha argues that identity is never fixed once and for all, never coheres into an absolute form. For him, identity always presupposes a sense of location and a relationship with others. However, this attention to place does not presuppose closure, for the representation of identity most often occurs precisely at the point when there has been a displacement.<sup>191</sup> The very experience of the “beyond” makes Julie displaced and totally transformed. She is affected by the experience of her socializing across cultural, racial, and religious lines in Abdu’s Arab-Muslim village, which makes her return to the present with a “sense of the new.”<sup>192</sup> Thus, Julie’s displacement to another “place” leads her to “rethink questions of identity, social agency, and national affiliation”<sup>193</sup> with her South African world.

In addition to being in an “in-between” state of belonging and unbelonging to South Africa, Julie experiences another turmoil with respect to her cultural belonging. She identifies with the members of the L.A. Café, yet dissociates from them when she establishes a relationship with Abdu and moves with him to his homeland.

Julie’s belonging to the L.A. Café is evident, since she spends most of her time there. She adopts the lifestyle of its members, a lifestyle which eliminates homogeneity and calls for heterogeneity. She and her friends are always ready for new encounters. In addition, the fact that the Café comprises immigrants who had not become prosperous bourgeois asserts Julie’s alienation from upper-middle class life. Julie has consciously chosen to join The Table, for people there, like her, have distanced themselves from their families and from the ways of the past (p. 23). By choosing The Table as a way of life, Julie has embraced the norms that dominate the place as opposed to The Suburbs upbringing.

Moreover, Julie’s belonging to the group of people at the L.A. Café is evident when she uses the pronoun “we” to distinguish herself and her friends from Abdu and his people: “‘yes, we don’t go in for lamentation.’ And after she had said it she saw that might be taken as

---

<sup>191</sup> Bhabha cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 277.

<sup>192</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>193</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 1.

a dismissal of what she supposed would be the reaction in his hidden life” (p. 25). Again, Julie employs “we” in the following quote: “She laid a slack hand on his smooth throat and marveled, to him: To hear silence. We never do” (p. 34). It is important to note here that the sentence *To hear silence: We never do* has a subtle meaning that places a distinction between Julie and her people, represented by the pronoun “We,” who never hear “silence” as opposed to Abdu and his people who are used to “silence.” The word silence here has double meanings: a literal meaning as an antonym to noise, especially that Abdu is living in the desert where silence is always heard and a figurative meaning as having “no voice,” i.e. being “Subaltern.”

In spite of Julie’s strong bond with the L.A. Café, it is noticed that she gradually dissociates herself from them after she falls in love with Abdu. She feels alien to her friends who have always been there for her, and to the place that has always been the “home” to where she belongs and resorts. And Abdu whom she had met months ago is the one she feels closest to:

The struggle stays clenched tightly inside her. It possesses her, alien to them, even to those she thought close; and makes them alien to her. She feels she never knew them, any of them, in the real sense of knowing that she has now with him, the man foreign to her who came to her one day from under the belly of a car, frugal with his beautiful smile granted, dignified in a way learnt in a life hidden from her, like his name. Her crowd, Mates, Brothers and Sisters. They are the strangers and he is the known. (pp. 91-92)

After spending months with Abdu and before she left with him to his home country, she sensed that the L.A. Café was no longer useful to her: “He was right about The Table—something left behind, abandoned like the cottage—The Table was no more of use to her, to him and his qualities, than the gatherings at Sunday lunch on Nigel Ackroyd Summers’ terrace” (p. 108).

As we have seen, Julie’s cultural identity struggles between belonging to a certain cultural group and dissociating from that group. It is only when she meets Abdu and establishes a relationship with him that she feels dissociated from the place she belongs to—The Table. This feeling of alienation from her home country and L.A. friends fluctuates when she moves to her husband’s homeland, where she adopts a completely new culture. In Abdu’s country, she experiences a new hybrid situation in which she assimilates the new cultural and religious practices. However, her integration into Abdu’s culture does not totally sever her from her South African roots. We notice that she frequently associates her past life in South Africa with present situations in Abdu’s country. For instance, when Abdu discourages her from going to the lavatory in the bus station since he knew it was a dirty place, she replies:

“You forget that I come from Africa? I’ve camped out all over, stayed in villages, you know my friends—we didn’t exactly look for tiled bathrooms” (p. 111).

Julie also recalls scenes from her childhood when seeing children capering in the streets in Abdu’s village, she thought that “his [Abdu’s] childhood might not after all have felt so different from hers climbing over Gulliver in a beautiful garden, falling asleep with plush toys bought by Nigel Ackroyd Summers” (p. 127). Julie recalls her childhood at her old parents’ house and not at the house built for her stepmother, Danielle. She remembers her cottage, her friends at the L.A. café, and the Sunday lunches at her father’s house (p. 164).

Julie’s nostalgia to the past is also apparent when she remembers how her L.A. friends used to celebrate New Year’s Eve:

The transformation of time-scale was complete when she remembered: back there, at The Table, friends had weeks ago seen an old year out, getting drunk, stoned; Nigel Ackroyd Summers and his Danielle had started with champagne and oysters their old life over again on a new calendar. A New Year was yet to come, as time is measured here. (p. 159)

Moreover, the delicious meals and dishes Julie prepares under the supervision of Abdu’s mother and sisters remind her of the “pilafs” and other “ethnic” dishes which were “fiercely spiced in the alternative cuisine favoured at The Table [but which] turned out to have had nothing to do with these [dishes in Abdu’s house]” (p. 196). The *rih* in the desert also reminds Julie of past days in Cape Town when “the wind called Black South-Easter slammed doors and kept people off the beaches on Cape Town holidays” (p. 164).

Julie’s association of past events that occurred in her home country with present situations in Abdu’s country confirms Bhabha’s notion of living “in-between” past and present. Bhabha’s “in-between” space is not only about living in between two cultures, but also in-between private and public space, and in-between past and present: “Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy [...]”<sup>194</sup>

In conclusion, the “in-between” state that Julie experiences between belonging to her home country and to the L.A. Café and her feelings of alienation from these cultural groups develops only when she meets Abdu and moves to his country, where she encounters “newness.” This asserts Bhabha’s argument:

The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with “newness” that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent in-between space, that innovates and interrupts

---

<sup>194</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 13.

the performance of the present. The past-present becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.<sup>195</sup>

In addition, Julie's realization of her individuality and sense of belonging which occurs when she faces difference in Abdu's culture illustrates William Connolly's definition of identity: "Identity requires difference in order to be, and it converts difference into otherness in order to secure its own self-certainty."<sup>196</sup> Thus, to understand one's identity and acquire its true meaning, one has to confront the other and identify differences in order to decide his cultural "location."

### *Julie's Racial Identity*

Julie's "in-between" state continues, this time with another aspect of her cultural identity which is race. As mentioned previously, Bhabha likens the "third space" or "in-between" space to the metaphor of the stairwell:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.<sup>197</sup>

Bhabha's use of the stairwell to describe the "third space" or "in-between" space is relevant to associate with Julie's "in-between" state in relation with her racial identity. She, like the stairwell, supports interaction that causes her to stay in a state of perpetual flux, which prevents her identity from settling into primordial polarities. Her identity entertains difference without an imposed hierarchy; she identifies with both black and white races. She is open to other encounters and is deeply inclined to acceptance of the "Other." This is manifested through her association with blacks and her interest in and her concern for the foreign "Other" Abdu.

Julie's racial identity is revealed to the reader at the beginning of the novel when she was cursed by the expression, "Idikazana lomlungu, le," which is later explained by the black

---

<sup>195</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>196</sup> Connolly, 1995, p. 222, cited in Gil, "Cultural Identity and Globalization," p. 2, accessed Nov. 12, 2011, <[http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/ana-gil\\_paper.pdf](http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/ana-gil_paper.pdf)>.

<sup>197</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

friend at the L.A. Café as “white bitch.” The expression reveals the nature of racial relations in South Africa and the difficulty of getting over the Whites’ persecution. It also points to gender relations in South Africa, where woman is seen in a subservient position. This is asserted later in the novel by Abdu’s description of Julie as: “stupid” (p. 95), “ignorant” (p. 94), “a child” (p. 94), and “innocent” (p. 94).

Also pointing to her white descent is the following comment: “The young woman was down in a thoroughfare, a bazaar of all that the city had not been allowed to be by the laws and traditions of her parents’ generation” (p. 5). Julie’s parents’ generation had established the laws and traditions for the city, meaning that she belongs to the white race that colonized South Africa, the architects of apartheid whose system of rule had been replaced by a post-apartheid form of government. More specifically, Julie is a White South African woman of British descent. What leads us to this conclusion is the mention of the two cities from which Julie originates: “in her case from Suffolk and County Cork” (p. 10). The name of the cities mentioned are located in Britain which asserts Julie’s British origin.

Although Julie belongs to the white race, she does not necessarily abhor blacks. She does not allow her racial identity to settle in a homogenous polarity. In fact, she is described by her L.A. friends as black and white: “her welcomers saw a graceful neck and face, naturally pale, reddened with emotion of some sort. Black and white, they fussed about her” (p. 6).

In addition, her acceptance of the “Other” shows her rejection of racial segregation. For instance, when narrating to her L.A. friends what happened when her car crashed, she tells them: “But it was black men who helped me, of course” (p. 4). Julie’s illusion of the good intention of her black helpers indicates that she does not discriminate against black people, despite the fact that the black men helped her “for a hand-out” (p. 4) as one of her L.A. friends comments. Another proof of Julie’s rejection of racial segregation is her frequent presence in bars whose icon posters stuck to the wall, with the inscriptions “BOB MARLEY LIVES,”<sup>198</sup> “HUGH MASEKELA,”<sup>199</sup> and “BRENDA FASSIE IS BACK”<sup>200</sup> (p. 29). These

---

<sup>198</sup> Robert Nesta “Bob” Marley, (1945–1981), was a Jamaican singer-songwriter and musician. Marley remains the most widely known and revered performer of reggae music, and is credited with helping spread both Jamaican music and the Rastafari movement to a worldwide audience. “Bob Marley,” accessed April 18, 2012, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob\\_Marley](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bob_Marley)>.

<sup>199</sup> Masekela, born in 1939, is a South African trumpeter and singer. He was exiled to the U.S. because he was an anti-apartheid activist. He played music that portrayed the sufferings and sorrows as well as the joys and passions of his country. “Hugh Masekela,” accessed April 18, 2012, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh\\_Masekela](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Masekela)>.

<sup>200</sup> Fassie (1964–2004), also known as the queen of African pop, was a South African pop singer recalled for her outrageous voice for disenfranchised blacks during apartheid. “Brenda Fassie,” accessed April 18, 2012, <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brenda\\_Fassie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brenda_Fassie)>.

are names of singers and musicians who were against the apartheid regime.

Moreover, Julie establishes a relationship with the “subaltern” Abdu whom she treats as someone of equal worth. When she accompanies him to the garage, she walks beside him, despite people’s gazes, rather than in front of him, in order not to make him feel inferior to her (p. 7). Julie shows interest in him, introduces him to her friends and family, and tries her best to help him avoid deportation. She invites him to join her at the friends’ table at the L.A. Café which shows her interest in knowing more about him (p. 14). She sympathizes with him because he is being exploited by his boss who does not pay him accident insurance, pension contributions, or medical aid, since he is an illegal immigrant and the garage employs him illegally.

Julie’s racial identity “in-between” white and black remains in a hybrid state even when she moves to Abdu’s culture, since her acceptance of the “Other,” which is represented by Abdu’s people, persists. It should be noted, however, that race does not play an essential role in Abdu’s society as it does in South Africa, since most of the people in Abdu’s community belong to the same race, as opposed to South Africa which comprises different races. Julie’s whiteness is clearly noticed among people there who are mostly characterized by their dark skin color. However, her racial otherness and foreignness is never referred to, and it did not hinder her acceptance in the host society. She is accepted among the host people who regard her as a sort of curiosity and like her presence among them (p. 171).

In a word, Julie’s racial identity is set in a “liminal space” where it does not settle into fixed identifications, but remains in a state of fluidity that accepts difference without imposed hierarchy.

### *Julie’s Language*

There is considerable evidence in the novel pointing to the protagonists’ cultural belonging through the language they speak. The fact that Julie cannot understand the language addressed to her by one of the locals in the South African city implies her distinction from the local inhabitants. This point is made clear by the narrator through her portrayal of the first scene in the novel when Julie’s car crashed in the middle of the road, and all the cars, taxis, vans, and motorcycles reproached and cursed her *in a language which she did not understand* (p. 4, my emphasis).

Another proof which reveals Julie's ignorance of the locals' language is when a black woman yells out to the black man who helped Julie "what must be a teasing remark in a language the young woman [Julie] doesn't understand" (p. 4). Although Julie does not understand the language they are speaking, she knows that the black woman is mocking her. This reflects Julie's marginal position and the power of the black woman over her. Hence, Julie's lack of the black's language assures her distinction from blacks. Another quote which places Julie as distinct from "them" is: "Inside her something struggles against them" (p. 6). The use of pronoun "them" indicates that Julie is not associated with these people.

Julie's fluency in English and her ignorance of the South African language(s) make her more efficient in communicating with people who speak her language. This asserts the power of language in fortifying ties between people who belong to the same culture or in undermining them between people who belong to two different cultures. We have previously seen that Julie associates herself with blacks. Hence, the reader might wonder here: If Julie identifies with blacks, why wouldn't she learn their language as she has done when she moved to Abdu's culture?

When the couple arrived in Abdu's country, it is noticed that Julie shows interest in learning the host language, which reflects her desire to integrate into Abdu's culture. In learning the host language, Julie is "looking for the join" in Bhabha's terms:

To live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity: "I am looking for the join... I want to join... I want to join."<sup>201</sup>

Julie's living in a completely new culture necessitates her learning of the host language in order to establish social solidarity in Abdu's community. Her attempts to learn Abdu's language confirm Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity" in which she "lean[s] over towards the center, adopt[s] the canon and mimic[s] hegemony."<sup>202</sup>

Julie's lack of the host language is evident; however, this did not prevent her from communicating with Abdu's family, and her poor Arabic did not hinder her from being an efficient member in the Arab-Muslim community. When Abdu's father addressed a welcome speech to her, she understood his non-verbal expressions: "[...] the hoarse flow and guttural hum of the language reached her on a wave-length of meaning other than verbal" (p. 118).

---

<sup>201</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 18.

<sup>202</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

Julie feels the suggested meaning of the non-verbal expressions, which asserts the role of “context” in understanding a certain message or discourse.

Julie makes an effort to learn Arabic. She tries her best to communicate with Abdu’s family members, although Abdu did not teach her any Arabic, not even simple words that would serve her in simple exchanges. She communicates mostly with Abdu’s sister who knows a few words in English: “[...] they began to talk, bridging hesitancy with gestures—Julie, with mime—and laughter at each other’s attempts at being understood. Her Ibrahim had taught her nothing of the language, dismissing even the conventional polite exchanges” (p. 135). It should be noted that Julie’s use of mime— despite the fact that gestures might differ from one culture to another— shows her determination to interact with the host people; or in Pieterse’s words, it reflects her determination “to lean over towards the center.”

Abdu’s sister, Maryam, had a great role in helping Julie acquire Arabic: “this young sister seemed to enjoy having the foreigner repeat these banalities become achievements, correcting the awkwardness of a throat producing unfamiliar sounds and lips shaped to expel them” (p. 135). In turn, the sister “arranged the sequence of her English words, and waited attentively to hear of her mistakes” (p. 136). Note that Julie’s method of learning Arabic is connected with the profound cultural change she undergoes. The unfamiliar sounds of Arabic that Julie is learning relate to the unfamiliar cultural practices and traditions of Abdu’s community that Julie is ignorant of. Julie’s achievement in pronouncing these sounds can be compared to her assimilation of the new cultural beliefs and practices. She succeeds in learning the host language just as she succeeds in assimilating the new cultural and religious practices.

Another point that is worth mentioning is the relation between language learning and feminine bonds which operate in close conjunction. It is Maryam, Abdu’s sister, who plays an important role in helping Julie acquire the host language and integrate into the host culture. She confides in Julie and shares secrets with her. For instance, she declares to Julie that she likes the man her family arranged for her to marry (p. 165). In addition, when Abdu and Julie get the visa and are supposed to leave together for the U.S., Maryam cries, not because of losing her brother who had been coming and going for so long, but because “he was taking his wife away from her” (p. 239). This reflects the strong sisterly and friendship tie that is established between Julie and Abdu’s sister (p. 164).

Moreover, Maryam insists that her sister-in-law Khadija should teach Julie Arabic. Maryam’s delicate choice of Khadija as Julie’s teacher is not only motivated by the fact that



Khadija comes from the capital and is far more educated than Abdu's sisters, but also because she wants to make Khadija sense her importance and superiority especially that she is always in a state of frustration and anger, weeping for her husband who works out in the oil fields and has broken off all contact with his family and village. Abdu's brother's case forms an interesting parallel with what Abdu will do. Also, it is a sign of the type of bond Julie will develop with the women in Abdu's family. Khadija, who uses strong perfume to assert her presence in the house, approaches nobody and talks to no one; however, she has established an amicable relationship with Julie: "When Ibrahim's wife was impulsively bold enough to approach her (Khadija) and say how glad she was that this sister-in-law's husband was safe and well, the woman gave a proud wry smile—and then, suddenly, she who never touched anyone but her own children, embraced Julie" (p. 193).

The relation of mutual dependence between Julie and Maryam with regards to language learning is extended to a mutual exchange between Julie and the whole village. Julie's integration into the new culture made her develop skills she was not aware of, such as her ability to teach English (p. 150). Julie is not only learning the host language, but also teaching her mother tongue to women and children in Abdu's village (p. 142). This has made her establish bonds with the women who communicate with her their ideas and secrets and not only phrase-book expressions.

Julie's learning of the host language has proved to be beneficial in establishing contact with the host culture, particularly with women. It has helped her not only in communicating with others, but also in playing an efficient role in society as a teacher. This asserts Bhabha's notion of "looking for the join"; Julie has joined the host society by learning its language and also by assimilating its religious practices as we will see in the following sub-section.

### *Julie's Religion*

There is no clear sign at the beginning of the novel pointing to Julie's religious ties before her union with Abdu and before her move with him to his country. However, her aptness in adjusting to the new religious beliefs and practices in Abdu's country is evident from the time the couple first arrives in the country. This confirms Chambers' viewpoint of hybridity who contends: "The most conventional accounts assert hybridity as the process of

cultural mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform and reconfigure this in production of a new hybrid culture or “hybrid identities.”<sup>203</sup>

The first thing Julie does is to adapt her dress style to a more Oriental one. Julie obeys her husband when he asks her to cover her chest. She searches in her bags for something to cover up. She finds a pin that held her shirt closed at her throat. When the couple arrived in Abdu’s family’s house, Julie “touched now and then at the pin that held her skimpy garment closed at her throat” (p. 120). She is worried about showing her chest, especially as all the women sitting around her are covered up.<sup>204</sup> This affirms her respect of the new rules in the new culture, or in Pieterse’s words, she “adopts the canon, and mimics hegemony.”

Maryam, being the closest friend to Julie, knows how to behave with Julie in a delicate manner. For instance, she does not order her to wear a scarf when they accompany Abdu’s father to the oasis, but brought the scarf along with her “as a gentle instruction rather than an indication that she should have decided to wear something adequate of her own” (p. 207). Julie does not decline the idea and wears the headscarf.

Julie’s adaptation to the new religion does not only lie in appropriating her dress to a more Oriental one, but also in her willingness to fast during Ramadan. She wants to fast like everybody else in the family despite her husband’s attempts to convince her not to do so: “You’ll make yourself ill. To be without water is terrible. Don’t think only, no food; food is nothing, nothing, not like water. Believe me” (p. 153). Abdu is trying to persuade his wife that it is too hard to fast during Ramadan, but she insists on fasting, hoping that she would lose some weight (p. 153).

It is noticed that Abdu rejects his wife’s assimilation to his religious practices. Besides his refusal of her fast, he has sharply resisted his mother’s request that Julie should wear a scarf when leaving the house or in the company of men who were not family. He also becomes furious seeing his wife wrapped up with a Muslim robe over her head like any other woman in the village. He shouts at his sister Maryam who kits Julie out for the wind: “who do you think you are what are you doing who walks out in the *rih* are you mad take that thing off her [...]” (p. 163).

Despite Abdu’s disapproval of his wife’s attempts to assimilate to Islam, Julie’s interest in the new religion persists. Her curiosity to read and learn the Koran made her write

---

<sup>203</sup> Cited in John Hutnyk, “Hybridity,” *Ethnic and racial studies* 28.1 (2005): p. 81.

<sup>204</sup> According to Islam, when girls reach puberty age, they are supposed to wear the hijab and cover their body except for the face and hands. Hence, the dress code is a religious feature, not just cultural in Arab-Islamic countries.

to her mother in the U.S. to send her a translated version of the holy book. The Koran became one of the books that Julie reads in the lean-to in addition to the various books that she brought from South Africa. She wanted to ask Ibrahim about the verses of the Koran his mother memorized by heart, but she was hesitant; she preferred to ask his sister Maryam instead. Julie's hesitation in asking her husband about the verses signifies that Abdu is not the right person to resort to when she needs explanation or help to know more about his religion and culture. What also points to Julie's interest in the Koran is her careful way of wrapping it and packing it with her stuff when she was supposed to leave with her husband for the U.S.: "she taped it once again in plastic film so that toothpaste or deodorant, which might leak under pressure changes in an aircraft, could not harm it in her overnight pouch" (p. 247).

Julie's curiosity in knowing more about Islam is also evident in her frequent questions. For instance, when she hears the muezzin summons, she asks Ibrahim: "What were the other functions of the muezzin?" (p. 125). It is also noticed that Julie does not mind replacing alcohol by any other drink (p. 120). No wine or other alcoholic beverage is permissible in Abdu's family, since this kind of drink is prohibited according to their religion.

Abdu's comment "You are not believing. You always tell me. Not a Christian, since you left your school, not a Muslim like my family, so what is this now?" (p. 214-215), as a response to Julie's philosophical explanation of the importance of water, underlines Julie's hybrid nature and her refusal to settle in one extreme polarity. She inhabits an "in-between" space in which she embraces difference and accepts diversity. Her assimilation to the new religion does not make her fall into polarities. For instance, she could not restrain her desire for Abdu and transgressed the religious prohibition placed on sexual intercourse between a husband and his wife during daylight hours in Ramadan. In addition, although she is interested in learning the Koran, she does not mind reading a book entitled *al-Kitab wa-l-Qur'an: Qira'a mu'asira* by Shahrur Muhammad, translated as *The Book and the Quran: A Contemporary Reading*, which calls for a reinterpretation of the holy text. Shahrur's contemporary interpretation of the Koran has attracted a lot of attention and controversy. Muslims must completely rethink fundamental principles, says Muhammad Shahrur, otherwise Muslims will continue to live in the past.<sup>205</sup> The book also calls for a new legal examination of the issue of women in Islam. Shahrur opposes the fundamentalists' attitude to

---

<sup>205</sup> Shahrur, Muhammad "We Urgently Need Religious Reforms: Muhammad Shahrur," interview done by Ahmad Hissou, April 8, 2011, accessed Sep. 15, 2012, <<http://newageislam.com/interview/%22we-urgently-need-religious-reforms!%E2%80%9D-muhammad-shahrur/d/4416>>.

women's dress code. He believes that the liberation of woman started with Prophet Mohammad and her status greatly improved at the birth of Islam. He argues that the Koran stressed the voluntary nature of belief: "la ikrah fi al-din" (There is no compulsion in religion).<sup>206</sup> "Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve."<sup>207</sup> Shahrur contends that if such an essentialist aspect in Islam as belief is voluntary, then what is the basis for thinking that dress is anything but voluntary?<sup>208</sup>

Julie's assimilation of the new religious practices and beliefs in Abdu's culture despite her partner's discouragement illustrates Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity," which is previously explained as a tendency to "lean over towards the center, adopt the canon and mimic hegemony."<sup>209</sup> Julie "leans" toward the center, which is represented in Abdu's Arab-Muslim community, by adapting to its cultural and religious practices.

### *Julie's Gender Role*

Gender refers to the socio-cultural definition of man and woman, the way in which they are differentiated and assigned socially acceptable roles. These roles change with time, culture, and region. Therefore, neither sex nor nature is responsible for the unjustifiable inequalities that exist between women and men. Like the inequalities that exist between classes and races, inequality between women and men are also created by historical constructs and therefore they can be questioned, challenged and changed.

We notice that, in some cultures, there is a preference for males because of the connotation attached to the males as "bread-winners," the ones who should inherit, control resources and properties, whereas females are considered a responsibility and liability. This is observed in Abdu's patriarchal village which is described as always full of men and nothing but men (p. 132). On the one hand, Abdu and his brothers work in order to provide for their elder parents. A reason that makes Abdu seeks a visa to enter a Western country is to give his mother a better life. On the other hand, women in Abdu's family are enclosed in the house, particularly in the kitchen where they perform housework. They marry at an early age; most of them become wives and mothers through arranged marriages. For instance, Abdu's sister is

---

<sup>206</sup> The Koran, chapter of "The Cow," verse 256.

<sup>207</sup> The Koran, chapter of "The Cave," verse 29.

<sup>208</sup> Sharur's argument which is mentioned here is discussed by Peter Clark, "The Shahrur Phenomenon: A Liberal Islamic Voice from Syria," Sep. 1997, accessed Oct. 2, 2012, <<http://www.wluml.org/node/287>>.

<sup>209</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

going to get married despite her desire of pursuing her studies, because when she gets married her husband becomes responsible for her instead of her parents. Abdu tells Julie that his mother has got brains too and is very intelligent. She fought with everyone for education and was the only girl among the boys in school. She could read books and newspapers, and she still can. But it was arranged, she was married.

Although there is not enough evidence at the beginning of the novel to inform us of Julie's gender identity, Julie's weakness and helplessness as a woman are depicted from the first scene in the novel by describing her as a "kill" surrounded by "clustered predators" (p. 3) when her car broke in the middle of the road. Altnöder describes the situation:

[...] stereotypical notions of femininity simultaneously evoke aspects of women's weakness and technical incapability as the young—inexperienced and innocent—woman driver causes a traffic jam, exposes herself to the threat of (urban) predators and must consequently be rescued by two unemployed black men.<sup>210</sup>

Thus, women's weakness is portrayed not only in Abdu's village, but also in South African society, where women are seen as subordinate and inexperienced. However, Julie proves to be a strong woman who is living an independent life. She has her own house, car, and job. She does not need anybody's help: "Nobody has to be responsible for me. I am responsible for myself" (p. 95).

Note here that the concept of doubleness has placed categories in a hierarchical relation to each other: masculine/feminine, North/South, culture/nature, public/private, etc. These hierarchical relationships have, generally, classified countries of the North as developed, advanced, independent, rational, and modern, while those of the South as underdeveloped, backward, dependent, and primitive. This is asserted by Priscilla Singh who contends:

Largely, the concept of dualism has helped to perpetuate subordination not only among women and men but also between south and north. Not only are the 'masculine' and the 'feminine' considered as opposites but also a hierarchy has been created between them. Mind, culture, reason, and public spheres are considered as masculine and under men's purview. Body, nature, emotion and private homes become the sphere of women [...]. At the global level, the countries of the 'South' are considered as body and those in the 'North' as the mind, the south as nature and north as culture; South as emotional, poor, dependent and backward and the north as rational, scientific, advanced and modern!<sup>211</sup>

Julie, who is of British origin, is considered a Western woman who belongs to the

---

<sup>210</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 110.

<sup>211</sup> Priscilla Singh, "Concept of Gender: A Just Analytical Tool?," accessed Sep. 15, 2012, p. 3, <[http://www.lutheranworld.org/What\\_We\\_Do/DMD/DMD-Documents/EN/DMD-Concept\\_of\\_Gender.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DMD/DMD-Documents/EN/DMD-Concept_of_Gender.pdf)>.

countries of the North; hence, she is associated with intelligence, independence, and development. When she moves into Abdu's culture, she transmits her Western ideas of women's independence to women in Abdu's family and in the village by advocating girls' education. She draws her husband's attention to his sister's intelligence and her right to learn: "She says she wants to study. Doesn't seem to know quite what [...] glamourized careers she sees on television, for sure. But she is so hungry to learn. Why can't she have the chance? [...] she has a brain" (p. 136). Julie's support of women's education is not only manifested in her encouragement of Maryam's desire for education, but also in her attempts to persuade the principal at the school where she is teaching "to let girls join the classes although it was more than unlikely their families would allow them to leave home" (p. 195).

Although Julie transmits her Western ideologies to the host culture, she at the same time adopts the role of Arab women by participating in house chores and obeying her husband. Thus, Julie's gender identity alternates between her Western ideas and her new role as an Arab woman. This confirms Bhabha's "in-between" space which "prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities."<sup>212</sup>

Moreover, Julie's "in-between" state is manifested by living "in-between" private and public spheres when she is in Abdu's village. While the South African lady is accustomed to a free and independent lifestyle in her home country, where she was used to going out alone and enjoying herself, she can no longer live this way in Abdu's culture (p. 122). She has to stay confined in the house, in the women's quarters, where women remain when men, who are not family, visit the house. Julie arrives in a village where women are not given their freedom. They are enclosed inside the house and cannot go out alone without being accompanied by a male family. When Julie asks the women in Abdu's family to show her the village, they tell her: "Ibrahim will show" (p. 121). Julie's thrill of knowing and confronting the "Other" places her identity on the border of openness to the "Other."

Although Julie knows that it is not permissible for women in Abdu's culture to go out alone without the company of a male relative, she constantly leaves the house to go to the desert with little Leila without informing her husband. Julie does not tell Abdu of her outings to the desert, perhaps because he does not care to know how she spends her time since he is always busy applying for visas to Western countries, or perhaps because he won't understand her hours spent there because of his contempt for the desert. The desert is the only place Julie does go alone to— a place of reflection and meditation for her. Only a stray dog is there. As

---

<sup>212</sup>Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

we can see, Julie practices a measure of her freedom despite the restrictions placed on women in Abdu's culture.

Thus, Julie, in Abdu's village, adapts to two different roles. On the one hand, she is still influenced by her L.A. Café ideas, which advocate women's independence and the right of education for both boys and girls. This is asserted through Abdu's thoughts: "Never mind teaching a few words of English, she had influenced them [the women] with her rich girl's Café ideas of female independence" (p. 256). Note also that when Abdu leaves for the US, Julie is expected to follow his orders, but refuses to do so. On the other hand, Julie seems to be adapting to the role of an Arab woman by performing housework, although she was not used to doing it in her home country, and by being obedient to her husband: "Women here—his home—do what their men tell them to. Is that what is happening in the makeshift walls of the lean-to, are there listeners with ears to the clapboard hearing what is being said" (p. 227).

Julie's two roles as a Western and an Arab woman confirm my hypothesis set in the introduction that when someone marries across cultures, he/she will be affected by his partner's cultural background and beliefs. As we have seen, Julie is influenced by Abdu's religious beliefs and cultural practices, which leads her to occupy Bhabha's "in-between" space in which she does not completely settle in one extreme polarity, neither that of the West nor that of the Arab culture. However, her oscillation between the two cultures ends in her choosing of Abdu's country as a "third space" to live in, which comprises aspects of Western culture and Arab culture.

### I.a.I.b. Julie's Third Space

Julie's hybridity does not lie in combining her two positions as a descendent from an upper-middle class family and as a member of the L.A. Café, but rather in her embracing a new position which she discovers in Abdu's village. It is in Abdu's culture that Julie has found a new meaning for her cultural identity that she could not find in South Africa. Abdu's culture is the "third space" which leads Julie to attain new avenues of knowledge and understating of her identity in society.

Julie's choice of Abdu's country as a "third space" to live in confirms the theoretical discussion set at the beginning of this chapter in which Bhabha defines the "third space" as:

For me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'Third Space' which enables other positions to

emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom.<sup>213</sup>

Julie's inner struggle between her past and future is revealed through a dream or a series of visions. She was not sure whether it was a dream, on the eve of her departure to California with Abdu, or a series of subconscious thoughts that had occurred to her in a wakeful night, but the desert was the right place to bring these thoughts or visions together. Note the use of interior monologue here. She had dreamt of "The suburbs," of her father's Sunday lunches on the terrace in California, of her husband being introduced to the "right" people and of his beauty being an exotic dish sampled along with the pool-side lunch, and of "The Table" friends whom, she knew, laughed about her pickup behind her back. Julie's dream reflects freeing herself from "The Suburbs," "The Table," and from the new country her husband is emigrating to.

At the interface of the opposing claims of her commitment to Ibrahim and her dedication to her newly found cultural identity, Julie once more chooses an unexpected alternative when she decides not to accompany Abdu<sup>214</sup> to America, but to stay with his family in his home country. Two days before their departure she tells Abdu that she is not going with him to America (p. 248). Abdu thought that she was going back home, to South Africa, where she belongs (p. 252). However, he was surprised to learn that Julie has decided to stay in his village. She told him that she was not going back to her country, because she does not belong there (p. 252). Failing to obtain a concrete place in South Africa, Julie does not know where to go. She does not want to go back to South Africa and does not want to accompany Abdu to America in fear of the unknown. She decides instead to stay in Abdu's homeland where she had created a new meaning for her cultural identity.

Abdu's confusion as to his wife's decision to stay in his country is cleared up by relating her decision to his own decision of leaving his country and his personal desire of not coming back: "No confusion; I should know that. Like me, like me, she won't go back where she belongs. Other people tell her she belongs. She looks for somewhere else [...]" (p. 262).

A new awareness arises in Julie— "something temptingly dangerous, too: The Suburbs; The Table; a third alternative" (p. 239). Julie's new awareness and cultural translation are a consequence of her encounter with "newness" in the sense intended by Bhabha:

---

<sup>213</sup> Bhabha, in Rutherford, 1990, p. 211.

<sup>214</sup> Ibrahim Ibn Musa is Abdu's real name in the novel.



The borderline work of culture demands an encounter with “newness” that is not part of the continuum of past and present. It creates a sense of the new as an insurgent act of cultural translation. Such art does not merely recall the past as social cause or aesthetic precedent; it renews the past, refiguring it as a contingent in-between space, that innovates and interrupts the performance of the present. The past-present becomes part of the necessity, not the nostalgia, of living.<sup>215</sup>

Julie’s past interrupts her present making her experience an “in-between” space. However, this past is renewed when she encounters “newness” and translates her principles. This proves that, for Julie, the boundary between cultures can be crossed. Her identity, as Sarita Chuang asserts: “takes on new meaning as she sees through the reality and refutes to be manipulated by the patriarchal ideology.”<sup>216</sup> The construction of Julie’s new identity recalls Stuart Hall’s definition of cultural identity:

It is always constructed through memory, fantasy, narrative and myth. Cultural identities are the points of identification, the unstable points of identification or suture, which are made, within the discourses of history and culture. Not an essence but a *positioning*.<sup>217</sup>

Likewise, Julie’s identity construction is affected by her memories of the past, for she often remembers her past life in South Africa. It is also influenced by “positioning,” for it is only when she moves to a new culture that her identity is reconstructed.

The “third space” Julie chooses to occupy combines aspects of two cultures: Western and Arab culture. Arab culture is exemplified by life in Abdu’s village, by living among an extended family, and by submitting to the laws of culture and religion; while aspects of Western culture are manifested in the capital where shops display “familiar international choice of Nike boots, cell phones, TV consoles, hi-fi and video equipment” (p. 203). There are also amenities to enjoy that don’t exist in a village like American fast-food restaurants such as McDonald’s where Julie and Abdu eat. In addition, there is a cinema complex which displays posters of Western and Oriental films, where Julie and Abdu watch a James Bond film. In other words, even in Abdu’s country there are outside influences from the postmodern industrial world, which adds a new dimension to hybridity in these countries. Being culturally displaced and living in such a hybrid environment leads Julie to experience Bhabha’s “unhomely” aspect.

---

<sup>215</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>216</sup> Sarita Chuang, “The vicissitudes of Identity: Boundary-Crossing between Self and the Other in Nadine Gordimer’s *The Pickup*,” accessed Feb. 10, 2011, <<http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/lctd/asp/works/397/study.htm>>.

<sup>217</sup> Hall in Rutherford, 1990, p. 226.

## I.a.I.c. Julie's Unhomeliness

According to Bhabha:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can 'unhomely' be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres. The unhomely moment creeps up on you stealthily as your own shadow and suddenly you find yourself in a state of incredulous terror. The unhomeliness is inherent in that rite of extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiation. In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting.<sup>218</sup>

The "unhomely," according to Bhabha, exists when someone crosses cultures. By crossing cultures, one encounters "newness" which creates a sense of displacement. In other words, one feels that he/she does not belong neither to the new culture he encounters, nor to his/her native culture that is familiar to him/her.

Bhabha refers to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century poet and philosopher, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's concept of unhomely condition of the modern world, that is, the creation of cultural confusion results in wars and mutual conflicts in the human world.<sup>219</sup> Such situations affect people's spiritual and intellectual needs to the extent that they cannot lead normal lives until they recognize that they have learned foreign ideas and have unconsciously adopted different ways of life. This leads Bhabha to utter: "In the world in which I travel I am endlessly creating myself."<sup>220</sup>

In addition, Bhabha presents "unhomeliness" as a condition of being colored in South Africa.<sup>221</sup> He refers to the different houses in Gordimer's *My Son's Story* (1990) as symbolic of the compartmentalized South African society in which members of a colored family have to struggle to find a home for marginalized people like themselves.

Note also that the term "unhomely" is evocative of Sigmund Freud's "unheimlich"—the "uncanny." The uncanny is a Freudian concept of an instance where something can be familiar, yet foreign at the same time, resulting in a feeling of it being uncomfortably strange or uncomfortably familiar.<sup>222</sup>

---

<sup>218</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>219</sup> Mazhar, 2007, p. 45.

<sup>220</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 8.

<sup>221</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 13.

<sup>222</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," accessed Sep. 16, 2012, <<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html>>.

Julie's "unhomely" state lies not in her being physically homeless, but in her being "culturally" homeless. In other words, Julie lives in a state of unbelonging and disorientation. This "unhomely" state is manifested when Julie was in South Africa even before encountering a new culture, not because she is "colored," as Bhabha argues, but because she was living "in-between" two lives. Julie's "unhomely" life developed when she moved to Abdu's culture, where she found that she neither belongs to her home country, nor to Abdu's country. Family, friends, and places that were familiar to her in South Africa became foreign when she encountered "newness" in Abdu's culture, which illustrates Freud's notion of the "unheimlich."

When she was in South Africa, Julie sounded aimless not knowing what she wants to do or to be (p. 11). She told Abdu that she wanted to become a lawyer, but she quit. Then it was languages and finally she ended up working as a PRO and fund-raiser, benefit dinners, celebrity concerts, visiting pop groups (p. 11). However, she stated that she wouldn't stick with this job for long. Julie's dissatisfaction with her job and the life she is leading leads her to search for a new life "somewhere" where she can fit in. She admits to Abdu that she had always wanted to live "somewhere": "Always wanted to live by the sea, I don't know why I didn't find the energy to take myself off somewhere" (p. 84). This recalls the epigraph of the novel which expresses the protagonist's aim in moving to another country. The description of the sea: "its depths various with life, its surface free, with crossings that have no frontier, the tides rising on this coastline, then that" (p. 84) justifies Julie's desire to live by the sea because, like the sea, she feels free to cross "borders" in its literal and figurative meanings. Julie is free to enter any country she likes thanks to her British passport, but also to cross "cultures" through her relationship with someone from another culture. Julie's desire to live by the sea is a hint for further events that will take place concerning Julie's life "somewhere." She, at the end, chooses to live in the "desert" which she discovers that it is somewhat like the "sea," without borders. Thus, Julie's desire to live "somewhere" reflects her sense of displacement and "unhomely" state in Bhabha's terms.

This "unhomely" state develops when Julie establishes a relationship with Abdu. After spending months with Abdu and before she leaves with him to his home country, she senses that the L.A. Café is no longer useful to her (p. 108). Her gradual alienation from the L.A. Café, which has always been the place to where she belongs and resorts (p. 91-92), increases when she moves to Abdu's culture.

Julie feels that she belongs “nowhere”; she neither belongs to the L.A. Café nor to her father’s home (p. 138). She has always been dissociated from her father’s home, probably since her mother left or it could be due to the end of apartheid Africa. She even distances herself from Abdu’s home country: “Only down the street. Not far to go. As if he doesn’t know, he was born here, *this is his place, not mine*” (p. 243, my emphasis).

Julie ventured when she moved beyond the boundary of her home. Once she is introduced to the world outside her home, she can never return to her home the way it was previous to her knowledge of the new world. She has a new sense of herself now after she encountered “newness” in Abdu’s culture. Her “unhomely” state is a result of her insistence on moving to a world beyond her home:

“Beyond” signifies spatial distance, marks progress, promises the future; but our intimations of exceeding the barrier or boundary—the very act of going beyond—are unknowable, unrepresentable, without a return to the “present” which, in the process of repetition, becomes disjunct and displaced.<sup>223</sup>

Julie lives an inner turmoil after she established herself in Abdu’s culture. She is caught

in-between the inner calm she has acquired in her spiritual encounter with the desert, and the somewhat pre-capitalist solidarity among the women in Ibrahim’s desert village on the one hand, and the anticipated dread of living in the capitalist social structures of the United States, so similar to The Suburbs in the South African home she believes to have left behind, on the other.<sup>224</sup>

Encountering a new culture makes Julie struggle in-between the social solidarity she has discovered among people in Abdu’s community and which was absent in South Africa and the fear of living in the capitalist social structures of the US which is similar to her family’s life in The Suburbs. What emerges from being “in-between” the paradigms of two worlds is the “interstitial” space, which makes it difficult for Julie to locate herself culturally, and thus makes her live in an “unhomely” state.

### I.a.I.d. Factors Affecting Julie’s Hybridity

The changes that occur to Julie’s cultural identity— particularly to her language, religion, gender, cultural ties, and her life project— after her union with Abdu and her move

---

<sup>223</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>224</sup> Altmöder, 2008, p. 139.

to his country prove the presence of hybridity. However, as already pointed out, Julie's way of life in post-apartheid South Africa already bore traits of hybridity in that her social relations represented a rejection of her origins. This hybridity has evolved when Julie encountered a new and different culture when she married Abdu and moved with him to his country, where she has become more reflective and mature after spending time there. She has firmly established herself in the host culture and wants to grow plantation there although it is not certain that this will actually happen. She has adopted the new cultural and religious beliefs and practices; however, her identity did not settle into fixed polarities. She has experienced Bhabha's "in-between" space in which she is caught "in-between" two worlds, in between cultural practices of her native culture and those of the host culture, in between recalling her past and living her present, and in between living in private and public spaces.

In this section, the different factors that have played a role in the evolution of Julie's hybrid experiences will be analyzed. Each hybrid experience is motivated by certain factors. Living in a post-apartheid society is the main factor for Julie's hybrid experience in South Africa. Her love for Abdu and her decision to marry him assert this hybridity. However, this cross-cultural relationship did not play a significant role in Julie's evolution of her hybrid identity when she moved to Abdu's village. In fact, her hybrid experience in Abdu's country is motivated by her integration into the host culture; by the hospitable reaction of the host society to her presence; and by her relationship with the desert. I will examine how each of these factors contributes to the evolution of Julie's hybridity and conclude the relation between her cross-cultural marriage and hybrid identity.

### *Post-apartheid Society*

The main reason for Julie's hybrid experience in South Africa— which is represented by her desire to escape her parents' upper-middle class lifestyle in The Suburbs— is living in a post-apartheid society which is characterized by heterogeneity and diversity, and her membership in the L.A. Café which represents a sample of this hybrid society:

[...] her familiars are the young who have lost the more grandiose, eloquent, traditional, African resources in self-expression, and have passed on easily to The Table, the bars, the streets, only those adapted to general usage, across all local cultures, heard all over coming from those of their generation, all colours and kinds. (p. 77)

After the end of apartheid system in South Africa in 1994, black people took action to enter the world that was entirely under the control of whites. As Altnöder contends:

In the aftermath of apartheid, affirmative action has caused an infiltration of the hitherto homogeneous and predominantly White sector of finance and business by an increasingly affluent black middle-class. Thus, even the mainstream of the social ordering is rendered an increasingly de-centred life-place, from which emanate distinct practices of habitation so as to cope with the country's "new" non-racial dispensation on the one hand, and the challenges of globalization/Westernisation on the other.<sup>225</sup>

This post-apartheid atmosphere is conveyed in the description of the black lawyer's office and his two blonde secretaries (p. 75-76). Black people are more indulged in South African society and even have white people to serve them—a radical reversal from earlier times. The black lawyer is now entitled to a respectable position in society; he could have become a judge if he had not preferred to enter the financial world (p. 77). In addition, the description of women waiting at Julie's uncle gynecologic clinic points to the emergence of a new upper class of blacks (p. 69).

This hybrid society that unites people from different cultures and races can also be found in "The Suburbs" at Nigel Ackroyd Summers' place, where he arranges Sunday lunch parties for people from different racial backgrounds to meet and discuss issues related to political renewal, liberalism, and economic progress in a post-apartheid ambiance. The change that took place in the South African society is observed, for Julie was surprised at the scene of a black couple at her father's house (p. 41). Julie's father as an international financier banker "[has] to add such names to the guest lists for a balance of his contacts" (p. 41). Another evidence of change is manifested in Julie's step-mother's guest list referred to in the following quote: "she had been an actress, interpreter of sophisticated comedies set in London, Paris or New York, out-dated now by the changes that had also changed her guest list" (p. 42). The guest list most probably involves people from different racial backgrounds rather than white people only.

Moreover, the L.A. Café constitutes a sample of hybrid society in post-apartheid South Africa. It is portrayed as a multicultural space that joins "ageing Hippies, Leftist Jews, grandfathers and grandmothers of the 1920s immigration" (p. 5), prostitutes from Congo and Senegal, and black and white people from different social classes. On this description, Altnöder comments: "Hence initially, both the café's name and its—for the most part—unsuccessfully aspiring clientele underscore suggestive allusions to the (American) dream of

---

<sup>225</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 120.

freedom and social upward mobility.”<sup>226</sup> The EL-AY café represents the hybrid society that is void of racism and discrimination desired to be lived by the new generations of South Africa. The “L.A.” letters stand for Los Angeles, another symbol of a heterogeneous hybrid city. Its members are living in an atmosphere that is hybrid, non-racial, and multicultural.

In fact, the L.A. Café can be likened to the carnival which “does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators [...]. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people.”<sup>227</sup> Just like the concept of Bakhtin’s Carnival<sup>228</sup> which, according to Keith M. Booker, has

representatives from different social and political strata thrust together in the same physical and social space in such a way that normal hierarchies and class distinctions are rendered ineffective, or at least unstable. This juxtaposition of various voices allows for a polyphonic dialogue that highlights the differences among social groups and generally calls into question the assumptions that would hold certain groups to be ascendant over others.<sup>229</sup>

Similarly, the L.A. Café embraces “whoever turned up” (p. 5); “people come and go among them” (p. 23). It includes a heterogeneous group of people<sup>230</sup> which subverts established social order and mediates between high and low forms of culture. It comprises people from different social classes who “have distanced themselves from the ways of the past, their families, whether these are black ones still living in the old ghettos or white ones in The Suburbs” (p. 23).

Julie’s membership in the L.A. Café which is a sample of a hybrid and post-racial society—up to a point because there is still the Other Abdu— indicates that race and color play no part for Julie. The description of mixed-race groups who gather at the L.A. Café clearly shows that people who attend this place are not concerned with racial ties. This is confirmed by Stephanie Genty, who contends that “Gordimer describes a post-apartheid South Africa where blacks are accepted by whites as friends or acquaintances, where it is now desirable or simply a social necessity for whites to present themselves in the company of

---

<sup>226</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 114.

<sup>227</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, London: Cambridge Mass, 1968, p. 7, cited in Ken Hirschkop and David G. Shepherd (eds.), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1989, p. 215.

<sup>228</sup> Carnival is a festive season which occurs immediately before Lent; the main events are usually during February. Carnival typically involves a public celebration or parade combining some elements of a circus, mask and public street party. People often dress up or masquerade during the celebrations, which mark an overturning of daily life.

<sup>229</sup> M. Keith Booker, *Techniques of Subversion in Modern Literature: Transgression, Abjection, and the Carnivalesque*, Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991, p. 34.

<sup>230</sup> A group of people and not community because community has a different sense in Abdu’s village where people share the same religion, race, and culture in contrast to the group of people at the L.A. Café who differ in race, religion, and culture.

blacks.”<sup>231</sup> Franz Meier describes the hybrid non-racial ambiance at the L.A. Café in much the same way:

Skin colour no longer seems to be an important distinctive feature in the liberal anti-bourgeois post-*apartheid* [sic] climate at the ambiguously named L.A./EL-AY Café. At best (or worst), racial diversity is relished by the whites as an element of postmodern *savoir vivre*, its casual display functioning as a *shibboleth* of one's own liberalism.<sup>232</sup>

In short, Julie is influenced by the hybrid society that surrounds her, whether in post-apartheid society in general or the L.A. Café in particular. Her habitual presence at the L.A. Café and her embracing of its hybrid lifestyle play an essential role in her alienation from her parents' lifestyle in *The Suburbs*. This hybridity is asserted by her love for the foreign “Other”—Abdu—and by her decision to leave South Africa with him despite her parents' opposition. Julie wouldn't have shown any interest in forming a permanent relationship with Abdu if she were not already deeply inclined to the acceptance of the “Other” as an alternative to her background. How, then, will this inclination play out in her cross-cultural marriage?

### *Julie's Love for Abdu*

In this sub-section, I will study the relation between Julie's cross-cultural relationship and her two hybrid experiences. On the one hand, Julie's love for Abdu and her intercultural marriage to the foreign “Other” assert her hybrid experience in South Africa. This hybrid experience, as pointed out previously, is represented by her desire to dissociate herself from *The Suburbs* lifestyle. Julie's engagement in a permanent relationship with Abdu and moving with him to his homeland, in my opinion, is but a way to distance herself from her father's life as she did by choosing the L.A. Café. On the other hand, Julie's relationship with Abdu did not play any role in her evolution of her second hybrid experience when she adopted a completely new culture in Abdu's village. Abdu was not in favor of his wife's assimilation to the new cultural beliefs and religious practices. Thus, her second hybrid experience was motivated by other factors as we will see later on.

---

<sup>231</sup> Stephanie Genty, “Genre/Gender in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*,” *Commonwealth Essays and Studies* 26. 2 (2003): p. 85.

<sup>232</sup> Franz Meier, “Picking up the Other: Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*,” accessed Feb. 14, 2011, <[http://webdoc.gwdg.de/edoc/ia/eese/artic23/franz/2\\_2003.html](http://webdoc.gwdg.de/edoc/ia/eese/artic23/franz/2_2003.html)>.



Julie's love for Abdu, despite her parents' and people's rejection of this relationship, forces her to defy racial segregation that is still visible in South African society despite the end of apartheid. Just as "the young, haphazard, and selectively tolerant" who are "breaking up in bars and cafés the inhibition of the past" (p. 5), Julie breaks down social barriers by loving and marrying a "colored" man.

People in post-apartheid South Africa still find it difficult to accept union across races or cultures, given that their country saw the enactment of the prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act in 1949 under apartheid institution. People's rejection of these kind of relationships is asserted by Abdu's boss who expressed bitterness at the assumption of Julie's sharing human standards in common with the "lout" (p. 32). He advises Julie to leave Abdu because he is not suitable for her (p. 32). However, Julie ignores all what he said as if the man had not spoken.

Not only Abdu's boss, but also everyone believes that Julie is not for Abdu and he is not for her (p. 79). The black lawyer sympathizes with Abdu's case for he and his people were once turned back at many emigration and immigration gates; however, he rejects the idea of Abdu being Julie's partner:

A flush of resentment: *he's not for you*, that's what he's really saying: the famous lawyer is one of *them*, her father's people and their glossy Danielles [...] it doesn't help at all that he is black; he's been one of their victims, he's one of *them* now. He, too, expects her to choose one of her own kind—the kind he belongs to. (p. 80)

Moreover, Julie's father's reaction toward this relationship was extremely furious when Julie informed him that she was leaving in a week's time to Abdu's country. He warned his daughter not to accompany the "foreigner" whom they know nothing about and whose "backward" country treats women like "slaves":

[...] you are leaving in a week's time for one of the worst, poorest and most backward of Third World countries, following a man who's been living here illegally, getting yourself deported—yes—from your own country, thrown out along with him, someone no-one know anything at all about, someone from God knows what kind of background [...]. What we do know, everyone knows, is that the place is dangerous, a country of gangster political rivals, abominable lack of health standards—and as for women: you, you to whom independence, freedom, mean so much, eh, there women are treated like slaves. It's the culture, religion. You are out of your mind. What more can I say. You choose to go to hell in your own way. (p. 98)

Despite the negative reactions of Julie's surroundings toward her relationship with Abdu, Julie defied all boundaries and barriers by her decision marry him and accompany him to his homeland. This again recalls the epigraph of the novel in which Julie desires to find a country where they can live happily and be accepted by their surroundings. By doing this, she asserts her hybridity and her desire of dissociating from her father's lifestyle: "Ibrahim is

desirable to Julie, while she knows well how Ibrahim is abominable to the upper white class. This abomination is in her, for she employs the abomination to assert her identity in front of her family.”<sup>233</sup>

Furthermore, other evidence points to Julie’s love for and acceptance of the “Other” Abdu, which confirm Julie’s hybrid experience in South Africa. The reader is aware of Julie’s love for Abdu which is manifested through her care and concern for him, her attempts to please him, and her efforts to overcome the obstacles that face them. The way she drove the car when she was with him points to her capability of crossing obstacles: “she reversed swiftly between obstacles on the workshop floor, to show him she could do it” (p. 13). Abdu’s presence in Julie’s life makes it more interesting for her; she loves his company. His occasional visits to her dwelling-place make her feel that it is home (p. 27). Julie considers Abdu as her “invisible shield,” her protector who is on her side. She cares for him more than he does. She waits for him in the evening when he comes back from work; prepares the towel for him to bath and irons his clothes although she is not used to performing domestic tasks herself. This point indicates that Julie is ready to adopt the role of housewife, although she is not used to doing it, in order to please Abdu. Thus, Julie’s love for Abdu plays an indirect role in transforming some of her Western characteristics to adapt to Abdu’s needs.

Moreover, Julie’s love for Abdu is apparent through her enthusiasm in helping him stay in her country. When Abdu got his deportation letter, she tried her best to save her lover from being deported. Her presentation of her lover’s case to the lawyer depicts her deep concern for Abdu (p. 76). Julie can’t bear the fact that Abdu is leaving South Africa. Abdu senses Julie’s love for him:

All that she had been to him, the physical oneness, the tenderness, the expression of her whole being that had concentrated in the hours with lawyers, the humiliations suffered before the indifference of official communications, the recognition of him as the man he knew himself to be beneath the nobody with a false name. (p. 96)

In short, I think that Julie’s love for Abdu is a means to further distance herself from her father’s life and not an end in itself. It is a way to confirm her hybrid experience which is represented by her desire to escape from what her father represents. In addition, what has led to the evolvement of Julie’s “assimilationist hybridity” while she was in Abdu’s country was not caused by her husband who refused seeing his wife as the foreign “Other,” but was mainly

---

<sup>233</sup> Chuang, Sarita “The vicissitudes of Identity: Boundary-Crossing between Self and the Other in Nadine Gordimer’s *The Pickup*,” accessed Feb. 10, 2011, <<http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/lctd/asp/works/397/study.htm>>.

motivated by her integration into the host culture— as we will see in the next sub-section— where Julie discovers the sense of community that she found absent in her homeland.

### *Julie's Integration into Abdu's Culture*

Julie's adoption of the new religious and cultural beliefs in Abdu's culture illustrates Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity," for the protagonist leans over toward the center and mimics hegemony which is represented by Abdu's culture.

Julie, who was at the "center" in her home country, is displaced in Abdu's country and is now located at the periphery. Being an "outsider" and a "woman" in a patriarchal society, Julie is no longer in a privileged position. Her identity is inseparable from her husband, she is "the wife" (p. 108) of Ibrahim Ibn Musa and not Julie Summers. When she first arrived in Abdu's country, she felt nameless and only Abdu's real identity is revealed (p. 110). She felt that she was strange to herself when she noticed that people in Abdu's country are looking at her in curiosity; she felt something she had never felt while she was in her home country, a feeling that made her feel her self-importance:

Julie Summers. In the human press of the airport, in the eyes of the man made out with difficulty in his cave of a shop, in the faces turned in curiosity to study her, close by in the bus, it came to her that she was somehow as strange to herself as she was to them: she was what they saw. That girl, that woman had lived all her life in the eyes of black people, where she comes from, but never had had from them this kind of consciousness of self: so that was what home was. (p. 117)

Being "peripheral" in Abdu's country does not last long, for Julie soon attempts to exchange with the "center" through her efforts to become a member of Abdu's family and her attempts to integrate into the host society. This interaction with the center generates a sense of hybridity that develops with time, as Nikos Papastergiadis who discusses Hall's notion of hybridity suggests:

Hybridity can be seen as operating on two levels: it refers to the constant process of differentiation and exchange between the centre and the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions.<sup>234</sup>

Julie's interaction and exchange with the "center" make her develop a hybrid identity that comprises aspects of the new culture. The first thing she adjusts to is the new time frame

---

<sup>234</sup> Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274.

in Abdu's Muslim culture which is set according to the time of the five daily prayers although the calls to prayer are an electronic recording: pre-dawn (Fajr), noon (Dohur), afternoon (Asser), sunset (Maghrib), evening (Isha) (p. 124). She is curious to see and learn everything about the new culture (p. 110).

In addition, Julie respects the cultural rule that living among an extended family implies acceptance of family rules which won't provide the privacy the couple used to have when they were living alone at Julie's place in South Africa. She is aware that the freedom she used to have in her culture with regards to acting intimately in public is not allowed in Abdu's culture. The couple can no longer act freely in an intimate manner before the family or in public, for this is considered impolite according to Abdu's cultural traditions (p. 214). We notice in Abdu's culture that brothers and sisters, nieces and nephews live in the same family house, which differs from Western cultures where individuality is more dominant and independence is more apparent. The couple could have lived in a private apartment, but Julie did not mind living among Abdu's extended family which reflects her desire for "the join," in Bhabha's terms.

Julie's "looking for the join" is also manifested in her desire to become a member of Abdu's family. Her gesture of holding her husband's hand when they enter the house reflects her desire to show Abdu's family that she is one of them (p. 181). She indicates that she considers herself as a member of Abdu's country and culture by declaring to him that she is not "a tourist" (p. 125) in his country. In addition, she establishes amicable relations with Abdu's mother and his sisters. While contact between Julie and Abdu's mother was barely established when they first met, Abdu's mother was more at ease with Julie's presence in the house with the passage of time. She had even become a helper for Abdu's mother in the kitchen (p. 196). Julie wants to help the women in washing the dishes for she is not accustomed to be waited on, but the women do not let her (p. 136). Altnöder thinks that Julie's exclusion from the cultural sphere of women and women's experience emphasizes her racial otherness.<sup>235</sup> In my opinion, however, Ibrahim asked his family not to allow Julie to join the women's circle so that his wife would not become like any other woman in the village. His motivation being that the village is a temporary home while he waits to obtain a visa to a Western country. He wants his wife to remain "Western." Also, he has no desire to remain attached to his origins. This is asserted by Altnöder's comment:

Seeing her otherness intact is vitally important for Ibrahim, who has to retain Julie's face as a "concrete figure of alterity"—to borrow Lévinasian terminology once more—in order for his

---

<sup>235</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 133.

Lacanian desire of the Other to stay alive. In other words: because she embodies the Other he desires, Julie must not be absorbed by the Other he despises. After all, it is Julie's presumed otherness that he needs as a reason to continue his enduring struggle for acceptance in one of the countries of the North/West."<sup>236</sup>

Abdu wants his wife to remain in the image of a Western woman who represents the West he is desperate to access. However, Julie adapts to the role of Arab woman and integrates into the new environment. Not only is Julie integrated into Abdu's family, she has also established herself in Abdu's society. In addition to the ladies conversation circles, Julie teaches English courses for older boys, who hope to go to high schools in the capital, and devises play-learning for small children. For the first time in her life, she feels satisfied with what she is doing (p. 195); not only because of her job as a teacher, but also because of her special relationship with little Leila, Abdu's niece: "There was another construction—perception of herself formed in—by—this village that was his home" (p. 197). She has found a new sense of community in Abdu's village that is absent in South Africa, even at The Table. Julie has discovered a new aspect of her identity while she was living in Abdu's community different from the one she had while she was living in South Africa. This is what Julie, several pages later in the novel, admits to Abdu: "I thought, I really thought you saw how I was beginning—you make it so hard to explain—to live here. Oh my god. How I was different—not the same as I was back there when you met me" (p. 262).

Julie finds solace in the host culture. The social ties that exist in Abdu's culture, the sense of living in an extended family, and the respect dedicated to Abdu's mother who is described as "the presence of this house" (p. 119), "the powerful presence" (p. 120), "monumental silence" (p. 125), generate a new awareness in her:

I don't know what I thought. Yes or no. because there's so much I don't know—about you. I've found that out. Since we've been home here. You must understand, I've never lived in a family before, just made substitutes out of other people, ties, I suppose—though I didn't realize that, either, then. There are... things... between people here, that are important, no, necessary to them... I don't mean the way you are to me... that doesn't fit in with anybody, anything else, and that's all right, but... you could have reasons for 'yes' I couldn't know about because they're... unconnected with me, with you and me, d'you see? (p. 187)

An important key to a fuller understanding why Julie finds solace in the materially poor but spiritually rich environment of Ibrahim's home is given here. Julie is so sickened by the pretentiousness of her father's house that she escapes it and finds relief in the community-life which dominates Abdu's village. She has acquired the sense of belonging to a family

---

<sup>236</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 136.

which she has lacked in her own culture, especially after she has witnessed Abdu's love and respect for his mother, which has awakened her emotions and thoughts of the importance of family:

What passed between mother and son must have been an apocalypse for both, a kind of rebirth tearing her body, a fearful thrusting re-emergence for him. His wife who had never known, never would know, such emotions—Nigel Ackroyd Summers and the mother someone imagined in California—felt the force of his humility and offered all she had in recognition: love-making. (p. 193)

Julie's cultural identity has undergone a process of transformation by constructing a new sense for her identity which comprises new aspects of the host culture. This affirms Hall's definition of cultural identity as fluid and subject to change:

Cultural identity... is a matter of "becoming" as well as "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities... have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation.<sup>237</sup>

In conclusion, Julie's hybrid experience in Abdu's village reflects Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity," where Julie attempts to lean over toward the "center" by her adaptation and assimilation to the cultural and religious beliefs of the host culture. This hybridity is not motivated by her relationship with Abdu, for as we have seen Abdu opposes his wife's assimilation to his culture. Instead, Julie's integration into the new culture plays an essential role in her evolution of this sort of hybridity. In addition, the hospitable reaction of Abdu's family and the host community in Abdu's village, which is a new form of interaction not found in South Africa even with the new openness after the end of apartheid, contributes to Julie's assimilation to the host culture.

### *Julie's Relationship with the Desert*

The last factor that has a role in Julie's evolution of her hybrid identity is her relationship with the desert. Altnöder asserts that for Julie, "the desert does not function as a metaphor of escape, but instead substantiates her adjustment to the foreign culture."<sup>238</sup> This quote reveals the importance of the desert in Julie's adjustment to the new culture and in her

---

<sup>237</sup> Fong and Chuang, 2004, p. 76.

<sup>238</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 134.

decision to choose Abdu's village as a "third-space" to live in; a space which is neither "The Suburbs" nor "The Table":

The stream of vision, thoughts, re-creation has a kind of narrative of its own; the desert is a good place for it to relate itself. On the terrace in California (which, like the child's ship, she had never seen except in prototype in the media) there are assembled the guests of Nigel Ackroyd Summers' Sundays, Danielle and her mother; or Danielle-and-her-mother one and the same. Men beside a sauna (sauna! Where does that detail come from!) are talking about winnings and losses at Black Jack and buying into the future on the stock exchange. The latest husband introduces Ibrahim to the right people, there's the international website man who emigrated to Australia and the black lawyer turned business entrepreneur. Her mother/Danielle introduces Ibrahim/Abdu to women, bringing him forward by the hand: my son-in-law, an oriental prince (as The Table, she knew, used to laugh about her pickup behind her back) in Gucci shoes, Armani pants and Ralph Lauren shirt Danielle's bought him, his beauty is an exotic dish to sample along with the pool-side lunch. He's still wearing his old elegant scarf round his neck. All that is left of him. Whatever he was, had been, is? Sliding himself out from under the vehicle, sitting in silent judgment upon us at The Table, flung upon his back on the bed in the cottage, now carefully repacking the canvas bag in the lean-to. (p. 245)

The indirect interior monologue is used by the narrator to exhibit Julie's internal thoughts, memories, reflections and feelings, which are stimulated by Abdu's final decision of leaving his country and migrating to the United States. It is an indirect monologue because the author comments upon Julie's thoughts as manifested in the sentences between parentheses. In addition, the monologue is not part of a dialogue and is not placed within inverted commas. Julie's thoughts flow freely without being interrupted by external events. She stays fixed in space, in the desert, but her consciousness moves feeling in time. Julie sits in the desert thinking over her present state; various scenes from her past life crowd into her mind. She thinks of her father and his acquaintances at The Suburbs, of her L.A. friends at The Table, and of her husband as an exotic dish among all these people.<sup>239</sup>

From Bhabha's perspective, it is in this passage through the "third space of enunciation" that the subject experiences a transformation, the formation of a new cultural identity. Julie's passage through the "third space" which is the desert causes her to experience a transformation in her cultural identity. This transformation has led her to embrace a "third alternative" that is Abdu's culture.

Julie reveals a special relationship with the desert, for she has no equivalent experience in South Africa although she fantasized about the sea. Her regular early morning walks to where the desert begins at the end of the street become an experience of spiritual growth for Julie. In the desert, Julie feels that she is bound neither by space nor by any time

---

<sup>239</sup> Literary analysis of passages from the novel will be provided in the second part of this chapter. We will see how the thematic aspect in the novel is reflected in literary discourse.

frame:

No seasons of bloom and decay. Just the endless turn of night and day. Out of time: and she is gazing—not over it, taken into it, for it has no measure of space, features that mark distance from here to there. In a film of haze there is no horizon, the pallor of sand, pink-traced, lilac-luminous with its own colour of faint light, has no demarcation from land to air. Sky-haze is indistinguishable from sand-haze. All drifts together, and there is no onlooker; the desert is eternity. (p. 172)

The desert is always; it doesn't die, it doesn't change, it exists (p. 229). Julie likes to sit out there and contemplate the non-ending horizon, for she feels at peace, in the sense that she is not accompanied by her past that constitutes part of her (p. 198). The desert is the right place for Julie to clear up mixed emotions that struggle inside her. When Abdu got the visa for the United States, Julie went to the desert as she had an inner struggle that needed to be cleared up, and it is only in the desert that Julie can do that (p. 231). She felt "Shame, guilt, fear, dismay, anger, blame, resentment at the whole world and what it is—and names come up, names—for the sight of him as he is going to be" (p. 230). She felt guilty because she belongs to the wealthy Western world that despises immigrants and people of "color." She is also afraid of the new world her husband will settle in, a world she knows very well (p. 230). It is in the desert that Julie decides not to follow Abdu to the US. However, Julie cannot tell Abdu that it is the "desert" that made her change her mind at the last moment and made her decide to stay in his village, for Abdu would ridicule her decision as a "piece of sheltered middle-class Western romanticism" (p. 262).

Julie has finally doubted Abdu's love for her when he left her behind at his parents' house and preferred to leave immediately for the United States, without any hesitation when he got the visa that he was finally granted, thanks to Julie's mother and her step-father in California. She has discovered his exploitation of her as a meal ticket to get a visa to the West.

### I.a.I.e. Conclusion to Julie's Hybrid Identity

As we have seen, Julie has undergone two hybrid experiences: one in South Africa and the other in Abdu's village. In South Africa, Julie was living a hybrid state, even before meeting Abdu, which is represented by her desire to escape her inherited social status. This desire has made her experience Bhabha's "in-between" state, which lies in her struggle between her upper-middle class descent of *The Suburbs* and her lifestyle as a working-class



woman before her friends at the L.A. Café. Her oscillation also lies in her racial identification and her double association with both white and black races. Julie's cross-cultural relationship with Abdu came as an assertion of her hybrid experience in South Africa, which is mainly motivated by her life in post-apartheid society and her membership in the L.A. Café. Her marriage to Abdu and her move to his home country are but a means to further distance herself from her father's life, and not an end in itself.

However, by marrying Abdu and moving with him to his country, Julie has experienced another sort of hybridity through her adoption of a completely new culture. By assimilating to the new religious and cultural beliefs, Julie has illustrated Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity." The most obvious changes she has undergone are manifested in her cultural ties, language, religion, gender, and particularly in terms of life goal. Her self-perception changes radically. She learns Arabic, wears a scarf, reads the Koran, fasts during Ramadan, participates in the housework, forms a strong bond with her sisters-in-law, and teaches English to the women and children of the village. At the same time, however, she maintains her L.A. Café ideas and ways of thinking. "How much longer will she continue to do so?" is a question that is left open to the readers' imagination.

Julie's integration into the host culture and her encounter of "newness" made her experience another "in-between" state. She felt that she belonged to her homeland, yet dissociated from it. The same feeling applies to the L.A. Café; she felt that she belongs there, yet not a member of it anymore. This discovery is made through her act of crossing the boundary between her culture and Abdu's culture. This complements Bhabha's idea of crossing the boundaries to visit the other side of life, the "beyond,"<sup>240</sup> which helps the individual to know differences amongst cultures, and which leads to a new identity for one's self in society. Living in such "in-between" state made Julie experience Bhabha's "unhomely" aspect. She sensed that she is "culturally" displaced; she felt that she neither belonged to her homeland, nor to the L.A. Café, not even to Abdu's country. She has chosen to stay in Abdu's village; the reason is not explained rationally but is explored in the interior monologue (p. 245). Julie develops a sense of community not found in the Suburbs or at the Table. The desert opens a new dimension in her, whereas Abdu only wants to flee the desert.

What has led to Julie's "assimilationist hybridity" in Abdu's village is not her husband. On the contrary, Abdu was trying to prevent Julie's integration into his culture, for he refused to regard his wife as the foreign "Other." Thus, Julie's cross-cultural marriage to

---

<sup>240</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 7.

Abdu did not play a role in her evolution of hybridity. The alteration in Julie's identity was mainly motivated by the shift in space, her integration into the host culture, the host people's hospitable reaction to her presence, and by her special relationship with the desert. The geographical move to Abdu's homeland separates rather than unites the couple. While Abdu feels imprisoned by his own Arabic-Islamic culture, Julie is increasingly attracted to it as she finds what she has unconsciously been looking for in South Africa, namely lasting values, such as commitment, solidarity, family cohesion, and spirituality. In Ibrahim's desert village, Julie discovers aspects of herself as teacher, as sister and as a member of Ibrahim's extended family that she was unaware of previously in her middle-class family from "The Suburbs." In addition, the hospitable reaction and her acceptance among Abdu's family and the receiving community gave Julie an urge to integrate into the new culture which in turn influenced her evolvment of her hybrid identity.

Having studied Julie's hybrid identity and the factors that have caused her two hybrid experiences, it is necessary to look at the other side of the river and see how Abdu's cultural identity develops throughout the novel.

## I.a.II. Section Two: Abdu's Hybrid Identity

Unlike Julie, Abdu does not undergo two hybrid experiences. He changes far less than Julie. His goal remains the same throughout the novel: to leave his culture to move to the industrialized world. He wants to leave his culture even before the beginning of the novel. He fails in South Africa, and even in taking Julie home to his village he still does everything he can to leave. However, it cannot be denied that he experiences Bhabha's "in-between" space through his relationship with Julie who plays an indirect role in his oscillation between his cultural and religious teachings and those of the West. It is because of Julie that he indirectly transgresses his cultural and religious principles. In addition, Abdu's experience illustrates Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity," where it is noticed that he always attempts to enter the "center," which is represented by Julie's upper-middle class and her Western background.

Following the same steps in Julie's hybrid identity analysis, I will study, in this section, Abdu's hybrid identity from the viewpoints of Bhabha's and Pieterse's hybridity theory, particularly by examining the notions of "in-between" space or "third space," and "assimilationist hybridity." In addition, I will study the factors which have played a role in the evolution of his hybridity with the aim of finding a relation between his hybrid identity and cross-cultural marriage.

### I.a.II.a. Abdu's Hybrid Identity from Bhabha's and Pieterse's Viewpoints

Julie experiences Bhabha's "in-between" space in South Africa before meeting Abdu, and so does Abdu. He lives in an "in-between" state in South Africa before even meeting Julie and also in his own culture when he moves back home. In South Africa, Abdu lives "in-between" his "private" identity as an illegal Arab man and his "public" identity as a garage mechanic in the South African city; just like Julie who lived in-between her "private" identity as an upper-middle class member and her "public" identity as a working-class woman before those who attended at the L.A. Café. Thus, both protagonists were trying to hide one aspect of their identity and appear in another identity. In addition, we have seen that Julie has undergone a transformation when she married Abdu and moved to his country, especially in her adoption of the new cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Similarly, when Abdu

establishes a cross-cultural relationship with Julie, he oscillates “in-between” his cultural and religious beliefs and those of the West and even tries to assimilate to those of the West. This “in-between” state becomes more intense when he marries Julie and returns to his homeland.

Thus, Abdu’s oscillation between two identities and assimilation to his wife’s cultural belonging will be analyzed. More particularly, I will show how each constituent of his cultural identity: class, cultural group, race, language, religion, and gender, develops throughout the novel and undergoes a hybrid state.

### *Abdu’s Social Class*

It is noticed that Abdu is impressed by Julie’s upper-middle class descent. He constantly seeks to establish contact with her well-off family in order to achieve his dream and obtain a visa to the West. By doing this, he confirms my hypothesis set in the introduction that when someone marries across cultures, he/she will be influenced by his partner’s cultural background and beliefs. Abdu’s constant attempts to enter the “center” by seeking to develop contact with Julie’s upper-middle class family illustrate Pieterse’s notion of “assimilationist hybridity that leans over towards the center, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony.”<sup>241</sup>

In contrast to Julie, who rejects ties with her class, Abdu shows interest in Julie’s social status as a member of the upper-middle class. Apparently, Abdu belongs to the working class, to a poor family, and comes from a poor country to work illegally as a garage mechanic in South Africa despite his degree in economics. The difference in social class between Abdu and Julie is depicted through Julie’s internal thoughts: “she found herself speaking rather shyly, respectful of the obvious differences in ‘fate’ between them: she in her father’s Rover, he trapped beneath her small jalopy” (p. 11). The distinction between the nature of Abdu’s and Julie’s jobs also reflects the social difference between them: “He put the mechanic’s overalls and went to the garage every day. She went much later to the tenth-floor suite of offices and occupied her custom-designed chair at a modular desk with a splendid view of the city [...]” (p. 33). The use of the word “tenth-floor” symbolizes the high social status of Julie who can see a splendid view of the city as opposed to Abdu who stays on the ground under the belly of cars and cannot climb up the social ladder.

---

<sup>241</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

Abdu's fascination with Julie's wealth is manifested through several incidents in the novel. First, he is astonished at the sight of Julie's Rover (p. 9); he asks her about its model and the year of its production (p. 9). He tells her that she should buy a new car: "He was turned from her, again looking at the Rover: *the evidence gathered that she could afford to*" (p. 9, my emphasis). The italicized part in the previous quote clearly reveals Abdu's admiration not only for Julie's Rover, but also for Julie's wealth. In addition, Abdu highly approves of Julie's musical system: "[...] listened to her recordings on her system, of which he highly approved. You like to drive a second-hand car but you have first-class equipment for music" (p. 20). Abdu's materialistic penchant is also demonstrated when he asks Julie if she makes good money working as a fund raiser (p. 11).

Moreover, Abdu's eagerness to attend one of the Sunday lunch parties at Julie's father's house does not merely arise out of his belief that parents should meet the man who lives with their daughter (p. 38), but rather, as Sonja Altnöder states:

[...] on an unspoken, subtle level, Julie's father and his friends are the kind of people who may help Abdu realize his dream of getting a foot in the door leading to the world of finance and business. For Abdu, Julie's privileged social status engenders the opportunity of him becoming an accepted—legal—member of South African society.<sup>242</sup>

As can be discerned, Abdu's insistence on meeting Julie's parents is but a subtle interest in their wealth and in their social status which would afford him the chance to become an accepted member of South African society: "he [counts] on her as a source of Permanent Residence in her country" (p. 219). He reveals his respect for Julie's father and his people (p. 51), which makes Julie feel disappointed. Abdu's concern in Julie's father and his "people" is also asserted in the following quote:

They are people doing well with their life. All the time. Moving on always. Clever. With what they do, make in the world, not just talking intelligent. They are alive, they take opportunity, they use the will, yes, I mean to say, the will. To do. To have... yes, your father and the other men. They know what they speak about. What happens. Making business. That's not bad, that is the world. Progress. You have to know it. I don't know why you like to sit there every day in that other place. (p. 62)

Abdu reproaches Julie for her alienation from her parents. He tries to convince her that she should have contact with them and see them. It seems that there is an ulterior motive behind Abdu's attempts to fortify the relationship between Julie and her parents. With Julie's parents' wealth and connections, Abdu would find the support needed in his mission to acquire an entry visa to any Western country. However, Julie hates the fact that Abdu admires

---

<sup>242</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 123.

her father's position, wealth, and his people: "How could he admire them, those other friends, her father's Chairmen of the Boards, Trustees of the Funds, Director-spiders at the centre of the websites that net the Markets, and at the same time not realize this?" (p. 63).

In summary, Abdu's interest in the upper-middle class is represented by his fascination with Julie's Rover, her musical system, her job, and most importantly her parents' wealthy status and connections. Abdu's mission to climb the social ladder continues in his home country through his constant insistence on Julie to maintain contact with her well-off parents who would provide him a decent life.

The two protagonists, Abdu and Julie, are placed in contrast with each other. They are living "in-between" their real social class descent and their aspiration for a different lifestyle. While Julie rejects her tie with her upper-middle class and seeks to live a bohemian lifestyle, Abdu remaining a poor person seeks to climb the social ladder by developing his ties with the upper-middle. Thus, he confirms Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity," in which he attempts to enter the center, mimics hegemony, and adopts the canon. Abdu's desire to enter the center is also apparent in his insistence to master English, the language of the Western countries he is seeking to enter.

### *Abdu's Language*

It is noticed that Abdu does not have good mastery of English; however, this does not prevent him from communicating with people in South African society. He tries his best to express what he wants to say and seeks Julie's help to understand difficult words. In addition, when he returns to his homeland, he refuses to communicate in Arabic with his wife. He asks Julie to teach him English, for it is essential for him to learn the language of the countries to where he is seeking to immigrate. By doing this, Abdu is "looking for the join" in Bhabha's terms:

To live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its sundering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity: "I am looking for the join... I want to join... I want to join."<sup>243</sup>

---

<sup>243</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 18.

In addition, his attempts to learn English, a universal language, point to Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity" in which he "lean[s] over towards the center, adopt[s] the canon and mimic[s] hegemony."<sup>244</sup>

Abdu's broken English and lack of the local South African language(s) indicate that he is neither a native speaker of English nor a South African. This is illustrated through his use of short phrases which are separated by pauses: "There's still some—I don't know—in the ignition" (p. 7); his use of incorrect verb tense, as in: "I never saw one before—only in a photo" (p. 9); his replacement of a verb for a noun in the following italicized part: "That is how it is. You have no *choose*—choice—or you have choice. Only two kinds. Of people" (p. 21); and his hesitation in the choice of words: "That would be your fate, but you would not have—*what do I say*—looked for it" (p. 10, my emphasis).

Despite his weakness in English, Abdu manages to communicate with Julie and her friends (p. 15), because he does not hesitate to ask about the meaning of words that he does not understand. For instance, when the L.A. friends were discussing one of their friend's state of health, who had been diagnosed with AIDS (p. 24), Abdu does not participate in the conversation because he simply does not understand the nature of the disease they are talking about; however, he asks Julie later on, who begins to explain (p. 24). His dependency on Julie, who helps him understand difficult words, is further manifested in the following quote: "He reads the newspapers with an intense concentration [...] sometimes he asks her for the meaning of an unfamiliar term or word" (p. 34). In addition, when one of the L.A. friends asks him about the social system in his country, he says: "Feudal" (p. 22). "He raises and lowers elbows on the table, looks to her, his sponsor here, to see if the word is the right one [...]" (p. 22). He also asks about the meaning of the word "schmuck," as it is the first time he has heard this word (p. 87).

Moreover, Abdu's will to communicate in English is manifested when he went to see the lawyer. Julie accompanied him for she thought "there might be difficulties with language" (p. 83). However, in the lawyer's room, Abdu "did all the talking, the manner an insistent alternation of rapidity and groping, at once frustrated and forceful. He found the words: the lawyer understood them, their gist was another language between the two men" (p. 83). Abdu spoke for himself; he spoke with confidence and did not let Julie do the talking.

Language has an important role in building and also in hindering successful communication between cross-cultural couples. Abdu's insufficient English sometimes

---

<sup>244</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

“brings” misunderstanding between him and Julie: “Sometimes the limitations of his use of her language bring misunderstanding although she thinks she lovingly has taught herself to interpret him instinctively” (p. 62). Abdu’s poor English makes him unable to flatter Julie, because he does not know how to express tender things in her language (p. 93). However, he insists on using the language and is determined to master it. When Julie corrects his sentence: “Time my uncle gave a new one my mother can be safe in, anyway” (p. 207) by telling him to use “*Would be*, not *can*” (p. 207), he complains that Julie helps everyone improve their English except him, to whom it was important. He wants to learn English and become fluent in the language as it is important for him in his quest to enter a Western country: “We must talk English. I need to speak English with you if I am going to get a decent job anywhere. I can be able to study some more there. Only with English” (p. 152). In addition, he refuses to communicate with his wife using his own language, and insists on using English only (p. 151).

Abdu’s refusal to communicate with Julie in his native language and his desire to improve his English reflect his alienation from his native culture and his wish to embrace a Western culture. This asserts Bhabha’s notion of “looking for the join” and Pieterse’s notion of “assimilationist hybridity,” where Abdu tries his best to enter the “center” through mastering English, the language of the “center” or the West.

### *Abdu’s Cultural Belonging*

Concerning Abdu’s cultural belonging, the foreigner feels detached from South African society and the L.A. Café. The main reason for this is his status as an illegal immigrant in South Africa, forcing him to distance himself from people in fear of being discovered. This makes him live in Bhabha’s “in-between” space in which he waivers “in-between” private and public. Bhabha contends: “Private and public, past and present, the psyche and the social develop an interstitial intimacy [...]”<sup>245</sup> Thus, hybridity according to Bhabha does not lie merely in-between two cultures, but also between private and public, and between past and present. Abdu lives in-between his private identity as a Muslim North African man, who does not reveal his real cultural belonging and his public identity as a

---

<sup>245</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 13.



garage mechanic, who works in the South African city. Also, his “in-between” state lies in his oscillation between distancing himself from his country, yet sticking to its cultural traditions.

Abdu’s cultural identity “in-between” private and public is manifested while he was in South Africa. He has to remain disguised as long as he wants to stay there, due to the fact that his residency permit expired a year and a half ago. He shed his identity and took on an assumed name in fear of being caught by the authorities. When Abdu first met Julie, he remained silent and withdrew when she asked him if he was doing all right in South Africa (p. 12). Abdu’s withdrawal without answering Julie reflects his desire not to reveal his true situation; his life is concealed from the public (p. 18). He is told to keep quiet about the room he is living in since it is an uninhabited place and he is occupying it illegally, so even his home address does not exist officially. He does not have a name, a home, or an identity in the South African city. It is important to highlight the comment inserted by the narrator here: “illegals have no fixed address, no identity” (p. 176), for it describes Abdu’s state of displacement and his “unidentified” identity. Abdu is unknown to anyone in the country; he is unreachable and unidentified (p. 33). He publicly appears in the garage overalls, and when he climbs out of them in the evening he “steps from his only identity, *here*, into a disguise, the nobody Abdu” (p. 31).

In addition, Abdu’s dissociation from the host society is due to the South Africans themselves who regard him as an outsider. It seems that Abdu does not enjoy Julie’s friends company; he cannot find his place among them. While they enjoy their time, he sinks in his own world and thoughts (p. 45). They also mistake him for Cape Malay because of his name “Abdu,” which they think is an abbreviation of “Abdu-Rahman,” a familiar name among Malays in Cape Town.

Abdu’s cultural belonging remains ambiguous because some people associate him with Cape Malays, while others mistake him for an Indian, Arab, or some sort of black. Abdu does not offer information about his identity when introduced to people at Julie’s father’s house, and keeps it private. When one of the women mistakes him for an Indian, he clarifies that he is not but does not offer any other information: “I’m not Indian. He doesn’t offer an identity” (p. 44). She then concludes that he must be “some sort of Arab” (p. 44), which shows the difficulty of classifying the “Other” as they are all put into the same bag. However, Abdu distinguishes himself from the locals in the host culture and associates himself with a group of people referred to by the pronoun “us” in his comment: “What would I do without him. He risks, I must pay for that. That’s how it works, for us” (p. 17). The use of pronoun

“us” which most probably refers to illegal immigrants, like Abdu, places Abdu at a distinct level from other legal immigrants and local citizens.

Besides experiencing Bhabha’s “in-between,” private and public, Abdu oscillates between his desire to distance himself from his country and people and identifying with his cultural background as an Arab-Muslim man. Abdu’s wish and goal in life is to get a visa to live in the West, in any Western country (p. 12). He seeks to distance himself from his family and start a new life in the West without any responsibilities. This recalls the epigraph of the novel, which reveals the protagonists’ desire to go to another country. He tries each and every way to realize his goal, although he knows that his presence is not desired in Western countries (p. 149). He tells Julie that the West views him, as any “Other,” an illegal immigrant, who constitutes a burden on the state, steals citizens’ jobs, and takes a lower salary. This is why he does not wish to be identified with his Arab-Muslim country, as immigrants who come from a country such as his are not desired in the West:

This country which claimed him by his birth, his features and colour, his language, and the Faith that he had to fill in on forms although he did not know if his mother’s son was still a Believer—this country was well known to have a high rating as a place of origin from which immigrants were undesirable. (p. 140)

He deliberately distances himself culturally from his people even though his racial and cultural background remains part of who he is. His real name, Ibrahim Ibn Musa, proves that he is an Arab-Muslim, despite his attempts to dissociate himself from this fact. He expresses his admiration for the West, instead, through his conversation with Julie: “World is their world. They own it. It’s run by computers, telecommunications—see about it here—the West, they own ninety-one percent of these. Where you come from—the whole Africa has only two percent, and it’s your country has the most of that” (p. 160).

Although Abdu attempts to dissociate himself from his country and people and is enthusiastic about living a Western lifestyle, there are cultural principles which he still respects and does not feel at ease crossing. His cultural traditions are still innate in him as it is apparent when he asks Julie to introduce him to her parents (p. 37). The tradition in Abdu’s village asserts that when a man decides to propose to a woman, their families should be introduced to each other, because parents’ consent plays an important role in the success or failure of the couple’s relationship: “If a woman chooses a man for this, or a man chooses a woman, it is time for the parents to know. To see the man. It’s usual” (p. 38). In addition, when Julie asks him to dance to the beat of Western music which is played at their farewell party, he declines: “No—not here, men and women don’t dance together—not in front of

parents, no” (p. 242). Abdu and Julie belong to two different cultures whose traditions and customs clearly differ: “For the first time, the difference between them, the secret conditioning of their origins, an intriguing special bond in their intimacy against all others, is a difference in a different sense—an opposition” (p. 38).

In conclusion, Abdu’s hybrid experience in South Africa represented by his oscillation between a “private” identity as an Arab-Muslim and a “public” identity as a garage mechanic working in the South African city illustrates Bhabha’s “in-between” space. In addition, his “in-between” experience lies in his alternation between his desire to distance himself from his country and his maintenance of its cultural beliefs and practices.

### *Abdu’s Religion*

Abdu’s state, “in-between” private and public, is also revealed through his attempts to keep his religious affiliation private while in South Africa. There are certain situations in which he transgresses his religious teachings; yet, at other times, he remains attached to these principles. By doing this, he illustrates Bhabha’s notion of “third space” which is likened to the metaphor of the stairwell:

The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.<sup>246</sup>

Abdu’s religious identity lies in the “third space”; it is open to translation and is not fixed in one extreme polarity. It undergoes change and entertains difference.

In South Africa, Abdu’s Islamic background is manifested through his daily practices, yet it is not clearly revealed to the public. He prefers to keep his religious belonging in private. For instance, when one of the L.A. friends asks him: “Are you a Buddhist?” (p. 15), he replies: “No, I am not that” (p. 15), but he did not say more. He did not claim his Muslim identity. Another instance is his response to Julie when she notices that he does not drink wine (p. 17). He does not reveal the prohibition inherent in his religion; when she asks him if he drinks, he replies: “Oh sometimes” (p. 17). Muslims do not drink alcohol because it is prohibited according to their religious teachings. Although there are many non-Muslims who do not drink alcohol for reasons unrelated to religion, Abdu’s reluctance to drink wine most

---

<sup>246</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

probably stems from his religion, especially because there is no mention in the novel that he suffers from health problems that would prevent him from drinking alcohol. In addition, when the L.A. friends suggest that Abdu needs to drink wine to forget about deportation, one of the friends adds: “that’s probably more like what an oriental prince needs” (p. 92). The comment is rather ironic and has a subtle reference to the fact that Muslims do not drink alcohol.

What is worth mentioning also is that Abdu “ate chips” (p. 25) while Julie ordered a hot dog when they were walking together round the lake. The fact that Abdu ate chips rather than meat shows his religious tie, for Muslims eat neither pork nor meat which is not “halal”<sup>247</sup> as this is prohibited according to Islam’s teachings.

Moreover, it is noticed that Abdu waivers between his religious teachings and the traditions of the host culture, as is apparent in the following quote: “[...] everyone had a good time. Except him, apparently, Julie’s find. Sometimes he would sit in the shadows, drink nothing; at others he would suddenly swallow alcohol with determination, as if set on a strange kind of reverse discipline” (p. 30). Abdu does not stick to one rule; sometimes he drinks alcohol, breaking the teachings of his religion, and at other times he does not drink at all. Ironically, the following comment: “If the theorist among them had concerned himself with this, he would have found it a survival technique” (p. 30), describes Abdu’s way of living as a “survival technique,” which highlights the fact that for people to survive in a new culture, adopting new aspects of the host culture cannot be avoided.

In addition, Abdu could not resist Julie’s desire for him to make love, although sexual relations with women before marriage are prohibited according to Abdu’s religion (p. 27). At the same time, “he resists residue feelings of tenderness towards this girl. That temptation” (p. 28). His resistance reflects the inhibition inherent in him; the reason that justifies his reaction toward Julie’s attempts to seduce him in front of her friends: “He restrained her gently, as if she were an over-affectionate pet” (p. 35). Her friends, however, are “accustomed to sex-play among them on these weekend transportations from The Table at the El-AY, no-one would have thought anything of it; it was his—his unfamiliar response that disquieted” (pp. 35-36). It was Abdu’s reaction that seemed out of place.

Abdu comes from a very traditional Islamic village where men and women sit in separate rooms and do not mix or interact together. However, he went out with Julie to the

---

<sup>247</sup> According to Islamic law, permitted animals are slaughtered in a particular method which makes their meat permissible to eat. The head of an animal is aligned in the direction of Qiblah, and should be slaughtered in the name of God. The animal is then hung upside-down and left to exsanguinate. In this way, the meat will contain no blood clots within the veins— thus, giving it a longer shelf life.

disco where they danced together and he displayed another side of his personality. He is not the timid, silent Arab anymore: he “would dance wildly with her, she laughing with amazement, welcoming this persona, excited, intrigued to know where the expertise, the energy came from [...]” (p. 30).

Despite Abdu’s occasional transgression of his religion’s rules, there are certain situations in which he cannot cross over his religion’s teachings. As an Arab-Muslim man, Abdu cannot accompany Julie to his Arab-Islamic village without official marriage. Abdu’s family will think that he abducted her; they will view him as a “kidnapper” for this is the word they would use in his country (p. 95). This is why Abdu proposed to Julie when she insisted on moving with him to his country (p. 107). It is important to note here that the marriage ceremony was not performed according to Islamic law. The narrator mentions that they were married before an official at the Magistrate’s court with David from *The Table* as the only witness. Their marriage is a purely administrative act with no religious aspect, which is regarded as void in his Arab-Muslim culture.

One might wonder here about why Abdu would keep his Muslim identity camouflaged while he was in South Africa. Is it because he is an illegal immigrant there? Or is he a non-practicing Muslim?

The picture becomes clearer when Abdu returns to his homeland, as he proves to be a non-practicing Muslim, rejecting his religious teachings and practices, which explains hiding his Muslim identity when he was in South Africa. For instance, when he hears the muezzin’s summons, he ignores them and does not go to the mosque to perform the five prayers which are obligatory for every Muslim (p. 125). However, he went to Friday congregational prayers with his father “without any comment,” as if he had no choice. He also asks his wife not to fast during Ramadan, but “he would: because of his mother” (p. 152). Hence, his religious practices seem to be driven by his parents’ rather than by his own personal desire. He goes to the mosque to pray because of his father, and he fasts during Ramadan because of his mother. In addition, Abdu could not restrain his desire for his wife during a fasting day in Ramadan although he is aware of the religious prohibition in Islam that a husband and wife must not retire together to their bedroom during the daylight hours of Ramadan (p. 155).

Moreover, Abdu and the group of friends who, like him, faced charges of illegal entry to some Western country and were deported to their country, seek to spread their ideas of cross-fertilizing Islam: “we must cross-fertilize Islam with the world if the ideals of Islam are to survive, the old model doesn’t fit, any kind of isolation can’t stand a chance with what’s

happening in the world [...]” (p. 177). Thus, they encourage having a hybrid state. In addition, they bring up issues concerning the freedom of women in their village and their right of having agency and freedom of choice:

But they want to decide for themselves. They don't want anyone to tell them to wear the chador, all right, but if they do want to wear it, they won't have some Westerner telling them to throw it away. They want to study or work anywhere they decide outside the kitchen, the modern world where men still think we're the only ones to have a place. (p. 178)

In conclusion, Abdu's religious identity does not settle into one fixed position; it is open to change and translation. Thus, it asserts Bhabha's notion of “third space.” This is observed through his relationship with Julie that plays a significant role in his transgression of his religious teachings, although it is an indirect role. Julie does not deliberately ask him to transgress his religious laws, but she suggests things like alcohol and sex and he yields.

### *Abdu's Gender Roles*

Abdu's gender role oscillates between being a silent subaltern man who has no power over his wife, which contradicts with his gender role as an Arab-Muslim, and being an authoritative man who is responsible for his family. His oscillation confirms Bhabha's “in-between” space or “third space” where Abdu's identity embraces difference without imposed hierarchy.

In South Africa, Abdu's gender role seems to be in a subaltern situation. He is always depicted as the silent “Other” who has no say or opinion. One cannot deny that this is largely due to the fact that he is an illegal alien with no family ties, and his social status as a working-class person; i.e. gender and social status cannot be separated when speaking about Abdu's silence. Abdu has to remain disguised if he wishes to stay in South Africa (pp. 55, 58, 59); the reason for which he is always depicted as hidden, unknown, silent, and timid (pp. 7, 8, 16, 20, 21, 42, 53, 76).

Moreover, the names and titles Abdu is called show that his existence is always associated with Julie. He is called “greasy monkey” (p. 15), “Julie's man” (p. 30), “her Someone” (p. 40), Julie's “pickup” (p. 63, 74), “her find” (p. 75), “her companion” (p. 76), Julie's “oriental Prince” (p. 36), “Julie's trouble” and “Julie's problem” (p. 82). These titles point to the fact that Abdu's identity is null without Julie. He is placed at the “periphery,” while Julie is placed at the “center,” which contradicts the male role he is supposed to occupy,

according to his cultural and religious principles. In addition, the comment: “he can’t make love. She has never experienced this with any other of her lovers” (p. 90) places Abdu’s masculinity into question.

Abdu’s masculinity, according to Islam’s teachings and Arab culture, is in danger. He, as an Arab-Muslim, is supposed to be responsible for his woman; “responsible” in every sense of the word. In other words, he has to care about her, love her, and protect her literally and materially. But it seems that Abdu is not ready for that due to his difficult economic and unsettled situation as a permanent citizen “somewhere” (p. 95). He tells Julie that she can only be responsible for herself in her own country and not in his country since, according to his religion and Arab culture he is the one who should be in charge of her expenditures and demands. However, Abdu cannot be responsible for someone else or does not want to be: “He felt something unwanted, something it was not necessary, no obligation on a penniless illegal to feel for one of those who own the world” (p. 173).

Abdu’s masculinity is no longer in a subservient position thanks to Julie’s treatment of him as an equal; he is no longer voiceless (p. 17). His voice emerges in an authoritative position to express himself (pp. 37, 82, 95, 97). He also attempts to impose his authority over his wife by making her obey him. He tells her: “if you love me you will want to do as I say, or at least make concessions to please me” (p. 97). He grasps her firmly on the forearm, to which the narrator comments: “That was the message of that grasp on her forearm. I am a man. I am the one who is not for you but who possesses you every night: listen to me” (p. 82). Abdu’s love for Julie is described by the narrator as a sort of possession. Julie should have expected that “with the acceptance of love there comes the authority to impose conditions” (p. 97). The expression which is clearly in the narrator’s voice shows the narrator’s ironic viewpoint about the story but that is also meant to apply more generally, not just in Abdu and Julie’s case.

Abdu’s authority becomes more obvious in his home country where he is portrayed as the one in control. He takes charge of solving his family’s problems, for he is the only one in the family experienced in the ways of a world outside (p. 134). There is the question of his brothers’ earnings which have failed to arrive for months from the agency to his wife and children, and the father’s right to a portion of profit from a small rice crop. Having no lawyer in the village to solve these disputes, Abdu has to go to the capital to solve these issues himself. In addition, Abdu’s machismo is obvious in the way he behaves with Julie (p. 111, 112). He wants to apply the rules of his culture on his wife: “She had been determined to come here, to this place. It had its rules, as her father’s beautiful house and the guests who

came there had theirs. She had made her choice; here it was. She was the one with the choices. The freedom of the world was hers” (p. 115).

Moreover, Abdu’s power is apparent through his imposition of his authority over women in his family. In most of the Arab-Muslim cultures, being patriarchal cultures, the brother has power over his sisters. He is respected, feared, and obeyed. Abdu exerts his power, being the brother, over his sister Maryam. “He has a power over this girl he will never have over his wife Julie, and that he would never want to have, it is part of what he emigrates from, every time he gets away. While he exerts it, it sickens him, the anger his sister fearfully sees rising in him” (p. 257). Ironically, Abdu would never exert his power over his wife as he does over his sister or would never want to, as the narrator asserts, most probably because he wants to embrace the Western life in which neither the husband nor the wife has power over each other.

Abdu’s gender role as an Arab does not prevent him from doing women’s work while he is in his homeland. For instance, he insists on fetching water for his bath instead of letting Julie do it. So he has to bear the women’s silent mockery: “the other women in the house smiled to see him carry the bucket, women’s work; his mother kept her face set against the spectacle, turned away from him” (p. 151).

His two brothers Ahmad and Daood think that Abdu/Ibrahim’s manhood is in question. They listen to him in disbelief when they learn of Julie’s decision to stay in the village. In their culture and religion a wife should obey her husband: “his brothers Ahmad and Daood listen to him in disbelief, a woman does what her husband says. They are too loyal to him, too respectful, to reveal what this makes him immediately alert to again: the stigma on his manhood” (p. 255).

In conclusion, Abdu’s gender role is called into question when he is depicted as a silent subaltern who has no say over his woman when he is supposed to occupy the opposite role as an Arab-Muslim, yet at other times he seems to impose his power over his wife who obeys him. He is placed “in-between” fulfilling his role as an Arab-Muslim toward his wife by being in control and responsible for her, and at the same time adapting to the culture he is emigrating to, where neither men nor women are supposed to have power over each other. Thus, his gender role remains fluid in Bhabha’s “third space,” i.e. does not settle into one fixed end, but oscillates between two polarities and accepts change and difference. There remains one aspect of Abdu’s cultural identity that needs to be examined: his racial belonging.



While Julie's racial ties associate with both black and white races, Abdu's racial identity remains ambiguous in South Africa. It is revealed by the narrator through Julie's eyes as neither black nor white: "he wasn't one of them—the white man speaking Afrikaans to the black man at the machine—but glossy dark-haired with black eyes blueish-shadowed" (p. 7). This quote, in free indirect discourse, merges Julie's voice into the narrator's discourse to portray Abdu's physical appearance.<sup>248</sup> Further evidence pointing to Abdu's racial identity is disclosed by one of the L.A. friends: "It's night in there, man. They're black like me. This guy here, Abdu, he's not one of them, his face and everything—it tells the story" (p. 87). This proves that Abdu is not black,<sup>249</sup> for the black man excludes him from being one of them.

Abdu is always depicted as an "Other" in the South African city. His racial identity was not yet clear to Julie, for she mistook him for "An Indian or Cape Malay" (p. 10). Whereas "Abdu" evokes a Muslim name but is not necessarily Arab since many Africans use "Abdu" as a nickname for Abdulrahman, Abdulkader, etc., the family name "ibn Musa" an Arab-Muslim tie: "ibn" is a word from the Arabic and meaning "son" in English. Others referred to him as "coloured," "Indian," (p. 44) "some sort of Arab," (p. 44) and a "young foreigner" (p. 78). In addition, when he was introduced to Julie's father, the latter could not judge the real origin of Abdu, "Black—or some sort of black" (p. 40).

Abdu's "Otherness," referred to by Julie's friends who call him names such as the Oriental prince (p. 36, 92) and black proves that racial segregation is still prevalent in the country despite diversity and heterogeneity of post-apartheid. Although blacks are no longer excluded from public space, they are still regarded as "Others" and are still referred to as "blacks." Even as black and white apparently gather as friends in this liberal, anti-bourgeois life-place (L.A. Café), the Other has remained black.<sup>250</sup> As shown in the following comment which is uttered by an unidentified speaker among the L.A. friends: "You say that because you are black" (p. 21).

Moreover, the atmosphere of heterogeneity that dominates the post-apartheid city is

---

<sup>248</sup> These issues will be explored in detail in the section on polyphony.

<sup>249</sup> "Black relates to or denotes a human group having dark-coloured skin, especially of African or Australian Aboriginal ancestry. Black has been used to refer to African peoples and their descendants since the 14<sup>th</sup> century, and it is the most widely used and generally accepted term in Britain today. In the US the currently preferred term is African American." Catherine Soanes, and Angus Stevenson (eds.), *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* 11<sup>th</sup> edition (revised), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 140.

<sup>250</sup> Altmöder, 2008, p. 117.

characterized by huge disparities in wealth and occupation. Julie senses envy and contempt of discrimination between the couple at her father's home who "may move about the world everywhere, as they please" and her lover who "has to live disguised as a grease-monkey without a name" (p. 49). The fact is that Julie herself belongs to the same world the couple belongs to and, as Sue Kossew suggests, one layer of the title's meanings could be that Julie is free to "pickup" Abdu and drop him anywhere: "The idea of the world as a global village is still an extremely one-sided one: only those from privileged countries are really free to 'pick up' other cultures and to drop them, too, when they wish to."<sup>251</sup>

Black people are still on the margins, although they are trying hard to find a decent place among the whites in their country. They are accused of being "corrupt" since they take bribes that "sicken" their newly freed country:

These people take bribes. You know that. We all know that. Ah-heh. It is the epidemic that attacks the freedom won for our country, sickening us from inside, one of the running sores of corruption. All right. With money no doubt—enough money—you could buy someone's hands to tear up that order to quit the country. (p. 79-80)

Employees at Home Affairs are referred to as "inefficient", irresponsible, and careless in their work, a typical attitude about civil servants among people of this class:

And fortunately for you, because of their inefficiency I'm only too aware of from the time I was in legal practice, your case slipped into some crack in a filing system, got lost in their computers, they smoked their cigarettes and chatted and looked at their watches for the time to go home and they forgot about you! (p. 79)

Once again, corruption in South Africa is alluded to by the lawyer (p. 85), and by one of the L.A. friends (p. 87). As we can notice, black people are still struggling to establish an independent country free of racial segregation, corruption, and white control.

Racial discrimination which is still widespread in South Africa even at a subtle level causes Abdu's "Otherness" to be in the spotlight. His racial identity remains ambiguous and unidentified to his surroundings until he mentions his country which no one has ever heard of.

In conclusion, the changes that occur to Abdu's cultural identity— particularly to his language, religion, and gender—prove the presence of hybridity. Abdu's life in post-apartheid South Africa already bore traits of hybridity, before even meeting Julie. His main goal remained the same: to distance himself from his country and obtain a visa to any Western country. In addition, he lived "in-between" his "private" identity as an illegal Arab-Muslim

---

<sup>251</sup> Sue Kossew, "Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*," *Quodlibet: The Australian Journal of Trans-national Writing* 1 (Feb. 2005): p. 2.

and his “public” identity as a garage mechanic working in the South African city. This hybridity has evolved when he encountered Julie. He has experienced Bhabha’s “in-between” space in which he is caught in between his cultural and religious practices that he transgresses most of the time and those of Western culture. His identity does not settle into fixed polarities, but remains fluid and open to translation.

#### I.a.II.b. Factors Affecting Abdu’s Hybridity

I have previously concluded that Julie undergoes two hybrid experiences: one in South Africa and the other in Abdu’s country. Her marriage to Abdu turned out to be a means to assert her hybrid experience in South Africa, and not an end in itself. This marriage did not even play a role in her second hybrid experience in her husband’s culture. On the contrary, it was a hindering factor to her assimilation of the new cultural and religious beliefs. In this section, I will study Abdu’s case. In particular, I will study the factor(s) that has/have caused his hybrid experience, and find out the role of his relationship with Julie in the evolution of this hybridity. In other words, I will examine whether his love for Julie is a means to assert his hybridity or it has a deeper role in his hybrid identity’s development.

The main factor that plays a role in Abdu’s hybrid experience before meeting Julie is his contempt for his country and people and his desire to live in the industrialized world in any possible way. The evolution of Abdu’s hybridity after his encounter with Julie, which is represented by his oscillation between his cultural and religious beliefs and those of the West, is a result of Abdu’s interaction with Julie. His wife plays an essential role in the evolution of his hybridity even if it is an indirect role. She does not deliberately ask him to transgress his cultural traditions and religious laws, but seems to suggest things that oppose his culture and he accepts and yields.

##### *Abdu’s Contempt for his Country*

Abdu’s contempt for his country is manifested throughout the novel by the fact that he is attempting to get an entry visa to any Western country. This recalls the epigraph of the novel which expresses, not only Julie’s desire, but also Abdu’s desire of moving to another country: “Let us go to another country.”

Abdu's country is described as one of those pre-colonized countries which are struggling post- their "independence" to achieve economic and political stability (p. 12). It is suffering from poverty (pp. 127, 132), unemployment, under development (p. 110), religious oppression, and different forms of persecutions and corruption (p. 14). His country's airport is described by the narrator as always full of immigrants who are leaving and arriving in the country (p. 109), which somehow justifies Abdu's insistence on immigration, and his seeking to enter any industrialized country that would receive him to make a living. It is noticed that Abdu's country's name is never mentioned in the novel. However, a clue is given on page 125 through the mention of the Shrine of Sidi Yusuf; this shrine lies in the city of Marrakech in Morocco.

Abdu views his country as useless and ineffective (p. 22). He is not really enthusiastic when he describes the place to Julie (p. 25). He feels ashamed of his village and his people because they do not meet the decent life Julie was living (pp. 133, 173). He feels angry because there is no decent place to sleep, no bathroom, and no water (p. 122). It is a dump yard for cheap products from industrialized countries, where he insists to go (pp. 126, 127).

Abdu feels that he cannot adapt to life in his own culture. He lives in a non-ending displacement (p. 111), as Altnöder comments: "Ibrahim chooses to live in an interstitial space, in a never-ending meantime and thus he remains perpetually caught in a 'vacuum before reality.'"<sup>252</sup> He attempts endlessly to apply for a visa to the West. He does not even unpack when he arrives home after his deportation from South Africa, as he is ready to leave as soon as he can (p. 148). Abdu's state between staying and leaving makes him experience Bhabha's "unhomely" life, where he feels culturally "displaced." He does not belong to his country, and not yet to the West.

Abdu's desire to leave his country is not only motivated by the country's poor economic situation, but also by his family's poverty and by the fact that offspring, according to his cultural traditions, should provide for their elder parents:

His mother for whom he had wanted to save the garage money, bring away from the yoke of family burdens in this dirty place, dirt of the politics of the rich, dirt of poverty. His father always with half-curved hanging hands of a man who lives only through the expectations he places on those he's engendered [...] coming to see what this son has brought from the world, his baggage and his strange wife. (pp. 115-116)

Abdu's love and respect for his mother (pp. 154, 180, 182, 184, 257), which constitutes a priority for him, and his desire to give her a better life pushes him to seek

---

<sup>252</sup> Altnöder, 2008, p. 136.

opportunities in the West (p. 123). Abdu could have accepted the decent job his uncle proposed for him, but he does not want to stay in his home country. From the first day he arrived in his country with Julie, he went to the capital to apply for visas to Western countries (p. 137).

Moreover, Abdu totally rejects Julie's project of growing a rice plantation in his homeland, telling her: "we do not live here" (p. 216). He does not belong or does not want to belong to his "home." When he finally got the visa to the U.S., his joy was indescribable (p. 220). Although he saw tears dribbling on his mother's face, he could not refuse the chance of going to America, a chance that he has been dreaming of for so long. Abdu's dream of obtaining legal entry to a Western country has finally come true. He is going to America where he will have various opportunities and chances for work. He is anxious to escape his country's life and to live the way he wants to in America (p. 227). When he was packing to leave, he insisted on Julie making sure not to leave anything behind (p. 247), which reflects his desire of not coming back. His desire to enter a Western country supersedes his love for his wife and family, for he has taken the decision of leaving them behind despite his wife's insistence on staying in his country. When he bade farewell to his family and got in the taxi on his way to the airport, his eyes were on the road in front of him. He did not look back, affirming his desire to leave the place without coming back (pp. 267, 268).

The open-ending of the novel leaves the reader wondering how Abdu will fare in the United States and whether he will return to his country. But the scene in which Khadija embraces Julie and comforts her by saying that he will come back is probably a hint that he will not come back, just like Khadija's husband had never come back from the oil fields.

In short, Abdu's hybrid experience lies in his "unhomely" life, which is represented by his goal to distance himself from his country and people and seek to enter any Western country. This goal is present before establishing a relationship with Julie, by the mere fact that he works in South Africa as an illegal garage mechanic although he has a degree in economics. His goal has remained the same throughout the novel. However, this hybridity developed when he encountered Julie by transgressing his cultural and religious beliefs; hence, we shall find out the relation between his love for Julie and his hybrid identity.

It is noticed throughout the novel that Abdu's love for Julie is not honest and sincere. His love and marriage to a foreign wife is but a means to embrace a Western lifestyle especially after he had failed to make a better life in South Africa. He did not want to go back home defeated, at least he had something from the West: his foreign wife (p. 114).

It is obvious in the novel that Abdu is not in love with Julie. For example, when he received his deportation letter, "he came over and put the iron aside from her [Julie's] hand and turned her towards him. It's all right. He had to kiss her [...]" (p. 61). The verb "had to" portrays Abdu's act as if it is an obligation for him to kiss her, or as if he did that out of sympathy because her eyes were swollen with tears. In addition, the description of Abdu's gesture as a "necessary thing" in the following quote reflects Abdu's obligation of showing his love for Julie: "Before he starts the engine he does that necessary thing, hooks an arm around her and kisses her tense cheeks."

Moreover, Abdu was not enthusiastic, at first, about accompanying Julie to his home country. His internal thoughts, depicted by the narrator, express his dissatisfaction with Julie's buying of the two airline tickets: "It's impossible, this idea of hers. What could she do there. What'm I expected to do with her. *There*" (p. 94). Abdu's thoughts demonstrate that he does not truly love Julie, for if he did he would have been happy when Julie bought the two airline tickets. He had no choice but to marry her, because he could not accompany a woman to his village without marriage:

He felt responsibility—that's it—responsibility for her. Though he had none; he had not wanted her to come here, she would not let go of him and he could hardly have told her that her purpose in his life was ended. So he even married her; had to, couldn't take her to his mother as if she were some whore he'd picked up in his loneliness [...]. (p. 174)

Abdu's marriage to Julie is not motivated by his love for her as much as by his obligation to apply his cultural traditions and his religious rule that do not accept a relationship between a man and a woman without formal marriage. His vow is fake, as it seems, for he believes that Julie's desire to accompany him to his country is simply a way for her to escape and pull herself away from her father's wealthy life and take on a new adventure to an unknown place with an unknown person:

He sees that this—the first cup of coffee at the EL-AY Café, the love-making in her bed, the wild decision to come to this place, this country, from which she could not be dissuaded, even—yes—the marriage he then had no choice but to insist on—all this was another of the

adventures she prided herself on being far enough from her father's beautiful house always to be ready for. (p. 112)

The previous quote asserts Abdu's doubt about Julie's love for him. He thinks that she is exploiting him and using him as a means to start a new life away from her father's wealthy life. It could be that Julie is exploiting Abdu to escape her parents' life, but Abdu is doing the same. He cannot view his wife as separate from her upper-middle class tie and cultural belonging. He sees her as the Western woman who has got money and "body" (pp. 113, 114).

The reader senses that Abdu is exploiting Julie to get a visa to any Western country: "Her mother can get some references. From her friends, her husband. He's an American, isn't he. It's necessary for our visas" (p. 144). When he got his U.S. visa thanks to Julie's step-father's connections, he insisted on Julie, despite her rejection, staying with her mother in California for a short period (p. 238). Abdu's insistence on the importance of contact between Julie and her mother is a pretext for him to be in contact with the mother and her wealthy husband (p. 238). It is obvious that Abdu is using Julie and her wealthy family to achieve his goals: "His arms open wide, he doesn't have the words, he is embracing California; or her. His gaze will not release her although they are standing apart" (p. 238).

Abdu's exploitation of Julie is hinted at from the beginning by one of the L.A. friends: "Come on, he's not a bad guy, he just needed a meal ticket. A bed. And he obviously knew how to occupy it" (p. 92). This point proves to be true since Abdu decided to leave for the U.S. leaving Julie behind in his country convincing his family that she will follow him as soon as he settles in the new country (p. 266).

Julie, herself, cannot always sense Abdu's true feelings toward her; she feels confused about him: "She often has the sense that he is not looking at her when his regard is on her; it is she who is looking for herself reflected in those eyes" (p. 129). Abdu does not display much care and attention for Julie when they are in his home country (p. 199). He does not even say romantic things to her (p. 152). He is always busy going to town to apply for visas in the embassies of different Western countries. She stays home alone, waits for him, tries to busy herself by learning the host language and reading the Koran (p. 146).

In short, Abdu's marriage to Julie is simply a means to achieve his goal of getting a visa to the West, and to assert that although he could not make a better life in South Africa, he did bring something from the West, his foreign wife. However, we have previously seen in Abdu's hybrid identity part, that his interaction with this foreign wife plays an essential but indirect role in his transgression of his cultural and religious practices. It is because of Julie

that we see Abdu in most of the cases transgressing his religious teachings. For instance, his drinking of alcohol and having a sexual relationship before marriage.

### I.a.II.c. Conclusion to Abdu's Hybrid Identity

We have seen that Abdu undergoes a hybrid experience even before meeting Julie. This hybridity is represented by his dissociation from his homeland and his people and his mission in finding a life in the West. The proof is his presence in South Africa despite the expiration of his entry visa. The main reason motivating his goal is his contempt for his country and his desire to live in the industrialized world in any possible way.

His cross-cultural marriage with Julie turns out to be a means to achieve his goal of getting a visa to the West and embracing a Western lifestyle, yet his relationship with her has played a role in his transgression of his cultural and religious practices, hence in the evolution of his hybridity. He seeks to climb the social ladder by developing his ties with the upper-middle class which Julie belongs to. He insists on her teaching him English, the language of the Western countries he is seeking to enter, which illustrates Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity." Abdu also attempts to adapt to male role in Western countries by not exerting his power over his wife, although at other times he could not help but impose his authority, which matches his male role in Arab cultures. This hybrid experience represented by his alternation between his cultural and religious beliefs and those of the West confirms Bhabha's "in-between" or "third space." Abdu's identity does not settle into one fixed end, but remains open to embrace difference and accept new ways of life.



I.b. Part Two:  
Linguistic Hybridity

## Introduction to Part Two

An analysis of hybridity in *The Pickup* would not be complete without a discussion of the linguistic hybridity that permeates the novel. In contrast to the first part of this chapter, which explored the protagonists' hybrid cultural identities, the second part focuses on the different linguistic hybrid aspects that are found in the novel. In particular, the notions of polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality will be examined.<sup>253</sup>

It should be noted that the linguistic hybridity in the novel parallels and somehow complements the characters' hybrid existence. It plays a role in the narrative techniques employed in the novel and allows direct insight into the protagonists' hybrid character. Polyphony, for instance, generates ambiguity and bi-textuality as the narrator's text and the character's text clash, resulting in many voices in the same segment of text. This reflects the experience lived by the characters concerning their hybrid identities, which generates ambiguity as two identities "clash," resulting in a third hybrid identity that does not settle into one fixed end, but oscillates in Bhabha's "third space" between two cultures. Just like text interference in linguistic hybridity, identity "interference" occurs in cultural hybridity. The protagonists' identities experience aspects or features of two different cultures that mix together, interact, or even struggle in the third space. Like polyphony that allows the emergence of two different voices, cultural hybridity allows the emergence of two different identities in the characters' psyche.

Bhabha was influenced by Bakhtin's concept of linguistic hybridity. The latter defines hybridity of language as follows:

What is hybridization? It is a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, an encounter, within the arena of an utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor.<sup>254</sup>

Bakhtin explains that hybridity can be a means to make language, even a single word, double-voiced.<sup>255</sup> Authoritative discourse or monologic language can be undermined by the phenomenon of hybridity. Bhabha's concept of hybrid identities derives from Bakhtin's hybridity of language, in which the politics of binaries can also be undermined by the phenomenon of hybridity.

---

<sup>253</sup> A definition of each of these concepts will be provided in the following paragraphs.

<sup>254</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 358.

<sup>255</sup> Sylvia Hadjetian, "Multiculturalism and Magic Realism? Between Fiction and Reality," Master thesis, Auflage: Grin Verlag, 2005, p. 53.

Linguistic hybridity could be manifested through many forms in a novel. One of these forms is text interference, which is defined by Wolf Schmid as:

Text interference is a hybrid phenomenon, in which *mimesis* and *diegesis* (in the platonic sense) are mixed, a structure that unites two functions: the reproduction of the character's text (*mimesis*) and the actual narration (*diegesis*). The text interference which is characteristic of narrative prose, with its two components, appears in various forms, of which the so-called *free indirect discourse* (subsequently FID) has most often been the subject of academic study.<sup>256</sup>

Text interference or the interference of narrator's text and characters' text results from the way that, in one and the same segment of the narrator's discourse, certain features refer to the narrator's text and others, in contrast, to the characters' text. Text interference appears in various forms as in: direct discourse and direct interior monologue; quoted figural designation; indirect representation of speech, thought, and perception; autonomous indirect discourse; free indirect discourse; free indirect perception; free indirect monologue; and figurally colored narration. Free indirect discourse has been the most studied form in academic study.<sup>257</sup>

Bakhtin has already pointed out the double structure of text interference, which he calls a "hybrid construction":

What we are calling a hybrid construction is an utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two "languages," two semantic and axiological belief systems.<sup>258</sup>

We can say that Schmid's text interference parallels Bakhtin's hybrid construction. Moreover, Bakhtin distinguishes, in his book *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (1984), between three types of discourse. The first is direct discourse which is oriented entirely toward the object or topic it refers to; this is normally the authorial discourse. The second type is objectified or represented discourse, the most common form of this being the direct speech of characters. Characters' speech is perceived by the author as someone else's discourse. Both these types of discourse are single voiced; they represent a single consciousness and intention.<sup>259</sup> The third type of discourse is double-voiced where an author can take someone else's direct discourse and infuse it with authorial intentions and consciousness while still retaining the original speaker's intention. Bakhtin further categorizes this double-voiced

---

<sup>256</sup> Schmid, 2010, p. 137.

<sup>257</sup> For further information about each form, refer to Schmid's book, 2010, pp. 137-174.

<sup>258</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 304.

<sup>259</sup> Bakhtin, 1984, cited in Pam Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 102.

discourse three varieties. The first variety is exemplified in stylization and non-authorial forms of narration in which the author's thought having penetrated someone else's discourse does not collide with the other's thought. In the second variety, as in parody and irony, the invading voice collides with the penetrated discourse forcing it to serve aims that oppose the original intention. In the third variety, the other's discourse remains outside the authorial discourse but is the object of a hidden polemic inflecting the authorial voice. In this case the other's discourse has moved from a passive to an active relationship with the authorial speech; instead of allowing itself to be used for authorial purposes it exerts a shaping force upon the author's speech.<sup>260</sup>

Bakhtin's third type of discourse, double-voiced discourse, or what can be called polyphony, is what we are interested in. It is necessary to distinguish between the terms polyphony, dialogism, heteroglossia, and intertextuality before studying how they are employed in the novel. Polyphony derives from the work of Mikhail Bakhtin and describes texts or utterances in which more than one voice can be heard in a text. In a polyphonic novel, especially in Dostoevsky's novels, Bakhtin identifies a plurality of independent and equally valid voices which are not subordinated to any single authorial hierarchy. This allows a free play between character consciousness and points of view in which the judgments of the narrator are afforded no special privilege and the narrator counts merely as one voice in a dialogue of many.<sup>261</sup>

Bakhtin argues that the novel is an ideal place for the representation of a multiplicity of voices in contrast to poetry where one voice dominates. He defines the novel as a "diversity of social speech types [...] and a diversity of individual voices, artistically organized."<sup>262</sup> It is the author, according to Bakhtin, who orchestrates the diversity of voices and directs the interactions. Polyphony enables a free play between the characters' and the narrator's utterances. In the novel, the narrator always has two voices. It can be either literary, as in a description, or oral, for instance when the narrator addresses the reader. A relevant fact is that these two voices can interact. In contrast, the monologic novel subordinates the characters' voices to the authority of a single narrator.<sup>263</sup>

---

<sup>260</sup> This summary of Bakhtin's discussion is taken from Pam Morris, *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin, Medvedev, Voloshinov*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 102-103.

<sup>261</sup> Richard Aczel, "Polyphony," in Herman et al., 2005, p. 443.

<sup>262</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 262.

<sup>263</sup> Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nünning, *An Introduction to the Study of Narrative Fiction*, Stuttgart: Klett, 2008, p. 112.

Moreover, polyphony enters the novel through the process of carnivalization. Carnival is defined by Bakhtin as: “Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people.”<sup>264</sup> Carnival represents an upside-down world where law and order do not exist. It celebrates disorder and embraces freedom. The idea of polyphony is similar to that of Bakhtin’s carnival in that it embraces all participant voices allowing freedom of interaction between the different voices without being subject to the authority of the narrator.

Note that polyphony refers not literally to a number of voices, but to the collective quality of an individual utterance; that is, the capacity of an utterance to embody someone else’s utterance, which thereby creates a dialogic relationship between two voices. For Bakhtin, this layering of voices within one voice is nowhere more obvious than in the novel where the writer embeds voices within voices (e.g., character speech within narrator speech, narrator speech within authorial speech, etc.), and to orchestrate a dialogue among them.

This leads us to define Bakhtin’s term “Dialogism,” according to which language is oriented toward the discourse (word, voice, or utterance) which has preceded it, and that which it anticipates.<sup>265</sup> This layering and multivoicing both downgrades the individual subject as intentional source of meaning, and emphasizes the socially located and constructed nature of meaning.<sup>266</sup> Bakhtin makes a crucial connection between a “polyphonic novel” and a “dialogic novel.” He shows a preference for novels over poetry due to the former’s “double-voiced” nature, its ability to both instantiate and foreground dialogism, to formally embody it, and to represent it in terms of social reality, its contradictions, inequalities, struggles.<sup>267</sup> In this dissertation, we will consider “polyphony” and “dialogue” to be interchangeable terms and that a polyphonic text should necessarily be dialogic and vice versa.

Moreover, the interaction of various discourses in a polyphonic novel results in what Bakhtin calls “heteroglossia.” Heteroglossia is marked by the recognition of difference, multiplicity, or stratification both within and between languages. In relation to narrative, heteroglossia stands as the appearance in real life of that plurality of languages of class, gender, region, or ideology which enter the novel in the form of dialogism, resulting—in Bakhtin’s most praised authors such as Dostoevsky—in a polyphonic narrative.<sup>268</sup> The means

---

<sup>264</sup> Bakhtin, 1968, p. 7, cited in Ken Hirschkop, and David G. Shepherd (eds.), *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*, Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1989, p. 215.

<sup>265</sup> Patrick Williams, “Dialogism,” in Herman et al., 2005, p. 104.

<sup>266</sup> Williams, in Herman et al., 2005, p. 104.

<sup>267</sup> Williams, in Herman et al., 2005, p. 104.

<sup>268</sup> Williams, in Herman et al., 2005, p. 213.

by which heteroglossia enters the novel are the authorial speech, the speeches of narrators and other characters and the inserted speech genres. If polyphony concerns individual voices, heteroglossia concerns social voices:

Heteroglossia, once incorporated into the novel, is another's speech in another's language, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way. Such speech constitutes a special type of double-voiced discourse. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions: the direct intention of the character who is speaking, and the refracted intention of the author. In such discourse, there are two voices, two meanings, and two expressions.<sup>269</sup>

More generally, heteroglossia refers to the ideologies inherent in the various languages to which we all lay claim as social beings and by which we are constituted as individuals: the language and inherent ideologies of our profession, the language and inherent ideologies of our age group, of the decade, of our social class, geographical region, family, circle of friends.<sup>270</sup>

Another term that needs to be introduced is "intertextuality." Intertextuality refers to the presence of a text A in a text B. A is the "intertext" if one stresses the textual precursor, the "pretext" absorbed by a later text. Or, one could call B the intertext if one lays emphasis on the text incorporating a previous text and thereby becoming intertextual.<sup>271</sup> The term intertextuality was first used by Julia Kristeva, influenced by both Bakhtin's and Saussure's ideas, in her essays "The Bounded Text"<sup>272</sup> and "Word, Dialogue, Novel."<sup>273</sup> In "The Bounded Text," Kristeva argues that authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts. She writes: "a text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text," in which "several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another."<sup>274</sup> Kristeva attempts to combine both Bakhtinian and Saussurean theories and insights.

For Saussure, the relational nature of the word stems from a vision of language seen as a generalized and abstract system; whereas for Bakhtin, it stems from the word's existence

---

<sup>269</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 324.

<sup>270</sup> Linda M. Park-Fuller, "Voices: Bakhtin's Heteroglossia and Polyphony, and the Performance of Narrative Literature," *Literature in Performance* 7 (1986): 1-12, accessed July 20, 2012, n.p. <<http://www.csun.edu/~vcspc00g/604/voices-lpf.html>>.

<sup>271</sup> Christian Moraru, "Intertextuality," in Herman et al., 2005, p. 256.

<sup>272</sup> Julia Kristeva, "The Bounded Text," in Léon Roudiez (ed.), trans. by Alice Jardine, Thomas Gora and Léon Roudiez, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, pp: 36-63.

<sup>273</sup> Julia Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, Novel," in Léon Roudiez (ed.), trans. by Alice Jardine, Thomas Gora and Léon Roudiez, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1980, pp: 64-91.

<sup>274</sup> Kristeva, in Léon Roudiez, 1980, p. 36.

within specific social sites, specific social registers and specific moments of utterance and reception. According to Saussure, signs exist within a system and produce meaning through their similarity to and difference from other signs. No sign has meaning of its own. For him, the linguistic sign is non-unitary, non-stable, relational unit which constitutes the synchronic system of language. This also applies to the literary sign where authors of literary works do not just select words from a language system, they select plots, generic features, aspects of character, images, ways of narrating, even phrases and sentences from previous literary texts and from the literary tradition.<sup>275</sup>

Likewise, Bakhtin believes that one cannot understand an utterance or even a written work as if it were singular in meaning, unconnected to previous and future utterances or works. For him, all utterances are dialogic, their meaning and logic dependent upon what has previously been said and on how they will be received by others. Kristeva incorporates Bakhtin's dialogism, his insistence on the social and double-voiced nature of language, into her new semiotics. Kristeva's notion of intertextuality is highlighted through Bakhtin's vision of language where a word is never wholly one's own, but is always permeated with traces of other words, other uses.<sup>276</sup>

In short, we have seen Schmid's definition of text interference which is a hybrid phenomenon, and Bakhtin's classification of the different types of discourse in which the third type, double-voiced discourse, is the one we are concerned with for it reflects the polyphonic aspect. We have also distinguished between polyphony, dialogism, heteroglossia, and intertextuality. We will now examine how each term is employed in the novel providing specific examples.

### I.b.I. Polyphony

Polyphony is related to Bakhtin's third type of discourse, or double-voiced discourse, where both the authorial intention and the original speaker's intention emerge. The polyphonic aspect in *The Pickup* is represented by different forms of text interference, by the sudden change of different forms of speech, by the presence of hybrid unidentified voices, and by the emergence of the characters' voice through the narrator's voice. We will employ

---

<sup>275</sup> Graham Allen, *Intertextuality*, New York: Routledge, 2000, p. 11.

<sup>276</sup> Allen, 2000, p. 28.

Schmid's typology of the different forms of text interference and Bakhtin's double-voiced discourse to study the polyphonic aspect in the novel.

Text interference occurs in the first paragraph of *The Pickup* novel:

It's a small car with a young woman inside it. The battery has failed and taxis, cars, minibuses, vans, motorcycles butt and challenge one another, reproach and curse her, a traffic mob counting its own confusion. Get going. Stupid bloody woman. Idikazana lomlungu, le! She throws up hands, palms open, in surrender. They continue to jostle and blare their impatience. She gets out of her car and faces them. One of the unemployed black men who beg by waving vehicles into parking bays sidles his way deftly through fenders, signals with his head—Oka-ay, Oka-ay go inside, go!—and mimes control of the steering wheel. (p. 3)

In this passage, direct speech is embedded within the narrator's omniscient third-person narration: "Get going. Stupid bloody woman. Idikazana lomlungu, le!" The phrase is ambiguous, for it is not clear to whom it belongs. There are no graphic markers that separate it from the previous discourse, so it could be the narrator's discourse or the character's discourse. However, the fact that it is characterized by the use of an interjection, an exclamation mark, and an imperative tense implies that it is a direct discourse that belongs to one of the characters and not to the narrator. Narration switches back to third-person, manifested through the use of the third-person pronouns "she/they/she"; then to the direct speech of one of the unemployed black men: "—Oka-ay, Oka-ay go inside, go!—" which is separated by two dashes and represented by the use of an exclamation mark and an imperative tense. The emergence of direct speech in the narrator's third-person narration in the previous passage allows the manifestation of other characters' voices although these voices are marginal and never appear in the novel again.

Another example of text interference occurs in the following paragraph:

There. You've seen. I've seen. The gesture. A woman in a traffic jam among those that are everyday in the city, any city. You won't remember it, you won't know who she is. But I know because from the sight of her I'll find out—as a story—what was going to happen as the consequence of that commonplace embarrassment on the streets; where it was heading her for, and what. Her hands thrown up, open. (p. 4)

There is an ambiguity in the use of the second-person pronoun "you." It could refer to an intra-diegetic or an extra-diegetic narratee, i.e. to one of the characters in the novel or to the actual reader of the text. Brian Richardson distinguishes between three types of second-person narrative: the standard form, the hypothetical form, and the autotelic form.<sup>277</sup> The standard form can be identified by its designation of the protagonist as "you" rather than "I"

---

<sup>277</sup> Brian Richardson, *Unnatural voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*, Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006, p. 18.



“he” or “she.” The hypothetical form employs the style of the guidebook to recount a narrative. The autotelic form employs direct address to the reader or narratee. The “you” in our example applies to Richardson’s autotelic form, which could be a direct address to the actual reader of the text or to the narratee. However, the phrase: “I’ll find out—as a story—what was going to happen” implies that it is the narrator who is addressing his/her readers preparing them for the story that is going to be told by him/her. It reflects the narrator’s superior knowledge of the character’s inner life and his/her superior ability to present it and assess it. The narrator uses the second-person pronoun “you” in order to involve the readers in the story and merge them with the characters. This contributes to the polyphonic aspect because we readers are drawn into this polyphony.

Similarly the same kind of ambiguity occurs on page 23: “You’re not there; I’m not there: to see. It’s not a traffic tangle in the streets [...]. It’s not the spectacle available late-night on adult TV. She still joins the friends as usual at The Table to which she belongs [...].” The “you” fits in Richardson’s autotelic form. The first-person pronoun “I” is also ambiguous; it could refer to the narrator or to one of the characters. What makes it more ambiguous is the phrase “I’m not there: to see.” This statement contradicts with what we have already been stated. In the previous example, we are informed that the narrator is an omniscient narrator who knows everything about the story: “You won’t remember it, you won’t know who she is. But I know [...].” The reason that makes the reader doubt that the “I” in: “I’m not there: to see” belongs to the narrator. Thus, polyphony emerges as the narrator’s discourse interferes with the character’s discourse.

Another form of text interference is represented in the following paragraph:

First she said she didn’t know if she’d be free; and then she did it, she told him her telephone number. No paper to note it on. The celebration with the friends was still warm upon her, she laughed. Put it on your wrist. And then was embarrassed at her flippancy because he took a ballpoint out of his pocket, turned his wrist face-up, and was writing the number across the delicate skin and the blue veins revealed of himself, there. (p. 16)

In this passage, we have an indirect discourse which serves not only to reproduce Julie’s statements, but also her thoughts, perceptions, and emotions. The third-person form “she” and the past tense are used; interjections are removed. Indirect discourse is manifested by use of the verb “said”; and by the indirect reporting of the protagonist’s thoughts: “no paper to note it on,” emotions: “the celebration was still warm upon her,” “was embarrassed,” and perceptions: “was writing the number across the delicate skin and the blue veins revealed of himself.” Note that the phrase “put it on your wrist” can refer to the narrator’s discourse or

to Julie's discourse. There is no graphic marker that distinguishes it from the preceding and the following discourse. However, the fact that narration suddenly shifts from using past tense to an imperative verb "put" indicates that this phrase belongs to the protagonist, since narrator's discourse is usually in past tense.

Moreover, free indirect discourse reflects a hybrid aspect in the following paragraph:

He drank the coffee evenly in swallows and pauses, as if this were a measured process. Perhaps he wasn't going to speak again: it was patronizing, after all, this making free encounters out of other people's lives, a show of your conviction of their equal worth, interest, catching the garage mechanic in the net, El-AY Café. When he had taken a last swallow and put down the cup he'd get up and say thank you and go—so she had to think of something to say, quickly, to mend, justify, the pickup. (p. 11)

The passage starts with the narrator's discourse represented by the use of the third-person pronoun form and the past tense "he drank," "he wasn't." However, the statement: "it was patronizing, after all, this making free encounters out of other people's lives, a show of your conviction [...]" makes the discourse ambiguous as to whom it belongs. The statement could refer to the narrator's discourse, as the past tense is used, or to one of the protagonists' discourse, for a graphic marker, a colon, is used to separate it from the previous discourse. The use of the possessive pronoun "your" is also ambiguous, as this could point to the actual reader of the text or to one of the characters in the novel, i.e. to an extra-diegetic or intra-diegetic narratee. The free indirect speech in the last sentence: "When he had taken a last swallow and put down the cup he'd get up and say thank you and go—so she had to think of something to say, quickly, to mend, justify, the pickup," is a segment of the narrator's discourse that reproduces Julie's words, thoughts, and perceptions through an internal focalization technique, whereby Julie's text is not marked by any kind of an explicit indicator. This is how the narrator's text interferes with the character's text allowing for the emergence of two distinct voices or polyphonic voices.

Julie's internal thoughts are allowed to go to the surface in the following passage through the use of free indirect discourse and an internal focalization technique which depicts Abdu's smile as seen through Julie's eyes:

He was no qualified mechanic...he learnt from him instead of playing with other boys...the garage employs him illegally—'black', yes *that's the word they use*. It's cheap for the owner...And now the seldom-granted smile, and this time it rises to the intense, solemn eyes as she turns her glance a moment to him. *All the principles of workers' rights I was taught in my studies*. (p. 17, my emphasis)

The passage starts with free indirect discourse represented by the narrator's discourse reporting Julie's statements, which are not graphically marked. In addition, the character

being discussed is described with the grammatical form of the third person “he.” There is text interference in the italicized sentences, which can refer to Julie’s internal thoughts as represented indirectly by the narrator or to the narrator’s discourse since it is not separated from the rest of the text. We should also note that Schmid’s quoted figural designation applies to the phrase: “—‘black’, *yes that’s the word they use.*” Quoted figural designation is when the direct discourse appears in a reduced variant, in which merely single words in the narrative text are attributed to the character text by graphic signals.<sup>278</sup> In the previous phrase, we have a single word ‘black’ attributed to the character’s text by the use of quotation marks. Note also that the second italicized sentence can fit into Schmid’s autonomous indirect discourse. This arises particularly when the indirect discourse takes on the constitutive features of direct discourse (graphic marking, use of the first and second person).<sup>279</sup> The sentence is recognized by the use of first-person pronoun “I.” Schmid asserts that autonomous indirect discourse arises from the narrator’s desire to reproduce the discourse of a character and all its idiosyncrasies as authentically as possible, without renouncing his or her narratorial presence.<sup>280</sup> The sentence is the narrator’s representation of Julie’s discourse without renouncing his/her presence; thus, making it a polyphonic sentence.

In addition to Schmid’s different forms of text interference, Bakhtin’s double-voiced discourse is revealed in the following quote:

It was the wrong thing—there! she’d done it, it came out god-awful as Showing Interest, and she thought she heard him take a breath in order to deal with it, with her; but he only put out his hand for the sugar-bowl, she hastened to hand it to him, he helped himself to another spoonful for the dregs in his cup. He would keep silent if he wanted to, he could speak if he wished, it wasn’t up to her. (p. 12)

Bakhtin’s second variety of double-voiced discourse, represented by the collision between the invading voice with the penetrated discourse, is manifested in the phrase: “It was the wrong thing—there! she’d done it, it came out god-awful as Showing Interest.” The narrator’s point of view opposes that of the character. The use of the terms “wrong thing” and “god-awful” asserts that the narrator is not content with Julie’s action. This is what Dorrit Cohn calls “dissonance narration.”<sup>281</sup>

The two italicized sentences in the following examples: “He carried a bulky handleless bag... and *it was awkward to walk beside him* through the streets with people dodging around

---

<sup>278</sup> Schmid, 2010, p. 152.

<sup>279</sup> Schmid, 2010, p. 155.

<sup>280</sup> Schmid, 2010, p. 156.

<sup>281</sup> Dorrit Cohn, *Transparent Minds: Narrative modes for presenting Consciousness in Fiction*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978, p. 28.

them” (p. 7, my emphasis), “it wouldn’t do to reveal to his young wife that the car was being driven around in unsuitable places—*that one was vigilant in protection of his possessions*” (p. 9, my emphasis) involve polyphony. The sentences could belong to the narrator’s discourse or to the character’s discourse. The use of free indirect discourse represented by use of the past tense and of the third-person pronoun “he” reproduces Julie’s voice; hence, she is given agency to express her inner thoughts indirectly through the narrator’s discourse.

Not only is Julie’s voice allowed to emerge through the narrator’s discourse, but also that of Abdu, paving the way for a polyphonic text:

He named a country she had barely heard of. One of those partitioned by colonial powers on their departure, or seceded from federations cobbled together to fill vacuums of powerlessness...one of those countries where you can’t tell religion apart from politics, their forms of persecution from the persecution of poverty, as the reason for getting out and going wherever they’ll let you in. (p. 12)

The paragraph starts with the narrator’s discourse represented by the use of third-person narration “he” and “she” and the past tense. Then text interference occurs in the statement: “one of those countries where you can’t tell religion apart from politics, their forms of persecution from the persecution of poverty, as the reason for getting out and going wherever they’ll let you in.” The use of the second-person pronoun “you” is ambiguous as it can refer to the reader of the text or to an intra-diegetic narratee. The statement could be Abdu’s speech directed to Julie or the narrator’s discourse directed to his readers or to Julie. The male protagonist is placed at an equal level with the narrator where both have their own voices.

Abdu’s voice is also depicted through direct speech and free indirect discourse that portrays his internal thoughts:

*Leave me, leave me:* he knows that is what this girl is really saying; to her—of course—expulsion means she loses her lover, this bed will be empty, at least until—she’s free, secure and free, she finds another lover. To calm her—and himself: I go there. Nothing will be done. They’ll look up the other paper from nearly one year and a half. They know I was supposed to get out then. (p. 54)

Text interference occurs as Abdu’s thoughts and perceptions are depicted indirectly by the narrator through the use of free indirect speech. The passage starts with the character’s indirect thoughts, the italicized part; then switches to free indirect speech that is marked by the grammatical use of third person pronouns “he/she.” The paragraph shifts back to Abdu’s direct speech at the end of the passage, which is preceded by the use of colon: “I go there.

[...].” Another instance which shows Abdu’s voice emerging through the narrator’s discourse is in the following quote:

With his eyes down, already preoccupied with some other thought, he signaled, a hand raised from the wrist, that whatever makeshift she had managed would have to serve. She was not at home...she had been determined to come here...she had made her choice; here it was. She was the one with the choices. The freedom of the world was hers. (p. 115)

The narrator is the one who is narrating here, using free indirect speech represented by use of the third-person pronouns “he/she”; however, it is Abdu’s thoughts that emerge and not the narrator’s. He is thinking of Julie’s choice of coming to his country where freedom can no longer be practiced. Thus, we have an indirect representation of Abdu’s speech, thoughts, and perceptions which is another form of text interference.

The different forms of text interference and the hybridisation of different forms of speech representation in the novel thus allow for the polyphonic presentation of different voices and points of view. Polyphony in the novel also exists through the presence of hybrid unidentified voices, as the following paragraph shows:

—All they care about is *getting there*...  
And where is it they think they’re getting to—this from the hanger-on with a shining bald pate and a cape of grey locks...  
—Nothing gives a white male more of a kick than humiliating a woman driver.—  
—Sexual stimulant for yahoos—  
—Someone else shouted something...like Idikaza...mulungu...what’s that, ‘white bitch’, isn’t it?—Her question to the black friend.  
—Well, just about as bad. This city, man!—  
—But it was black men who helped me, of course.—  
—Oh come on—for a hand-out!— (p. 6)

We know that the previous sentences are direct speech of characters in the novel, but these voices remain undistinguishable— except for the voice of the narrator who comments in sentence 2: “this from the hanger-on with a shining bald pate and a cape of grey locks,” and in sentence 5: “Her question to the black friend.” The direct mode signals authentic reproduction of the character’s discourse. The presentation of direct speech here shows some particular characteristics. It is graphically highlighted by explicit markers such as question marks, exclamation marks, and dashes. It can also be incorporated in the continuous text or merged with it at the beginning or end of the statement as the second sentence shows: “And where is it they think they’re getting to.” However, what makes the characters’ discourse undistinguishable is the omission of quotation marks, or more precisely omission of “he said/she said,” so that it is difficult to identify the person speaking, thinking, or narrating.

Another instance of multiplicity of voices occurs when several voices emerge. We know that these voices are the voices of the L.A. friends; however, the narrator does not distinguish between them. There is no way to identify any of the voices except for the dashes that separate one voice from the other:

—Where's that girl you brought along, the one who said she'd been a speech-writer for some cabinet minister who was sacked?— —Oh she seems to have left town. — —And the other guy—interesting—he wanted to organize street kids as buskers, playing steel drums outside cinemas, did he ever get that off the ground?— —No idea where he landed up.— (p. 15)

The hybrid voices of the L.A. friends who are unidentified reappear a little later (pp. 20-21):

—What happened to brotherhood, I'd like to ask? Fat cats in the government. Company chairmen. In the bush they were ready to die for each other—no, no, that's true, grant it—now they're ready to drive their official Mercedes right past the Brother homeless here out on the street.— (p. 20)

—Did you see on the box last night—the one who was a battle commander at Cuito, a hero, he's joined an exclusive club for cigar connoisseurs...it's oysters and champagne instead of pap and goat meat— (p. 20) [...] —Doesn't make sense...why should people abandon what they've believed and fought for, what's got into them between then and now?— (p. 21)

There is no text interference in the previous passages, for it is obvious that the discourses are uttered by the characters and not by the narrator. What makes these statements belong to the characters is the presence of explicit markers that identify them as direct discourse, such as: question marks and dashes, use of three grammatical persons (I, he, she, they) and different tenses (past, present, present perfect, past perfect). The emergence of these different voices makes the text a polyphonic text that embraces diversity and celebrates difference, since none of the voices is subjected to the control of the authorial voice.

Hybrid voices are also present at Julie's father's place, where people speak without being identified:

—Gold...hardly the issue any more. When you think of the crisis, nearly flooded us not so long ago...first London sales that sent the market crashing...  
—A full vault somewhere doesn't earn anything  
—Well exactly. Wasting asset. For any country. Sell it, sell, sell for dollars deutschmarks whataveyou buy blue-chip stocks. Asset must earn, law of survival, ay!  
—Pretty sure AngloGold's going to reduce its forward hedge position within a year...more than fifty percent of production's probably there, with a big drop likely in the physical market— (p. 42-43).

The passage is a good representation of financial market babble, conveying the anonymity and impersonality of this sphere of activity. These unidentified voices continue to

converse in the following few pages without a hint as to “who” is saying “what.” Although direct speech is represented by the insertion of dashes and exclamation marks, the speakers remain ambiguous and unidentified. Apart from these voices whose main conversation is about business, “a counterpoint of voices was exchanging enthusiasm about a holiday in India” (p. 43).

The same technique of depicting a hybridity of voices is witnessed among Abdu’s friends in his country back home where many voices, without being identified, were discussing issues that call for a hybrid state such as “bringing the modern world to Islam” (p. 176), “cross-fertilize Islam” (p. 177), and “refusing the traditional interpreters of Islam” (p. 177).

In summary, polyphony is manifested in the novel through different forms of Schmid’s text interference, through shifts in different speech forms, through the presence of unidentified hybrid voices, and through the emergence of characters’ voice within the narrator’s discourse. These features can be related to other aspects in the novel such as the lack of closure at the end of the novel, for instance. Abdu leaves for the US, but no one knows what will he do there and whether he will return back to his home country, and whether Julie will follow him. Several voices emerge to express different possibilities. One of the old men asked, when Julie and Abdu embraced:

—She’s not going?—  
—Couple of weeks.—  
—*Bismillah*. That’s much better.—  
—When he has a place.— (p. 267)

This is the pretext Abdu has invented in front of his family— after Julie’s refusal to accompany him— to convince them that Julie is following him to the US in a couple of weeks as soon as he settles there. Julie would keep up the version he had arranged with the brothers, for this is all she could do for him for the present. She was asked kindly questions like when she will expect to follow and in which city they will make their home (p. 268). She had the appropriate answers, even though it is not yet certain that Julie will follow her husband. It is not even certain that she will stay in his home country, as she has planned or go back to her homeland.

The final scene in which Khadija embraces Julie and comforts her by saying that Abdu will come back is probably a hint that he will not come back, just like Khadija’s husband had never come back from the oil fields: “She spoke Arabic, the foreigner understands enough, now. —He’ll come back.— But perhaps a reassurance offered for herself, Khadija thinking of

her man at the oil fields” (p. 268). Abdu decides to leave for the U.S. leaving Julie behind in his country, just like his brother who had cut off contact with his village and family. Thus, the end is left to the readers’ imagination to wonder whether Abdu will settle in the US or will return back to his country to live with Julie. The end can be considered polyphonic in that several possibilities emerge regarding Abdu’s and Julie’s destiny; these are represented by the thoughts and actions of Abdu, Julie, and Khadija.

In addition to the presence of multi-voices, multi-languages exist also in the novel. Multi-languages, not simply language groups as in French, English, Arabic, but languages as in the speech of the rich, the poor, the outcast, the privileged, and so forth. This multi-languages aspect is what Bakhtin terms “heteroglossia.” Bakhtin believes that individuals are bound into social groups and even within those groups, one finds a multiplicity of perspectives that exist as different communities listening and speaking to one another.<sup>282</sup>

## I.b.II. Heteroglossia

As we have already pointed out, heteroglossia is marked by the recognition of difference, multiplicity, or stratification both within and between languages. To study heteroglossia in *The Pickup*, it is necessary to examine how various social languages are employed. To do so, we shall look at how the author makes a distinction between the language of the lower social class represented by the local South Africans and the language of the upper-middle class in *The Suburbs*. Then we are going to consider the insertion of foreign words in the novel.

The use of different social languages is manifested in the employment of special words which reflect the speakers’ cultural belonging. For instance, the swear word *Idikazana lomlungu,le!*, meaning “white bitch” as translated by one of Julie’s black friends, is directed to Julie by one of the locals. In addition, the use of the verb “yells out” by the black woman vendor reflects her lower social status.

Another distinction is made between the discourse of the L.A. Café friends who represent people from different social classes and the discourse of Julie’s father and his people who belong to the upper-middle class. For instance, one of the L.A. friends uses the informal expression “For Chris’ sake!” (p. 24) to express his annoyance or exasperation,

---

<sup>282</sup> Williams, in Herman et al., 2005, p. 213.



whereas Julie's father uses the expression "Good lord" (p. 39). In addition, Julie's father uses out of date terms such as "cometh" (p. 46).

Although Nigel Summers' acquaintances belong to the upper-middle financial business class, some use informal words in their conversation such as "nada," (p. 44) a Spanish word that means nothing, and "nous" (p. 47) that means practical intelligence. This suggests that Julie's father and his associates have their own language. The narrator comments: "The lawyer (in the corporate jargon she's familiar with among her father's associates) is affable" (p. 74). Note that the parenthetical comment fits in Bakhtin's double-voiced discourse as it refers to the narrator's discourse or to Abdu's discourse.

The L.A. friends use informal common expressions to express closeness and familiarity among them. For instance, the use of the word "my brothers" points to the friendship bond that ties them together, and the use of the word "man" in the following quote: "Look, man, can't you catch on [...]" (p. 60) indicates their informal language. Also, the use of words such as: "schmuck" (p. 87) which is informal for a foolish person and "dope" (p. 87), which is black slang for very good, points to the slang language of the L.A. friends. In addition, the sentence: "they must know a hell of a lot about this kind of situation" (p. 58) reflects everyday language as opposed to standard language. The difference between the discourse of *The Suburbs* and that of *The Table* also lies in the subject of conversation. While the L.A. café friends share personal stories, Nigel Summers and his people talk business only.

Moreover, Julie uses vulgar language to express her annoyance: "There must be many, many people like himself—the two of them—in the shit" (p. 61). The narrator comments that Julie "knows he [Abdu] doesn't like to hear her using these words that everyone uses—really there must be the same sort of necessity in his own language but of course even if he wanted to relieve his feelings in this banal way she wouldn't understand" (p. 61).

Heteroglossia is represented not only in the same culture between different social groups or classes, but also across different cultures. For instance, Julie and Abdu have never said the "worn old words to one another" (p. 97), i.e. the marriage vow, because "for her they are bourgeois clichés left behind; or perhaps it is because each would need a different vocabulary in their two languages" (p. 97).

In addition to the diversity in social languages, heteroglossia is manifested through the insertion of foreign words in the novel. The author inserts words either in one of the South African languages to convey the hybrid society in the South African city, or in Arabic to depict the nature of discourse in Abdu's culture.

Different words from other languages are also employed in the novel. For example, the French word *objets trouvés* (p. 126) uttered by Julie to express her delight at the scene of various items at the Market day. The word *sherbet* (p. 129) originates from the Turkish “*şerbet*”<sup>283</sup> although the term is used in English, and means a cold drink prepared in a specific way. In addition, the word “*suras*” (p. 144) originates from Arabic and means a chapter of the Koran. Several other Arabic words are inserted in the novel to reflect on Arab-Muslim life. For example, “*muezzin*” (p. 125) is the man who calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret of a mosque; “*Eid al-fitr*” (p. 161) means the Muslim festival marking the end of the fast of Ramadan; the “*rih*” (p. 163) is the strong wind which normally blows in the desert; “*Imam*” (p. 176) is the person who leads Friday prayer; “*Galabiah*” (p. 176) is the long garment reaching the feet worn by Muslims; “*Hijab*” is a head covering worn by Muslim Women before men who are not family; “*Keffiyeh*” (p. 179) is a traditional headdress for Arab men made of a square of cloth (scarf), usually cotton, folded and wrapped in various styles around the head; “*Kif*” (p. 189) is a substance, especially cannabis, smoked to produce a drowsy state.

Moreover, Islamic religious terms are inserted by the narrator to convey Abdu’s mother’s thoughts and report her feelings toward her son’s sin:

*Aoodhu billah*. If she took the sin upon herself, as if she assumed the distorted visage of the beloved face only she knew was evident. *Astaghfar allah*. If he is disgraced, nothing will stop him. He will leave. She will lose him again. Any punishment, *in sha allah*, rather than that. (p. 158)

*Aoodhu billah* signifies “I seek refuge with Allah”<sup>284</sup>; *Astaghfar allah* means “I ask Allah’s forgiveness”<sup>285</sup> to prove her innocence of the sin her son had committed; *In sha allah* (p. 158, 207) signifies “if Allah wishes”<sup>286</sup>; *Al-Hamdu lillah* (p. 182, 185, 215, 224, 256) means “praise be to God”; *ma sha allah* (p. 190, 255) literary means “whatever God wills”; and *Inna lillah* (p. 190, 258) is a shortened expression for “Inna lillah wa inna ilayhi raaji’oon” which means “to Allah we belong and to Him is our return,” it is often said when

---

<sup>283</sup> *Sherbet* came into English from Ottoman Turkish *sherbet* or Persian *sharbat*, both going back to Arabic *šarba*, “drink.” In Europe *sherbet* eventually came to refer to a carbonated drink. Because the original Middle Eastern drink contained fruit and was often cooled with ice, *sherbet* was applied to a frozen dessert (first recorded in 1891). American Heritage Dictionary, accessed Jan. 6, 2012,

<<http://www.answers.com/topic/sherbet>>.

<sup>284</sup> “*Aoodhu billah*,” *Islamic-Dictionary.com*, accessed June 7, 2012, <<http://www.islamic-dictionary.com/index.php?word=audhu>>.

<sup>285</sup> “*Astaghfar allah*,” *Islamic-Dictionary.com*, accessed June 7, 2012, <<http://www.islamicdictionary.com/index.php?word=astaghfirullah>>.

<sup>286</sup> “*in sha allah*,” *Islamic-Dictionary.com*, accessed June 7, 2012, <<http://www.islamic-dictionary.com/index.php?word=inshallah>>.

someone suffers a setback or harm; *Bismillah* (p. 177, 267) means “In the name of God,” and *Allah yahfazak* (p. 259) signifies “May God protects you.”

The inclusion of foreign words and phrases in the novel touches on the implied audience to whom the novel appears to address. Many readers who are not bilingual might not possess the linguistic knowledge to understand the inserted Arabic words. They might find themselves linguistically alienated at some point in the novel, especially that the words are neither translated nor explained in a glossary at the end or beginning of the novel. It could be that the author’s purpose is to address a multilingual audience or a hybrid audience who is not restricted to one culture or language but is open to heterogeneity and difference; thus, asserting the hybrid atmosphere in the novel.

It should also be noted that some of the inserted Arabic words are not italicized when introduced in the novel such as: “muezzin” (p. 125), “Imam” (p. 176), “Galabiah” (p. 176), “Keffiyeh” (p. 179), and “Kif” (p. 189). Thus, the novel makes foreign words part of the expanded vocabulary of English; it engages with such significant otherness by also treating English as a foreign language. In certain situations in the novel, English words and phrases are italicized as if they are foreign words that need to be reinterpreted. For instance: “*getting there*” (p. 6), “*belonging*” (p. 44), “*genuine-trained*” (p. 141), “*existence*” (p. 214), “*real people*” (p. 230), “*That’s where the world is*” (p. 230), etc... All these words appear as defamiliarized foreign words that demand new investigation.

By treating foreign words as part of English and by making English words as foreign, the novel asserts exchange across languages, which parallels the exchange across cultures as we have seen with the protagonists’ hybrid identities.

In short, heteroglossia in the novel is manifested by the diversity of social languages between different social groups or classes, by the diversity of languages across cultures, and by the insertion of foreign words. The fact that different languages co-exist together in *The Pickup* highlights the intertextual aspect in the novel. Heteroglossia can be regarded a variation of the intertextual theme if we consider the dialogism of an utterance and of the text as an utterance.<sup>287</sup> The concept of dialogism is not solely formulated through heteroglossia, but also, as I develop in the following sub-section, through intertextual practices.

---

<sup>287</sup>Christian Moraru, in Herman et al., 2005, p. 257.

### I.b.III. Intertextuality

The presence of a fair number of intertexts in the novel creates several layers of interpretation and meaning, which effectively results in another form of linguistic hybridity. Intertextuality refers to the presence of a text A in a text B. A is the “intertext” if one stresses the textual precursor, the “pretext” absorbed by a later text. Or, one could call B the intertext if one lays emphasis on the text incorporating a previous text and thereby becoming intertextual.<sup>288</sup>

The first intertextual evidence in the novel lies in the insertion of a short quotation by William Plomer<sup>289</sup> as an epigraph intended to summarize the whole novel and to suggest the dominant theme in the novel is cross-cultural love and marriage. “Let us go to another country... The rest is understood... Just say the word.” The novel introduces a number of tensions and double meanings into the quote. The country here signifies another country ideal for lovers where the couple can both find perfect fulfillment, but Julie and Abdu end up in different countries. For Julie, it is in Abdu’s country that she finds satisfaction and decides to stay; whereas for Abdu, it is in the West, in the United States, that he finds a “home,” which he has been seeking to enter throughout the novel and finally succeeds. The quote also expresses the protagonists’ hidden desires. Abdu regards Julie as a means that would enable him to enter any Western country, where he dreams of living. In addition, Julie considers Abdu as a way to distance herself from her father’s upper-middle class lifestyle. Both protagonists are inviting one another “to go to another country” where they can fulfill their desires and where “the rest is understood.”

The same poem is mentioned again in the middle of the novel; it was dedicated to Julie by the poet, one of the L.A. friends, who wrote it on a paper and put it in Julie’s pocket:

Let us go to another country  
Not yours or mine  
And start again.  
To another country? which?  
One without fires, where fever  
Lurks under leaves, and water  
Is sold to those who thirst?  
And carry dope or papers

---

<sup>288</sup> Christian Moraru, in Herman et al., 2005, p. 256.

<sup>289</sup> William Plomer (1903-1973) was a South African author, known as a novelist, poet and literary editor. He became famous in South Africa with his first novel, *Turbott Wolfe*, which had inter-racial love and marriage as a theme.

In our shoes to save us starving?  
Hope would be our passport  
The rest is understood  
Just say the word.  
(Sorry, don't remember how it ends) (p. 88-89).

The quoting of the whole poem confirms its centrality. Julie has read the poem aloud to Abdu, but "it was meant for her" (p. 89). Note that the second line of the poem, a country which is "not yours or mine" could reflect Bhabha's "third-space" which Julie has chosen to occupy. It is a space which neither belongs to The Suburbs from which she desires to dissociate, nor to The Table where she has always been a member. Although she has chosen Abdu's village and community as a space to "start again," no one knows how long she will continue to tolerate the lifestyle there. The question is left open to the readers' imagination at the end of the novel.

The poem summarizes the different events in the novel. We have seen that both Julie and Abdu are looking for another country, for they are not satisfied with life in their own countries. Julie admits to Abdu that she has always wanted to live "somewhere" (p. 84). In addition, she has married Abdu and moved with him to his country despite the negative reactions of her surroundings toward this relationship. Julie's aim is to dissociate herself from her father's life and to find a country where she can "belong." Moreover, Abdu attempts constantly to apply for visas to Western countries, for he wants to live in the industrialized world away from the desert life of his country. He considers Julie as the meal ticket that would enable him to achieve his goal; the reason for which he always insists on maintaining contact with her wealthy family. Abdu finally gets a visa to the U.S. thanks to Julie's mother and step-father who live in California.

Note also that the first two lines of the poem: "Let us go to another country... Not yours or mine," reflects the hybrid aspect in the novel. By migrating to another country and facing a new culture, the protagonists' hybrid experiences evolve to oscillate "in-between" their native culture and the host culture. This asserts Bhabha's concept of living in a "third-space" or "in-between" space. This can also be related to the inter-cultural marriage question in that the country which the two protagonists' aim to migrate to is an ideal country that would accept them both and in which they can find satisfaction.

Further evidence of intertextuality lies in mentioning names of famous old Arab poets by Abdu such as "Imru' al Qays, Antara" (p. 93). In addition, Abdu lends Julie a book *al-Kitab wa-l-Qur'an: Qira'a mu'asira* by Shahrur Muhammad, translated as *The Book and the*

*Quran: A Contemporary Reading*.<sup>290</sup> The fact that Abdu owns this book indicates that he is open to non-traditional forms of Islam, since the book dismisses all traditional interpretations of the Koran and calls for reinterpreting it from a contemporary perspective. The book is forbidden in Abdu's country, as he explains to Julie. He warns her: "But take care. Don't leave the book lying around. You can't find it, here, somebody sent it, and even then it had to be hidden in the cover of some other book, some nonsense" (p. 178).

Intertextual relations are also manifested through references to chapters and verses from the Koran: "the Chapter of The Merciful, the Chapter of Mary, the Chapter of The Prophets" (p. 144). Julie reads at random:

*And remember Job: when he cried to his Lord, Truly evil hath touched me: but thou art the most merciful of those who show mercy.  
So we heard him, and lightened the burden of his woe; and we gave him back his family. (p. 144-145)*

God deprived Prophet Job from his wealth, health and children to test his patience, but he was a true believer and would not let evil thoughts tempt him. He prayed to God who heard him and granted him back all that He had taken.

The verse has a subtle reference to Abdu, as the narrator comments: "her lover, the son, cast out by Nigel Ackroyd Summers' world, given back to his family by that silent figure whose authority came from the thrall of his love" (p. 145). The quote has a subtle hint to one possible choice of how might the novel end. Abdu, Julie's lover and the son who loves his mother, is deprived of wealth, represented by Nigel Ackroyd Summer's world, and of his family since he migrates to the West. However, the quote suggests that Abdu will finally return to his family thanks to Julie's love who is described as the silent figure who has authority. Julie reads more verses which are meant for her:

*And make mention in the book of Mary, when she went apart from her family, eastward  
And took a veil to shroud herself from them: and we sent our spirit to her, and he took before her the form of a perfect man.  
She said: "I fly for refuge from thee to the God of Mercy! If thou fearest him, begone from me."  
He said: "I am only a messenger of the Lord, that I may bestow upon thee a holy son."  
She said: "How shall I have a son, when man hath never touched me and I am not unchaste."  
He said: 'So shall it be, The Lord hath said: "Easy is this with me; and we will make him a sign to mankind, and a mercy from us. For it is a thing decreed."'  
And she conceived him, and retired with him to a far-off place. (p. 145)*

---

<sup>290</sup> None of the secondary sources which I have read on the novel have mentioned or dealt with this book. See my discussion on the book on page 79.

These verses are known by heart for Julie, because she has lived a similar experience by moving away from her family and by taking a veil to shroud herself from them. First, she has moved from The Suburbs to live in a black neighborhood, and then she has left for another country with her lover, where she has discovered a new identity for herself, particularly in the desert.

Julie reads another verse from the Koran and leaves the book open on these two lines because they apply to her case are:

*...He hath let loose the two seas which meet each other:  
Yet between them is a barrier which they overpass not. (p. 146)*

The two lines are a perfect reflection of the state in which Abdu and Julie are living. They signify that although Abdu and Julie have met and married, there remains an invisible barrier that keeps them apart. Both protagonists are seeking what the other partner is running from. Abdu seeks the upper-middle class Western lifestyle that Julie is trying to escape, while Julie aims to live in Abdu's community and in the desert life from which Abdu is trying to dissociate.

Moreover, other intertextual elements exist in the novel through the insertion of quotes from different poems and by different authors such as: "Too long a sacrifice makes a stone of the heart" (p. 21) by W. B Yeats.<sup>291</sup> The quote is uttered by the elderly poet among the L.A., and it reflects the change that has occurred to post-apartheid South Africa. Black people who were ready to die for each other, now are ready to "drive their official Mercedes right past the Brother homeless" (p. 20). They have abandoned what they have believed in and fought for, because they have sacrificed for long; the reason for which their hearts have become like a stone.

Another quote is inserted when Julie was looking in an anthology of poetry: "Whoever embraces a woman is Adam. The woman is Eve. Everything happens for the first time... Praise be the love wherein there is no possessor and no possessed, but both surrender... Everything happens for the first time but in a way that is eternal" (p. 28). The quote, which is written by Jorge Luis Borges,<sup>292</sup> is read by Julie after she made love with Abdu for the first time. Julie had made love so many times before, but those lines expressed what she was aware of in herself. It is the first time she feels that she is neither a possessor nor a possessed. This is how Julie desires to live, and this is what Abdu is trying to adapt to throughout the novel. He

---

<sup>291</sup> W.B. Yeats, "Easter 1916," *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*, Churchtown: The Cuala Press, 1920.

<sup>292</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, "Happiness," *Jorge Luis Borges: Selected Poems*, New York: Viking, 1999.

attempts not to exert his authority over his wife, for in Western lifestyle, neither woman nor man has power over one other.

Moreover, Julie has fallen upon another quote in a book that she has been reading: “I decided to postpone our future as long as possible, leaving everything in its present state” (p. 35). Julie felt that this statement, by Feodor Dostoevsky,<sup>293</sup> has been written for her. She, enjoying life with Abdu, does not want to think about the future, particularly concerning Abdu’s illegal status and his inevitable deportation from the country. She prefers to leave everything in its present state and seize every moment in her present life to live it with Abdu.

However, Julie discovered Abdu’s true intentions in the desert: “I was occupied in picturing him [Abdu] to myself; I had undertaken the task of imagining him” (p. 245). The quote, written by Rainer Maria Rilke in his novel *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*,<sup>294</sup> reveals Julie’s consciousness becoming aware of Abdu’s exploitation of her. She was busy in picturing him to herself, but the fact is that he had been using her as a meal ticket to enter the West. It was in the desert that Julie discovered this through a stream of visions and thoughts.

Another intertextual quote is mentioned by an unidentified character in the novel. We know that it is uttered by one of Dr. Archie’s patients, but she is not identified and her name is not mentioned. She praises Dr. Archie, Julie’s uncle, and his power in healing. She says that if everything is not okay, if “rose thou art sick” (p. 66), Archie will cut it out so that blooming continues. The quote, which is the first line of “The Sick Rose” poem written by the famous poet William Blake,<sup>295</sup> reflects a feminist aspect in the novel. It signifies that if something is wrong with women, it is a man who heals it. Archie is described as the “deliverer of life” (p. 66), which reflects the dependency of women on him to heal them and to provide them life.

Intertextuality in the novel includes not only references to simple quotations, but also allusions to parallel narrations. Julie’s relation with the desert and its essential role in transforming her identity recalls the film and myth of “Lawrence of Arabia” that revolves around the story of a man who was struggling with contradictory emotions, loyalties, and identities. “The desert confronted Lawrence with his sexuality, his manliness, and his English ethnicity. His identification with the Arabs and their culture displaced the centered position of

---

<sup>293</sup> Feodor Dostoevsky, “The Meek One,” *The Diary of a Writer—Feodor Dostoevsky*, trans. Boris Brasol, New York: George Braziller, 1954.

<sup>294</sup> Rainer Maria Rilke, *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*, trans. John Linton, London: The Hogarth Press, 1990.

<sup>295</sup> William Blake, “The Sick Rose,” *Songs of Innocence and Experience with Other Poems*, London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1866.



his identity as a white man.”<sup>296</sup> Similarly, the desert confronted Julie with her origins, with her bourgeois descent and her bohemian life as a member of the L.A. Café. Her integration into Abdu’s culture and assimilation of Arab and Muslim practices displaced her dominant position as a white woman. For Lawrence, the desert left him neither Arab nor English: “I had dropped one form and not taken on another.”<sup>297</sup> Julie experienced the same situation as Lawrence, the desert made her lose her identity; she discovered that she does not belong to South Africa, yet she is not an Arab. The desert made Lawrence, as well as Julie, view the West with a new perspective. Lawrence wrote in *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*: “the effort for these years to live in the dress of Arabs, and to imitate their mental foundation, quitted me of my English self and let me look at the West and its conventions with new eyes: they destroyed it all for me.”<sup>298</sup>

In addition, Julie’s integration and assimilation to Arab culture recalls Lady Anna’s experience in Egypt, the female protagonist in Ahdaf Soueif’s *The Map of Love*. Anna, a British widow, came to Egypt when the country was under British colonization after her husband’s death in the war. There she met and married an Egyptian who belongs to the national movement. Anna has developed a hybrid identity by her adoption of the new culture. She wore a scarf, learned Arabic, and established bonds with women in the host community.

In short, all the intertextual references in the novel: the epigraph and poem, the verses from the Koran, and the quotes from various authors are intricately intertwined. They all contribute to the thematic aspect of the novel and to its structuring form. They somehow summarize all the events in the novel. Both protagonists are “deprived” of wealth, both have rejected their roles in their traditional families, both choose to leave their homelands, and both are trying to find a place, a home where they fit in, where they belong. This is particularly asserted in the poem, which relates to the hybrid question and intercultural marriage issue. The quest of both protagonists is to search for self amid a hybrid world and their intercultural marriage is their hope for a new beginning.

---

<sup>296</sup> Jonathan Rutherford, “A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference,” in Jonathan Rutherford (ed.) *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>297</sup> Rutherford, 1990, p. 9.

<sup>298</sup> Lawrence in Rutherford, 1990, p. 9.

## I.b.IV. Conclusion to Part Two: Linguistic Hybridity

Having analyzed the cultural hybridity of the protagonists' identities, I found it necessary to discuss the linguistic hybridity that is present in the novel, as this will back up the argument raised in the first part of this chapter. As we have seen, linguistic hybridity that permeates the novel is conveyed through the notions: polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality.

Polyphony allows the emergence of two different voices in the same segment of text, just like the "third-space" or "in-between" space that allows the emergence of two different identities. It generates ambiguity and bi-textuality as the narrator's text and the character's text interfere. This reflects the experience lived by the characters concerning their hybrid identities, which generates ambiguity as two identities "interfere" resulting in a third hybrid identity that do not settle into one fixed end, but oscillates in Bhabha's "third space" between two cultures. "Polyphony and heteroglossia are marked by the recognition of difference and the rejection of the unifying impetus characteristic of many dominant cultural discourses."<sup>299</sup> This is how polyphony and heteroglossia shed light on cultural hybridity, since both embrace difference and reject domination and homogeneity.

In addition, heteroglossia which allows the manifestation of different social languages highlights the difference in language style between "The Table" and "The Suburbs," thus reflecting on the hybridity which exists in post-apartheid society. In addition, the insertion of foreign words, mostly Arabic, and treating them as part of the expanded vocabulary of English assert the otherness of languages and the intertextual aspect. Exchange occurs across languages just as it occurs across cultures.

Moreover, intertextual elements, especially the epigraph and the poem in the middle of the novel, summarize the whole novel. They play an important and even central structuring role in the novel that seems to be a sort of "expansion" of them. The lines: "Let us go to another country... The rest is understood... Just say the word" reflect the protagonists' central aim and the hybrid aspect in the novel. By migrating to another country and facing a new culture, the protagonists' hybrid identities evolve; they experience Bhabha's "third-space" or "in-between" space. The lines are also related to the intercultural marriage question in that the country which the two protagonists' aim to migrate to is an ideal country that would accept

---

<sup>299</sup>Neumann and Nünning, 2008, p. 112.

them both and in which they can find satisfaction. However, each end up in different countries.

## I.c. Conclusion to Chapter One

What conclusions can we draw after analyzing the two protagonists' hybrid cultural identities and the factors which played a role in the construction of this hybridity?

Returning to the main questions proposed at the beginning of this study, several points can be borne out: First, the change that occurs to the protagonists' cultural identities in *The Pickup* illustrates Bhabha's hybridity notions of "in-between" space or "third space" and "unhomely" life, in addition to Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity." Second, concerning the factors that caused the change and the relation between hybridity and cross-cultural marriage, we have found that cross-cultural marriage is both a manifestation of hybridity and at the same time may lead to hybridity. It is a manifestation of hybridity because the protagonists have chosen to marry across cultures in order to assert their hybrid experiences. In addition, cross-cultural marriage leads to hybridity as in the case of Abdu and not Julie. Although Julie does not ask her husband to transgress his cultural barriers, he unconsciously becomes influenced by her and attempts to adapt to Western lifestyle. However, Abdu does not play a role in Julie's transgression of her cultural boundaries, for he opposes her adoption of his culture. Julie's evolution of her hybrid identity in Abdu's culture is caused by factors other than cross-cultural marriage, which mainly lie in her integration into the host culture and her relationships with the desert.

Bhabha's theory of hybridity offers a constructive angle to approach Gordimer's novel. The notions of "third space" or "in-between space" and "unhomely" state apply to the protagonists' hybrid experiences. First, the two protagonists' have crossed national borders by moving to another country other than their native one. Hence, the pre-condition to the occurrence of hybridity exists. In addition, both protagonists seek to distance themselves from their families and homeland; this makes them experience Bhabha's "in-between" space where their identities oscillate between their cultural "baggage" and the newness they encounter. Living in an "in-between" space makes Julie and Abdu encounter Bhabha's "unhomely" aspect in which both feel that they are "culturally" displaced.

This chapter proposed to explore two aspects of hybridity: the complex representation of Gordimer's protagonists' hybrid cultural identities, and the different forms of linguistic hybridity that are present in the novel. Both aspects of hybridity, the cultural and linguistic, converge and coincide in the novel. First, we have seen that in polyphony, text interference occurs and two hybrid voices emerge in the same segment of text. Similarly, in cultural

hybridity, identity interference occurs and the protagonists develop two different identities that co-exist and, at other times, struggle together. In addition, multi-languagedness or heteroglossia exists in the novel, where we have seen that the boundary between languages can be crossed. Likewise, the protagonists have proven that cultural boundaries can be crossed. We have also explored how the numerous intertexts, which are present in the novel, particularly the epigraph and poem, play a central role in summarizing the thematic and structural aspects of the novel.

Chapter Two:  
Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*

## Introduction to Chapter Two

We have concluded in the previous chapter that: the change that occurs to the protagonists' identities illustrate Bhabha's hybridity notions; the factors that affect the evolution of hybrid identities do not necessarily relate to cross-cultural marriage as we have seen in Julie's case; and that cross-cultural marriage can be both a manifestation of hybridity, where the protagonists' cross-cultural marriage is seen as an assertion of their hybrid experience, and, as in Abdu's case, a means to hybridity. However, we will explore in this chapter that the change that occurs to the protagonists' identities when crossing cultures, either through migration or through inter-cultural encounters, is not necessarily a hybrid experience as we will see in the female protagonist's case. In addition, we will find out that the hypothesis: cross-cultural relationships lead to the evolution of hybridity does not always apply to all cases, for Sammar's relationship with someone from another culture leads her to experience the opposite of hybridity.

An analysis of Leila Aboulela's 1999 novel *The Translator*, the chapter is divided into two parts. The first part deals with the protagonists' cultural hybridity, while the second examines the linguistic hybridity.

The steps to be followed in our study of the protagonists' cultural hybridity in *The Translator* differ from those applied in the analysis of *The Pickup*. Unlike chapter one, which explored the protagonists' hybrid identities from the viewpoint of Bhabha's notions of "in-between" space, "third space," and "unhomely," chapter two looks at the protagonists' identities from different viewpoints. Concerning the female protagonist, it is noticed that Sammar's experience is quite different from that of hybridity, she refuses to cross cultural and religious boundaries and remains attached to her native way of life. Thus, Bhabha's notions of "in-between" space and the "unhomely" are not relevant in Sammar's case. Rather, she undergoes what Floya Anthias calls "ghettoisation and enclavisation": "Through migration and diasporisation, the opposite to hybridity can occur: a ghettoisation and enclavisation process, a living in a 'time warp,' a mythologising of tradition."<sup>300</sup>

Concerning the male protagonist, Rae, his experience cannot be described in terms of the "in-between" or "third-space," either. His hybrid identity is represented by his interest in Islam and acceptance of the "Other." However, he does not oscillate "in-between" his native

---

<sup>300</sup> Anthias, in Anthias and Lloyd, 2002, p. 32.

culture and that of Islamic culture, because his interest in Islam remains objective as his job as a Middle-East historian and lecturer in Postcolonial politics necessitates. In fact, his hybrid experience can be studied in the terms of Stuart Hall, who contends, as Nikos Papastergiadis's discussion of him suggests, that the term hybridity refers to "the constant process of differentiation and exchange between the centre and the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions."<sup>301</sup> Rae's hybridity lies in his interaction as a Scottish white man (the center) with the Arab-Islamic culture (the periphery). It also lies in his cross-cultural relationship with Sammar (the periphery) and his conversion to Islam at the end of the novel, where he chooses to cross cultural and religious boundaries.

While part one of this chapter deals with the protagonists' cultural hybridity, part two examines the role of linguistic hybridity, for this will support the debate proposed in the first part. Linguistic hybridity in *The Translator* is conveyed by the presence of intertextuality and heteroglossia. Intertextually, the novel is related to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* (1969). For Aboulela, *The Translator* is a Muslim *Jane Eyre*.<sup>302</sup> The author wanted the Western reader to empathize with Sammar's Muslim dilemma in the same way a Muslim reader empathizes with Jane's Christian dilemma. In a way, this intertextual link between the two characters justifies, in a way, Sammar's rejection of crossing religious barriers. In addition, Aboulela's novel incorporates many intertextual elements from Salih's novel that highlight Sammar's rootedness in Sudan and the hardships of the foreign experience as we will demonstrate later in the section on intertextuality.

Not only intertextuality, but also heteroglossia will illustrate and complement our comments on cultural hybridity. The use of Arabic words and of certain idiomatic expressions that echo literal discourse from Arabic underscores the fact that not everything is translatable, as shown in Sammar's case. In addition, the absence of explanations for the untranslated words may estrange the reader who is not familiar with Arabic, forcing him to search for their meanings elsewhere. This could be read as a resistance strategy employed by the author to the

---

<sup>301</sup> Stuart Hall, "New Ethnicities," in Bill Aschcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, 2006, cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274. The reason for using a secondary source on Hall rather than the primary source itself is that Papastergiadis' discussion bears out the relevant argument, for our purposes, more clearly than Hall himself.

<sup>302</sup> Leila Aboulela, "The Translator—Inspiration," accessed Feb. 15, 2012, n.p., <<http://www.leila-aboulela.com/books/the-translator/inspiration/>>.



dominant English discourse, which again underscores Sammar's refusal to translate herself in the host environment.

II.a. Part One:  
The Protagonists' Hybrid Cultural Identities

## Introduction to Part One

As mentioned above, this part will be devoted to the study of the protagonists' cultural identities from viewpoints of different scholars. In Sammar's case, Floya Anthias' notions of "enclavisation and ghettoisation" will be explored. While in Rae's case, Stuart Hall's notion of hybridity will be applied. Before studying the protagonists' identities, it is necessary to explain these notions and to demonstrate why they are relevant to apply to the protagonists' experiences.

In the article "Diasporic Hybridity and Transcending Racism: Problems and Potentials," Anthias states:

Bhabha's idea of the 'in-between space' constructs a 'third space' inhabited by the cosmopolitan who lacks a central cultural narrative. However, cosmopolitanism may not be the primary condition produced through transnational movements. Through migration and diasporisation, the opposite to hybridity can occur: a ghettoisation and enclavisation process, a living in a 'time warp', a mythologising of tradition.<sup>303</sup>

As the quote reveals, crossing cultural boundaries does not always result in hybridity. Reactions to the new cultural context vary from mild acceptance to intense rejection. In the case of acceptance, the individual lives in what Bhabha calls "in-between space," where identity wavers between the cultural norms, values, and beliefs of the host culture and those of his native country; as a consequence, he develops a hybrid identity. In the case of rejection, the individual experiences the opposite of hybridity, in which he makes an effort to maintain his native beliefs, refusing cultural assimilation. In this case, the individual might suffer from an identity crisis or a culture-clash due to an inability to reconcile the two sets of beliefs. Thus, he experiences a "ghettoisation and enclavisation" process as an alternative to hybridity. Having found that there is no adequate research on these notions, particularly in relation with hybridity, I find it beneficial to study these terms and apply them to Sammar's case.

To start with, the notion of ghettoisation is derived from the word ghetto. A ghetto was formerly a street or quarter of a city set apart as a legally enforced residential area for Jews. Ghettos were customarily enclosed with walls and gates and kept locked at night and during Christian festivals; however, these were abolished in Western Europe in the nineteenth century. More recently, the term ghetto has been applied to impoverished urban areas

---

<sup>303</sup> Anthias, in Anthias and Lloyd, 2002, p. 32.

exclusively settled by a minority group or groups and perpetuated by economic and social pressures rather than legal and physical measures.<sup>304</sup>

According to the sociologist Loïc Wacquant, much can be learned from a historical comparison between ghettos and prisons, because both belong to the same class of institution of forced confinement: the ghetto can be theorized as a “social prison,” while the prison functions as a “judicial ghetto.” Both are entrusted with enclosing a stigmatized population so as to neutralize the material and/or symbolic threat it poses for the broader society.<sup>305</sup> Although Sammar lives in a social prison rather than in a judicial one, the threat she poses to the host culture, though largely imaginative, could not be avoided. She has caused Rae to comply with her own cultural and religious norms and convert to Islam at the end of the novel.

Ghettos have served to exclude, from the host culture, groups that seemed to form a threat to it; but they have also served the interest of immigrant groups by providing them with a space where they are free to be different. Immigrant groups have, in some sense, chosen to remain apart, preferring cultural distinction over assimilation.<sup>306</sup> As it turns out, the ghetto provides them partial protection and solidarity. This being the case, note that Sammar is not confined by force to live in a “ghetto” in the strict sense, since her “ghetto” is represented by her private room. However, she does choose to dissociate herself from the host culture and live freely according to her own cultural and religious norms.

Being a social process of isolation and confinement of members of a particular community to a restricted area, ghettoisation restricts their activities and their opportunities for development. Immigrants cease to be ghettoised, to be part of a segregated underclass, only when they assimilate, as they cease to be culturally different. By refusing the idea of cultural assimilation, Sammar remains “ghettoised” and alienated from the new environment.

According to Montserrat Guibernau:

Ghettoization assumes the isolation of ethnic communities which live within selected neighborhoods and so keep their contact with the host society to a minimum. They are alienated from the rest of society and form closed communities. Ghettoization is usually a consequence of socio-economic marginalization and often racism. Such situations tend to foster resentment among ethnic communities, who perceive the host country and its citizens—those belonging to the dominant nation or ethnic group—as alien. The degree of identification with the host society and its national identity tends to be minimal or non-existent among a

---

<sup>304</sup> “Ghetto,” in *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*, Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, INC, 2006, p. 759.

<sup>305</sup> Loïc Wacquant, “The new ‘peculiar institution’: On the prison as surrogate ghetto,” *Theoretical Criminology* 4. 3 (Aug. 2000): p. 378.

<sup>306</sup> Ninno Ricci, “Questioning Ethnicity,” accessed Nov. 10, 2012, <<http://www.ninoricci.com/QuestioningEthnicity.htm>>.

population able to conduct their lives within a ghetto-like structure. In turn, they often seek to maintain a national identity linked to their country of origin.<sup>307</sup>

Sammar's fitting into Guibernau's definition of "ghettoisation" keeps her contact with the host culture to a minimum. She perceives the outside environment as hostile, watching people do what she cannot do. She seeks to maintain her native identity by sticking to her cultural traditions and religious teachings. Further evidence of how Sammar chooses to live a ghetto-like life will be detailed in the following section.

While ghettoisation results from segregation by force, enclavisation is not practiced by compulsion, but comes about as a result of economic and social factors. The enclavisation of the Asian community in Britain, for instance, is principally a function of personal preference— people choose to live near relatives, close to places of worship and cultural centers and to those of the same ethnic group. Personal choices, however, may be compounded and perpetuated by relative poverty and an inability to move to other, more prosperous areas of town.<sup>308</sup> Veronica Vivero and Sharon Jenkins argue that being a part of an ethnic reference group or ethnic enclave may give members a sense of being at home culturally, which elicits a sense of safety, relaxation, pleasure, and familiarity. On the other hand, living in different cultures may cause individuals to feel lonely and dislocated.<sup>309</sup> However, this is not always the case, for as we will observe in Sammar's case, the protagonist feels "at home" when she establishes a cross-cultural relationship with her Scottish employer. Moreover, Alan Billings and Andrew Holden believe that in the past the (British) nation has absorbed relatively small numbers of people. Many of these migrants were eventually assimilated through personal choices, especially marriage. More recent migrations have led to the creation of large enclaves, many of which reject the possibility of assimilation through marriage. In addition, absorption is now more difficult because recent migrants have often been both ethnically and religiously distinct. They have had less in common with their neighbors than some groups in the past.<sup>310</sup>

---

<sup>307</sup> Montserrat Guibernau, *The Identity of Nations*, Cambridge: Polity press, 2007, p. 64.

<sup>308</sup> Alan Billings and Andrew Holden, "The Contribution of Faith to Integration and Cohesion and the threat posed by 'enclavisation' in some northern towns," University of Lancaster, accessed Nov. 10, 2012, p. 6, <<http://www.chorley.eu/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1401&p=0>>.

<sup>309</sup> Veronica Vivero and Sharon Jenkins, "Existential Hazards of the Multicultural Individual: Defining and Understanding 'Cultural Homlessness,'" *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology*, 1999, Cited in Agnes Wing Yan Kwong, "The Asian American cultural alienation scale: development, factor analysis, validation, and reliability," PhD dissertation, New York University, 2007, p. 30.

<sup>310</sup> Billings and Holden, p. 14.

In this study, the terms ghettoisation and enclavisation will be used interchangeably since both share the notion of ethnic minorities being separated from the host culture, whether by force or by personal choice.

Another concept that needs to be defined is Stuart Hall's viewpoint of hybridity. Hall contends that the term hybridity refers to "the constant process of differentiation and exchange between the centre and the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions."<sup>311</sup> This means that the constant exchange between the center (the dominant position) and the peripheries (the margins) brings about a hybrid position that connects the two positions.

Hall invests the hybrid position to "undermine dominant formations by insisting on the presence of otherness within the dominant centre."<sup>312</sup> This does not indicate, however, that the Others have occupied the place of the center; on the contrary, Hall's assertion lies in "decentering" the center. In other words, there is no dominant position which takes the place of the center, for every position is a center in itself. Hall states: "We all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture."<sup>313</sup> Hence, the point of argument, according to Hall, lies in the specific marginal position potential for displacing the centered perspective and thereby undermining the taking-for-grantedness of the perspective of the center.<sup>314</sup>

The hybrid position is thus understood in terms of "displacement" rather than in terms of "blending." This is what is asserted in the following quote:

What is at issue is not some 'happy mixture' of cultures but the 'double consciousness' of the exile. That is, focusing on hybridity involves focusing on 'positioning', rather than on 'mixing' of cultural forms. It involves focusing on the relation between the 'centre' and the 'margin' in one way or the other – be it the relation between the West and the rest or between majority and minority. And it involves focusing on how the penetration of the centre by the marginalized undermines the naturalized dominant position of the centre. Hybridity is about the introduction of 'otherness' – in terms of an 'impurity' that contaminates, disturbs and displaces the idea of purity. And the migrant's insistence on belonging in the centre is a very concrete example of this.<sup>315</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> Hall, "New Ethnicities," cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274.

<sup>312</sup> Stuart Hall, "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities," 1991, cited in Frello, 2006, p. 7.

<sup>313</sup> Hall, "New Ethnicities," p. 227.

<sup>314</sup> Cited in Frello, 2006, p. 7.

<sup>315</sup> Frello, "Essentialism, Hybridism, and Cultural Critique," p. 3, accessed Jan. 5, 2012, <<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ccsr/documents/FrelloEssentialism.pdf>>.

For Stuart Hall, identities are not firmly anchored or fixed to the spot, but are not entirely free-floating: “Every identity is placed, positioned, in a culture, a language, a history [...] It insists on specificity, on conjuncture. But it is not necessarily armour-plated against other identities. It is not tied to fixed, permanent, unalterable oppositions. It is not wholly defined by exclusion.”<sup>316</sup>

Anthias’ notions of “enclavisation and ghettoisation” together with Hall’s concept of hybridity are relevant to the analysis of *The Translator*, for they adequately fit the protagonists’ experiences. In Sammar’s case, it will be noticed that the Arab-Muslim protagonist lives in a state of isolation and homesickness so long as she remains in Scotland. She dissociates herself from the host culture and becomes “enclaved” in her room. Her cross-cultural relationship with Rae, her Scottish employer, makes her overcome her grief and feels “at home.” However, it does not enable her to overcome cultural and religious barriers. On the contrary, she continues to be attached to her native beliefs and traditions, refusing to translate herself culturally, and thus remaining enclosed in her own “ghetto.”

On the other hand, Rae, the Scottish white man, can be considered a cosmopolitan who is familiar with the Arab-Islamic culture and open to the acceptance of “Others.” His hybrid position is manifested by his constant exchange with peripheries, which are represented by his interest in Islam and his frequent defense of it and by his cross-cultural relationship with Sammar. In addition, Sammar’s marginal position as an Arab-Muslim woman in a Western country undermines the dominant position of the center (represented by Rae) by not succumbing to the pressures of assimilation and by insisting on maintaining her cultural identity and imposing her otherness on the center. This is manifested by the fact that Rae is the one who converts at the end of the novel, the one who translates himself culturally and religiously.

Having defined the theoretical notions of Anthias and Hall, I will demonstrate how they apply to the protagonists’ experience in the following two sections.

---

<sup>316</sup> Stuart Hall, “Minimal Selves,” cited in James Procter (ed.), *Stuart Hall*, London, Routledge, 2004, p. 121.

## II.a.I. Section One: Sammar's Anti-Hybrid Identity

This section studies Sammar's anti-hybrid experience, taking into consideration Anthias' notions of "enclavisation and ghettoisation." In addition, the evolution of Sammar's identity through her intercultural relationship with Rae will be examined to find the relation between her cross-cultural relationship and her anti-hybrid experience. Moreover, the factors that hinder Sammar's crossing of cultural and religious barriers will also be explored.

### II.a.I.a. Living in a "Time Warp"

In her quote, Anthias mentions that the opposite of hybridity can occur as a result of transnational movements: a "ghettoisation and enclavisation" process, a living in a "time warp," a mythologizing of tradition.

Bhabha's idea of the 'in-between space' constructs a 'third space' inhabited by the cosmopolitan who lacks a central cultural narrative. However, cosmopolitanism may not be the primary condition produced through transnational movements. Through migration and diasporisation, the opposite to hybridity can occur: a ghettoisation and enclavisation process, a living in a 'time warp', a mythologising of tradition.<sup>317</sup>

In its literal sense, the term "time warp" signifies a situation in science fiction stories where people and things can move between different times.<sup>318</sup> According to *Word Reference Dictionary*, "time warp" is a hypothetical eccentricity in the progress of time that would allow movement back and forth between eras or that would permit the passage of time to be suspended.<sup>319</sup> Another definition is found in *Longman Dictionary*, where the term means: to have not changed even though everyone or everything else has; or an imaginary situation in which the past or future becomes the present.<sup>320</sup>

From the above definitions, we can discern that "time warp" is movement back and forth between past and present or even future. In fact, this is what the female protagonist,

---

<sup>317</sup> Anthias, in Anthias and Lloyd, 2002, p. 32.

<sup>318</sup> "Time warp," *Macmillan Dictionary*, accessed Jan. 7, 2013, <<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/time-warp>>.

<sup>319</sup> "Time warp," *Word Reference Dictionary*, accessed Jan. 7, 2013, <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/time+warp>>.

<sup>320</sup> "Time warp," *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, accessed Jan. 7, 2013, <<http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/time-warp>>.



Sammar, experiences when she cross cultures and move to Scotland. Sammar's present is suspended because her past always intrudes into her present.

Her past reaffirms itself at every moment and in every exchange. Sammar dwells upon images, sounds, and smells of her native land. When she was translating a document, stained with tea and beans mashed with oil, she imagines she could smell beans cooked in the way she had known long ago, with cumin and olive oil (p. 6). The use of the adjective "warm" to describe the place where the tins were packed reflects Sammar's nostalgia for home (p. 66). When she sees Rae's tapes, she recalls songs she once heard from the radio of a Toyota pickup in the petrol queue of Souk 2. She mistakes the gurgle of the central-heating pipes for a distant azan (p. 21). She recalls the rain in Khartoum when, looking from her window, she saw snow falling (p. 118).

In addition, Sammar's past "intrudes" into her present when she reads familiar names of towns in the magazine map which lay open on the floor in Rae's apartment: "Inside her was their sheer dust and meagerness. Sunshine and poverty. Voices of those who endured because they asked so little of life" (p. 17). She recounts things from the past to Rae, telling him how she and her family used to sleep outdoors in Sudan because of the heat. She talks about her first visit to Khartoum with her parents when she was seven, about her excitement at being on an airplane for the first time, and about how the family was welcomed at the airport. She describes her late husband Tarig and her mixed emotions toward him. She misses her aunt's house and the real color of things she got used to seeing in her country. She tells Rae that colors make her sad:

Yellow as she knew it and green as she knew it were not here, not bright, not vivid as they should be. She had stacked the differences; the weather, the culture, modernity, the language, the silence of the muezzin, then found that the colours of mud, sky and leaves were different too. (p. 45)

Moreover, "time warp" is manifested through Sammar's move back and forth between past and present: "Where was she now, which country? What year? She climbed the stairs into a hallucination in which the world had swung around. Home and the past had come here and balanced just for her" (p. 41). A similar hallucination comes over her when she leaves Rae's house:

Outside, Sammar stepped into a hallucination in which the world had swung around. Home had come here. Its dimly lit streets, its sky and the feel of home had come here and balanced just for her. She saw the sky cloudless with too many stars, imagined the night warm, warmer than indoors. She smelled dust... the muezzin coughed into the microphone and began the azan for the *Isha* prayer. (p. 21)

Sammar feels dislocated, not sure whether she is in Scotland or in Sudan. She imagines that she is back home at a party where she is offering sweet drinks, while Rae is on the phone:

The stairs in a warm yellow light and sounds of a party, people talking and someone laughed. She was inside the laughter, wearing something new, carrying a tray... she offered glasses of something that was dark and sweet... someone called her name, she had to hurry, look over her shoulder, locate the voice, shout back, I'm coming now. (p. 42)

Sammar's longing for her homeland is also revealed when she was interviewed in London for the job in Egypt: "she had answered all the questions confidently, as if she were strong, as if she were not afraid. At the back of her mind, the motivation, I will see home again" (p. 33). She cannot wait to see home again which was a chandelier on the ceiling of her life. Note that the expression "her home was a chandelier on the ceiling of her life" alludes to the fact that Sammar's life in Scotland is gloomy and dark and it is only at home that she feels light and brightness. She wants to see the streets where Tarig had ridden his bike, and where she had walked every day after school to see him and Hanan (p. 33).

I tend to disagree with Alexandra Schultheis when she states that Sammar belongs "neither in Sudan nor in Britain."<sup>321</sup> In fact, Sammar belongs to her homeland and suffers homesickness for her native country, Sudan, when she first arrives in Scotland with her husband Tarig: "Culture-shocked they were alone together for the first time. No Mahasen, no Hanan. No one in this new city but them."<sup>322</sup> Her yearning for home is aggravated by her husband's accidental death while she spends four years convalescing (p. 30). She feels that her home has been taken away from her in the same way her husband has (p. 33). Her living in the past underscores this point, since homesickness is living in the past. "Scotland is always 'another man's land', whereas Africa is home, since she is not ready to convert Aberdeen into home. Even when she has a feeling of home there, she inevitably connects it with the feeling of her 'home in the past': i.e. her Sudanese home."<sup>323</sup>

Sammar could have stayed in Scotland, like many Third-World citizens who wish to escape their countries' difficult economic and political situations. However, she decides to

---

<sup>321</sup> Alexandra W. Schultheis, "From Heterotopia to Home: The University and the Politics of Postcoloniality in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* and Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*," in Maria Olausson and Christina Angelfors (eds.), *Africa Writing Europe: Opposition, Juxtaposition, Entanglement*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009, p. 209.

<sup>322</sup> Aboulela, 1999, p. 25. The page number of further references to *The Translator* will be indicated in the text.

<sup>323</sup> Nadia Butt, "Negotiating Untranslatability and Islam in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*," in Elisabeth Bekers, Sissy Helff, and Daniela Merolla (eds.), *Transcultural Modernities: Narrating Africa in Europe*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009, p. 173.

resign from her job in Aberdeen and stay in Sudan. When her brother, Waleed, knows that she is going to resign from her job in Aberdeen, he shouts: “You must never do that. Do you think jobs are lying about waiting for people to pick them up? Do you think you’re going to find a job here?” (p. 152). Sammar insists on her resignation despite the advice of her brother who thinks that she is fortunate to have a good job in a civilized place where there are no power cuts and strikes. Sammar, however, does not seek material comfort but a spiritual one; she tries to explain to her brother that being exiled isn’t very nice: “She wished she could explain how desolate it would be, her and Amir alone in Aberdeen. The long winter evenings, the small room they would live in, just them, the two of them, face to face, claustrophobic” (p. 153).

Alexandra W. Schultheis believes that Aboulela

uses the romance genre not to grapple with the disorientations of the uncanny—in Bhabha’s terms, to speak to the ‘unhomely’ condition of the modern world or to expose the awkward, ambivalent, unwelcome truth of empire’s lie—but to assuage its discomforts through a return to what is seemingly *heimlich*.<sup>324</sup>

Sammar thus seeks to return to what is *heimlich* or “homely.” Living in Aberdeen for four years did not estrange life in Sudan for her: “though she had come back from rain and a rich city of the First World, the meagerness of this place was familiar. Shabbiness as if the sun had burned away the lushness of life and left no room for luxuries or lies” (p. 148). Sammar’s view of her country remained familiar, unlike Gordimer’s Julie who sensed that she no longer belongs to her country and to the group of friends at the L.A. Café after she encountered “newness” in Abdu’s culture. In fact, Sammar did not encounter “newness” in the host culture, for she dissociated herself from it and remained detached from the new cultural and religious beliefs.

## II.a.I.b. Sammar’s “Ghettoisation”

We have seen that Sammar’s anti-hybrid identity is manifested through Anthias’ notion of living in a “time warp,” where her past haunts her present by living in a state of homesickness for her homeland. Another term, in Anthias’ quote, that proves Sammar’s anti-hybrid experience is “ghettoisation and enclavisation” which is represented by her

---

<sup>324</sup> Schultheis, 2009, p. 196.

“alienation” from the host community. Her alienation from the host society proves that she favors neither cultural fusion nor a heterogeneous way of life. This is confirmed by her isolation in her room, her neglect of herself and of life outside, and by her inability to comprehend the different aspects of life in the new culture, which completely differ from those in her native culture.

The term “alienation” is a multidisciplinary word coming from sociology, psychology, anthropology, philosophy, and political theory. However, we are concerned with the term alienation in its cultural context in particular. The concept of alienation has a long history, dating back to the sociological thought and literature of influential philosophers such as Hegel, Marx, Weber, and Durkheim. Two of the founding texts on alienation are Marx's theory of alienation, as set out in *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*<sup>325</sup> and in *The German Ideology*,<sup>326</sup> and Melvin Seeman's *On the Meaning of Alienation*.<sup>327</sup>

Marx holds that workers in capitalist nations are alienated because they have no claim to ownership of the products they make. Products are produced by machines, and the worker may never see the final finished product. Hegel describes alienation as what happens to a socialized individual when he or she becomes detached from the world of nature and from himself.<sup>328</sup> Seeman identifies five dimensions of alienation: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement.

Powerlessness in Seeman's terms refers to “the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements, he seeks.”<sup>329</sup> Meaninglessness refers to “the individual's sense of understanding events in which he is engaged.”<sup>330</sup> Normlessness “denotes the situation in which the social norms regulating individual conduct have broken down or are no longer effective as rules for behaviour.”<sup>331</sup> Social isolation refers to “the feeling of being segregated from one's community.”<sup>332</sup> For Seeman, social isolation “is most common in descriptions of the intellectual role, where writers refer to the detachment of the intellectual from popular

---

<sup>325</sup> Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, trans. by Martin Mulligan, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959.

<sup>326</sup> Karl Marx, “The German ideology,” in Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.

<sup>327</sup> Melvin Seeman, “On the meaning of alienation,” *American Sociological Review*, 24.6 (1959): pp. 783-791.

<sup>328</sup> Cited in Agnes, 2007, p. 26.

<sup>329</sup> Seeman, 1959, p. 784.

<sup>330</sup> Seeman, 1959, p. 786.

<sup>331</sup> Seeman, 1959, p. 787.

<sup>332</sup> Devorah Kalekin-Fishman, “Tracing the growth of alienation: Enculturation, Socialization, and Schooling in a democracy,” in Felix Geyer, *Alienation, Ethnicity, and Post-modernism*. London: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 97.

cultural standards.”<sup>333</sup> Seeman’s last dimension of alienation is that of self-estrangement. This is “the psychological state of denying one’s own interests—of seeking out extrinsically satisfying, rather than intrinsically satisfying, activities [...]”<sup>334</sup> These definitions place much of the responsibility within the individual, whereas cultural alienation is not a personality characteristic, but is more contextual and relational. A white ethnic individual, for instance, would not be experiencing cultural alienation in the same way as a member of an ethnic minority.

Moreover, early conceptualizations placed alienation within the individual as a pathological characteristic. However, in this study, cultural alienation is not considered pathological. Rather, it is a natural response developed by migrants when they reject integration into the new culture.

Although alienation is not a modern concept, its significance has progressed far beyond what Marx and Seeman envisaged. It has to be reinterpreted in the post-modern world, since conditions have changed along with an ever-changing society. However, the purpose of my study is not to delve into the theory of alienation, but to adopt its post-modern significance as a guide to analyzing the particular form of alienation experienced by Sammar. According to Richard Schacht, classical social alienation is “the loss or absence of identification with, and participation in, the form of life characteristic of one’s society.”<sup>335</sup> Moreover, Benedetti Gianmaria, Silvana Russo, and Daniele Losco contend that cultural alienation is used in the analysis of colonialism and post-colonialism, with the meaning of “process of devaluation or abandonment of their culture or their own cultural back-ground” on the part of indigenous peoples subjected to colonization and forced into a rapid modification of their traditional values.<sup>336</sup> Another expression often used, “Cultural cringe,” is used in studies of social and cultural anthropology to denote a kind of inferiority complex that causes people of one nationality to devalue their own culture as inferior to the dominant one.

By contrast, William Gudykunst contends that when immigrants are in a state of deviance, they experience tension with their new cultures. Host nationals tend to respond with

---

<sup>333</sup> Seeman, 1959, p. 788.

<sup>334</sup> Kalekin-Fishman, 1996, p. 97.

<sup>335</sup> Richard Schacht, “Alienation Redux: From here to Post-Modernity,” in Felix Geyer, *Alienation, Ethnicity, and Post-modernism*, London: Greenwood Press, 1996, p. 10.

<sup>336</sup> Benedetti Gianmaria, Silvana Russo, and Daniele Losco, “An atypical psychic breakdown of adolescents in immigrant families: The Cultural Alienation Syndrome,” *Adolescence Florence Conference* October 9, 2010, accessed Nov. 10, 2012, <<http://neuropsic.altervista.org/drupal/?q=node/362>>.

neglectful communication (e.g., low level of communication, negative feedback). One possible response to host nationals' neglectful communication is for immigrants to become alienated from the host cultures.<sup>337</sup> Gudykunst's definition of alienation, as the feeling of being pulled away from the host culture rather than one's own culture, is the most relevant one to adopt in this study; for as we will observe in Sammar's case, the protagonist is culturally alienated from the new environment but not from her native culture.

Confirming Loïc Wacquant's definition of a "ghetto," Sammar's private room is considered as her "ghetto" which is a "social prison"<sup>338</sup> that sets her apart, willingly and not by force, from the host culture. Sammar does not mind staying enclosed indoors for several days at a time, eating and drinking what is available at home, which reflects her isolation and indifference (p. 3). The distinction between Rae's lunchbox and her sandwich confirms her seclusion from the outside world: "he was proud of his lunch, carefully prepared [...] her sandwich was wrapped up in the same clingfilm as the day before" (p. 36). The green furry spot on the edge of the bread she is holding in her hands indicates that Sammar does not go out frequently to shop or buy fresh bread. She is used to eating rotten food without thinking what she is doing, as if fog blocks her vision, a dreamy heaviness everywhere (p. 67). In addition, the description of her room reflects the state of isolation she is experiencing. It looks like a hospital room void of everything: "In the morning when she woke, she had looked with clear eyes at her room, the hospital room. She had seen the ugly curtains, the faded bedspread. She opened cupboard and drawers to find tired elastic, worn-out nylon and scruffy shoes with eroded heels [...]" (p. 67).

Sammar is always depicted enclosed in her room afraid of what is foreign to her:

She was afraid of the rain, afraid of the fog and the snow which came to this country, afraid of the wind even. At such times she would stay indoors and wait, watching from her window people doing what she couldn't do: children walking to school through the swirling leaves, the elderly smashing ice on the pavement with their walking sticks. (p. 3)

The previous incidents illustrate Guibernau's definition of "ghettoisation":

Ghettoization assumes the isolation of ethnic communities which live within selected neighborhoods and so *keep their contact with the host society to a minimum. They are alienated from the rest of society and form closed communities*. Ghettoization is usually a consequence of socio-economic marginalization and often racism. Such situations tend to foster resentment among ethnic communities, who *perceive the host country and its citizens—those belonging to the dominant nation or ethnic group—as alien*. The degree of identification with the host society and its national identity tends to be minimal or non-existent among a

---

<sup>337</sup> William B. Gudykunst, *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication*, California: Sage Publications, 2003, p. 184.

<sup>338</sup> Wacquant, 2000, p. 378.

population able to conduct their lives within a ghetto-like structure. In turn, they often seek to maintain a national identity linked to their country of origin.<sup>339</sup> (my emphasis)

Note the word “alienation” and “alien” in the previous quote which can be associated with Sammar’s case. Sammar is dissociated from the rest of society and considers the outside environment as hostile or “alien” watching people do what she cannot do (p. 3). Immigrants cease to be ghettoised, to be part of a segregated underclass, only when they assimilate, as they cease to be culturally different. By refusing the idea of cultural assimilation, Sammar remains “ghettoised” and alienated from the new environment. Butt adds: “cultural encounter in *The Translator* clearly dismisses cultural *mélange* in favour of cultural authenticity.”<sup>340</sup>

Sammar’s contact with the host community is kept to a minimum, for she does not have many acquaintances. Rae, her employer, and Yasmin, his secretary, are the only people Sammar knows in the city (p. 16), in addition to her neighbor, the old lady, Lesley, whose loud TV sound keeps Sammar company. Sammar feels that her cultural identity deviates considerably from that of the host culture. Hence, she lives in her own room and follows her own rules, away from the dominant culture, a term often associated with alienation. Sammar’s stance is acknowledged by Aboulela who confirms: “it is understandable when some people choose to reject cultural fusions, because they regard them as inimical to their indigenous cultural identity: ‘because of greater diversity and greater choice, some people will take the option of not mixing.’”<sup>341</sup>

Moreover, Sammar’s cultural alienation from the host environment confirms Gudykunst’s definition of alienation, as the feeling of being pulled away from the host culture rather than one’s own culture. This is manifested in the following quote: “She [Sammar] recalled a time when she belonged to a particular place, before she knew the feeling this has nothing to do with me, these shops, these people have nothing to do with me, this sky is not for me. Times when she was silent but never detached” (p. 103).

Many aspects of the host culture make Sammar feel disorientated and “pulled away,” in Gudykunst’s terms, from the new environment. She, who is used to the burning sun of Sudan, cannot understand that the winter sun of Scotland is colder than its winter rains. She goes out lightly dressed if she sees the bright sun from the window, only to “shiver with incomprehension and suffer as every inadequately dressed African suffers in the alien British

---

<sup>339</sup> Guibernau, 2007, p. 64.

<sup>340</sup> Butt, 2009, p. 177.

<sup>341</sup> Cited in Butt, 2009, p. 168-169.

cold” (p. 65). In addition, she cannot understand the privacy that surrounds praying in the host country, for she is used to praying in the middle of parties, in places where others chat, sleep or read (p. 76). However, she has to now pray in her private office when no one is there, locking the door from inside. She realizes how surprised people will be if they see someone praying on the grass in public. Sammar is also wary when she talks with people, making sure not to say anything out of place. She cannot act in a spontaneous way as she does in her native culture. For instance, she once addressed Lesley as “Aunt,” for this is the word used to address elderly women in her country to show politeness and respect. However, her neighbor was taken aback and replied: “I’m not your aunt” (p. 31-32), which made Sammar cry.

More cultural differences emerge in the novel, which make Sammar feel detached from the host culture. For instance, Rae’s stay at his ex-wife’s family home for Christmas, since in her country, no one stayed on talking terms with the divorced spouse, since, in most cases, he turns out to be “a son of a dog” and is treated as such (p. 39). In addition, the way that Diane, Rae’s student, talks is a source of culture shock for Sammar: “I bought my mum knickers for Christmas”; “met him at the pub”; “hardly *anyone* showed up for Rae’s lecture this morning, there was a big piss-up last night”; and “I definitely don’t want to have children. I am *never* going to get married” (p. 72-73). The sentences uttered by Diane reflect the cultural differences between the two women. First, the relationship between mother and daughter in most Arab cultures, generally speaking, is not familiar enough that underwear can be bought for mothers as presents. Mothers are treated in a more solemn manner and their position of authority in the family is revered. In addition, girls in Sammar’s culture are not used to meeting and going out with men without an official tie, for this is prohibited according to Islam. Moreover, Diane’s rejection of the idea of marriage and having children makes Sammar surprised; if she were back in her home country, she would have replied: “Are you mad? You want to live celibate all your life!” (p. 73).

In short, Sammar experiences an anti-hybrid state by going through a “ghettoisation” process and by living in a “time warp,” in Floya Anthias’ terms. However, the quote at the beginning of the novel— “Tropical plants cramped in the damp warmth” (p. 4)— suggests that foreign elements can establish roots in a new environment. This is reiterated when it is pointed out that cacti, which are plants that grow in the desert, in other words, in an environment completely unlike the environment in Scotland, did establish roots in the host environment (p. 4). So the question arises: could Sammar set down roots in the new country after her love relationship with Rae?



## II.a.I.c. The Evolution of Sammar's Identity through Intercultural Relationship

The relationship between Rae and Sammar went beyond a formal relation between an employer and his employee. The bond started with friendship and developed into mutual feelings of love and affection. It is Rae's concern and care that make Sammar get out of her "ghetto" and her "time warp" state; however, this relationship does not lead her to cross the religious barrier that separates them. In fact, Sammar insists on "enclosing" herself and refuses to translate her religion when Rae declines to convert when she asks him to in order to get married.

Although Sammar's experience, as we have seen in the previous sub-section, illustrates Vivero and Jenkins' argument that living in different cultures may cause individuals to feel lonely and dislocated,<sup>342</sup> her relationship with Rae makes her feel at "home." First, Sammar sees Rae as sort of familiar like people in her country, not only because of his looks but also because of his manners (p. 6). She believes that he is not so different from her although "they lived in worlds divided by simple facts— religion, country of origin, race— data that fills forms" (p. 34). She feels free when conversing with him, because he is very understanding and would not be surprised by anything she says. His lengthy conversations, which offer her a way to escape her tragedy, make her feel that she has been away to a place where she is content and warm.

In addition, Rae helps her come out of the "time warp" state; Sammar lives her present and forgets about her past: "At night she dreamt no longer of the past but of the rain and grey colors of his city. She dreamt of the present" (p. 69). Rae's love constitutes a motivating factor for Sammar to escape her "ghetto" and start anew. She packs everything in her room, throws it away, and goes to buy new clothes: "She felt like when she was young on the first day of the Eid, new dress, new socks, a new ribbon for her hair" (p. 65). She cleans everything in her room and opens the windows to rinse her life with the freezing rain (p. 68). She even feels reluctant about leaving Scotland now despite the years she has lived in homesickness: "In the past when she had imagined leaving this city she had seen herself easily slipping away, casually, with nothing left behind. Now everything was murky and at times she almost forgot why she was leaving" (p. 112). When Rae tells her: "I thought you were homesick, and this anti-terrorist project would be a chance for you to go on to Khartoum, see your son. Maybe I made a mistake in suggesting it..." (p. 128). Sammar

---

<sup>342</sup> Vivero and Jenkins, 1999, Cited in Kwong, 2007, p. 30.

assures him that she was homesick, but admits that she cannot leave Scotland anymore because of him. She uses the word “sickness” to describe how she would feel without him: “I was homesick for the place, how everything looked. But I don’t know what kind of sickness it would be, to be away from you” (p. 128). “The text equates unsatisfied desire with dislocation and suggests that being dislocated, whether from home or from loved ones, is experienced as illness.”<sup>343</sup>

Anna Ball asserts that the scene in which Sammar reads the origins of species of the tropical plants which have also been uprooted but have again set down their roots in order to flourish is, “a deeply symbolic gesture towards the natural and generative need of all living things to find a terrain—whether literal or spiritual—in which to root themselves, and so to grow.”<sup>344</sup> In fact, Sammar’s literal and spiritual terrain lies in Sudan, for she could not establish roots in the new country even after falling in love with someone from the host culture. When Sammar proposes to Rae— which is an unlikely gesture for Muslim women— and asks him to convert so that they can marry, he tells her that he is not sure. So when she has to choose between her love for Rae and her religious teachings, she chooses to leave for her homeland and resign from her job in Aberdeen, thus asserting her attachment to her cultural and religious beliefs.

However, her longing for Rae does not stop— despite her attempts to keep herself busy and immersed in life in her country— for this can only be cured by marrying him and consummating their love. In the words of Aboulela: “finding a home and belonging is possible, even in movement. Home, as we have seen, is a state of mind rather than a geographical location.”<sup>345</sup> Sammar cannot keep herself from remembering Rae and dreaming about him (p. 166). She imagines that he has forgotten her and found another woman, more accessible than her; one who does not care whether he believes in God or not. Also, when her mother-in-law accuses her of causing Tarig’s death, she feels that Rae is on her side and remembers his words: “you’ve won me to your side in any quarrel you have with your aunt”

---

<sup>343</sup> Heather Hewett, “Translating Desire: Exile and Leila Aboulela’s Poetics of Embodiment,” in Charlotte Baker, *Expressions of the Body: Representations in African Text and Image*, Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009, p. 267.

<sup>344</sup> Anna Ball, “Here is where I am: Rerooting Diasporic Experience in Leila Aboulela’s Recent Novels,” in Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru, and Sarah Lawson Welsh (eds.), *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium*, New York: Routledge, 2010, p. 120.

<sup>345</sup> Tina Steiner, “Strategic Nostalgia, Islam and Cultural Translation in Leila Aboulela’s *The Translator and Coloured Lights*,” *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, July 2008, accessed July 21, 2012, <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Strategic+Nostalgia,+Islam+and+cultural+translation+in+Leila...-a0194279515>>.

(p. 177). She recalls when she visited him in the hospital in her new coat and how warm the ward was.

Moreover, Sammar keeps recalling memories related to Abedeen. When she discovers that her post at the University is still vacant, she finds herself nostalgic for her old job, the work itself, moulding Arabic into English, trying to be transparent like a pane of glass, not obscuring the meaning of any word (p. 167). In addition, the sudden chill Sammar feels when she opens the fridge door reminds her of the frost in Aberdeen. She feels a bittersweet longing for Aberdeen:

She unzipped the suitcase and looked at her winter clothes. She unfolded wool and out came the smell of winter and European clouds. She put on her gloves and then took them off, saw her tights, for a year she hadn't worn tights. Her henna-coloured duffle coat, its silky lining... In one of the pockets, she found the bottle of perfume... She opened it and breathed in, forgot the dust and the smell of dried beans and rice. She ran her fingers over a scarf that was too warm for wearing in Khartoum, its pattern of brown leaves. (p. 192-193)

Hewett comments: "Because Sammar's body has been changed by her time in Scotland; she cannot live in Sudan as she once did. As a result, she cannot inhabit the present without remembering the past."<sup>346</sup> The burning heat of the sun in Sudan, for instance, is contrasted with the snow and fog in Scotland. For Sammar the sun is too piercing: "Two hours before sunset and the sun was a spot of blue heat, still too piercing for eyes that had seen fog and snow" (p. 137). The previous incidents confirm the notion of "time warp"; Sammar re-experiences the "time warp" state in which her past intrudes into her present when she moves to Sudan by remembering things related to Scotland.

John A. Stotesbury finds that "while Sammar's soul remains embedded—rooted—in Islam, her heart remains in Scotland."<sup>347</sup> He declares: "her attempts to re-embed her identity in what passes for modernity in the Sudan function ironically as an exile from what has become her true homeland: Scotland and her emotional attachment to Rae."<sup>348</sup> Sammar seems to have developed some feelings for Scotland though probably not to the extent of making it her home country. She, unlike Gordimer's Julie, does not find a place for herself in the host community. She does not develop a hybrid identity that comprises aspects of two cultures. As we have seen previously, Sammar neither integrates into the host culture nor establishes relations with the host people as Julie does. Although Sammar's longing for Scotland cannot

---

<sup>346</sup> Hewett, 2009, p. 269.

<sup>347</sup> John A. Stotesbury, "Genre and Islam in Recent Anglophone Romantic Fiction," in Susana Onega and Christian Gutleben (eds.), *Refracting the Canon in Contemporary British Literature and Film*, Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004, p. 77.

<sup>348</sup> Stotesbury, in Onega and Gutleben, 2004, p. 75.

be denied, she feels that she culturally and religiously belong to her homeland Sudan. This is asserted by her decision not to marry a non-Muslim, hence, not to cross cultural and religious barriers.

#### II.a.I.d. The Hindering Factors to Sammar's Cross-Cultural Marriage

Sammar's rejection of crossing cultural and religious barriers and refusal to marry Rae unless he converts to Islam can be seen to be motivated by several factors. It is not only religion that plays an essential role in her rejection, but rather a number of other factors that lead Sammar to make this decision: a personal factor that concerns her love for her late husband and the persistent memory of him; a cultural factor that relates to Sammar's cultural principles and traditions; and family and friend factors that influence Sammar's decision and affect her thinking. We will study each of these factors in order to understand Sammar's inability to translate herself into a foreign culture.

##### *Religious Factor*

The direct and main barrier that prevents Sammar from marrying Rae is her religious feeling and commitment. Butt declares: "A large majority of Muslims today consider it an obligation to keep Islam in a water-tight compartment lest any outside influence may tarnish its codes and character. This is, in fact, the fundamental aim of the female protagonist in the novel."<sup>349</sup> Note the contrast between how Sammar and Gordimer's Abdu negotiate Islam. While Abdu wants to cross-fertilize Islam with the world, since the old model does not fit (*The Pickup*, 177), Sammar prefers to keep Islam in an enclosed space and rejects change and translation:

Sammar is categorically opposed to reconciling herself with the idea of having a dual identity, Islamic and secular, in the wake of her migration to a foreign country. The idea of mixing an Islamic identity with a European one, of keeping your Islamic identity intact yet becoming a European, is totally absent from the tale of Sammar's transcultural encounter.<sup>350</sup>

---

<sup>349</sup> Butt, 2009, p. 172.

<sup>350</sup> Butt, 2009, p. 174.

Thus, the novel insists on the impossibility of translating Islam. “Throughout the novel the female protagonist remains determined that she cannot believe in a hybrid but only in a pure Islam.”<sup>351</sup> In fact, several scholars contend that *The Translator* refuses to celebrate hybridity. Dima Ayoub, for instance, states: “Aboulela has proven unpopular among (Western) critics because of the way that Islam occupies the centre of the novel and perhaps also because of her refusal to ‘celebrate hybridity.’”<sup>352</sup>

According to Islam, a Muslim woman is expelled from her religion if she marries a non-Muslim. This fear of expulsion from the circle of Islam by allowing a non-Muslim to enter her life haunts Sammar throughout the novel, for she knows that her relationship with Rae is forbidden according to Islam’s teachings. This is reflected in her subconscious thoughts which are reported by the narrator: “because unless you become a Muslim we will not be able to get married, we will not be together and I will be miserable and alone” (p. 89). In addition, when Yasmin asks her if she is going to marry a non-Muslim, she answers: “Of course not, that would be against the sharia” (p. 91). The struggle Sammar is living in *The Translator* is not between cultures or between two sets of beliefs, traditions, and customs. Rather, it is an internal tension between a prohibited love relationship and religious teachings. Wail Hassan believes that *The Translator*

is a story of spiritual growth, with its central conflict being not between colonizer and colonized or between traditional norms and the violent intrusion of modernity, or between oppressive patriarchy and a feminist, liberatory impulse—major themes of postcolonial fiction. Rather, the conflict in *The Translator* is between worldly desires and spiritual discipline—an internal struggle that is an important theme in religious literature of all traditions.<sup>353</sup>

There is evidence in the novel that depicts Sammar as a practicing Muslim. So when it comes to marrying someone from a different religion, she refuses this option, asserting her attachment to her religion. The first proof that points to Sammar’s Muslim identity is her appearance. Sammar wears hijab, thereby expressing her religious belonging. Her body is covered with a Muslim dress: “It was hidden from Rae, like her hair and the skin on her arms, it could only be imagined” (p. 4). In addition, Sammar’s commitment to her religion is evident through her devotion to the daily five prayers; which provide her with a structure and protect her from outside threats that may cause her to step over her religious teachings. She

---

<sup>351</sup> Butt, 2009, p. 170.

<sup>352</sup> Dima Ayoub, “Anglophone Arab Women Writers and the ‘End’ of Postcolonialism,” cited in Hewett, 2009, p. 252.

<sup>353</sup> Wail S. Hassan, “Leila Aboulela and the Ideology of Muslim Immigrant Fiction,” *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 41. 2-3 (2008): p. 303.

makes sure not to miss any of the prayers required of every Muslim, and she also sits for the *tasbeeh* after every prayer, which is not obligatory but considered a *sunnah*<sup>354</sup> (a recommended, though not obligatory, religious practice) (p. 37). She wonders how Rae would feel if he ever saw her praying: “Would he feel alienated from her, the difference between them accentuated, underlined, or would it seem to him something that was within reach, something that he himself would want to do?” (p. 76).

Moreover, Sammar, as a practicing Muslim, makes sure that she fasts missed days during Ramadan (p. 32). It is not permissible for Muslim women to fast during the menstrual cycle in Ramadan; however, they ought to make up for these days after Ramadan. She also takes care to eat “halal” meat (p. 66), following Muslim teachings. Sammar stuck to the sharia laws when her husband died. She stayed at home without seeing any man unknown to her for four months and ten days, the waiting period required before getting married again: “Sammar had not worn make-up or perfume since Tarig died four years earlier. Four months and ten days, was the sharia’s mourning period for a widow, the time that was for her alone...” (p. 69).

The previous events illustrate and contradict at the same time the premise set at the beginning, which states that “ghettos have served to exclude from the host culture groups that seemed to form a threat to it; but they have also served the interest of immigrant groups by providing for them a space where they are free to be different.”<sup>355</sup> It is true that Sammar’s “ghettoized” state makes her live freely according to her religious norms as the two previous paragraphs demonstrate; however, the threat Sammar poses to the host culture, though largely imaginative, could not be avoided. Her inability to cross the religious barrier herself and her intolerance of the fact that Rae is a non-believer pushes her to ask her partner to convert to Islam. She explains to him about Islam, the *shahadah*<sup>356</sup> and its meaning, about the prophets and their miracles, and about the Koran and prophet Muhammad. In fact, she succeeds in affecting Rae and makes him comply with her own cultural and religious norms, for he is the one who converts at the end of the novel.

---

<sup>354</sup> The Sunnah is the ways, teachings and activities of Prophet Muhammad. Muslims should emulate the sunnah of the Prophet to be good Muslims.

<sup>355</sup> Ricci, <<http://www.ninoricci.com/QuestioningEthnicity.htm>>.

<sup>356</sup> Shahadah is testimonil of Islamic faith: there is no god but God, Muhammad is the messenger of God.

## Cultural Factor

In addition to the religious barrier, Sammar is guided by her cultural traditions and customs and finds it hard to get over them. This can be observed through her behaviors and way of thinking. Her cultural principles and traditions haunt her in every act she goes through throughout the novel, particularly when it comes to her relationship with Rae. This illustrates the argument in Guibernau's definition of "ghettoization" in which he states: "[...] The degree of identification with the host society and its national identity tends to be minimal or non-existent among a population able to conduct their lives within a ghetto-like structure. In turn, they often seek to maintain a national identity linked to their country of origin."<sup>357</sup> Sammar, who is able to live in a ghetto-like structure, maintains her link with her homeland by following its cultural rules.

For instance, when Sammar's Pakistani friend, Yasmin, asks her to come with her to Rae's house to hand him some papers concerning work, Sammar resists thinking that it is not appropriate for them to visit a man in his house. She says: "We can't do that, it's not right" (p. 14). Her answer reflects the cultural rule in Muslim cultures, where free uncontrolled mixing between men and women is not permissible, as we have seen in Abdu's village, in *The Pickup*, where women have their private space in the house. In addition, when Rae tells Sammar that they will go for a drive when he gets back to Aberdeen, she remains silent imagining what the reaction would be in her part of the world toward this relationship:

Once upon a time, in another part of the world, were the fears *someone will see us together, alone together... a woman's reputation is fragile as a match stick... a woman's honour...* Reputation was the idol people set up, what determined the giving, the holding back. *A girl's honour... your father will kill you... your brother will beat you up...* you will go to school the next morning as the bolder girls inevitably did, with puffy red eyes, unusually subdued. (p. 57, emphasis in the original)

As we can see from this quote, Sammar cannot cross her cultural traditions and go out with Rae, because she thinks that this is something not feasible, not right at all. A Muslim woman has to maintain her virginity/chastity until her wedding night. The rule is not only about forbidding sexual relationships before marriage, but also the mere relationship with a man would affect a girl's reputation. A girl's reputation in Arab culture is the idol people set

---

<sup>357</sup> Guibernau, 2007, p. 64.

up. A girl would not be preferred by the groom and his family if she had had previous relationships with men. Sammar's answer to Rae: "I would like to see castles where believers lived long ago helpless and yet strong, a lighthouse tall as a minaret, a house with a flat roof like my aunt's house. But it would be wrong. I'm sorry, very sorry" (p. 57) indicates that her culture's laws are internalized in her. This is asserted by Nadia Butt who contends:

Although Sammar was born in England and underwent an English education, her experience of living between cultures and continents is not enough to enter marriage with a non-Muslim, or even to go for a ride with him from Aberdeen to Stirling. All kinds of prejudices and taboos come to her mind that exist in Islamic societies whenever unmarried men and women meet or enjoy any kind of intimacy.<sup>358</sup>

In another instance, Sammar hesitates to visit Rae in the hospital and thinks it is more appropriate and respectful if she comes with Yasmin or with one of his PhD students (p. 80). However, Sammar could not prevent herself from heading toward Rae despite her hesitation: "bus stop after bus stop came and went, and she continued sitting, pushing her way to Foresterhill" (p. 80). When the bus stopped in front of the hospital, she was so slow getting up from her seat that the doors started to close as she passed through them (p. 80). There was a glass door to push in order to enter the hospital building; for Sammar, it was "the heaviest glass door in the world. Her shoulder felt bruised" (p. 80). Her hesitation to see Rae continued and it became more evident in the following quote:

She suddenly realised that she did not know which ward Rae was in. This realisation came as a relief. If she could not find him then it would be a sign that she should not have come and she would go away, convinced. If she found his ward, she would ask if he was well enough for visitors, if not, she would go away without leaving her name. If he was asleep she would go away before he woke up. She felt better now. She had sorted everything out. (p. 80)

Sammar's hesitation confirms the struggle she is living between her personal desire for love and her cultural rule of the importance of maintaining chastity: "She was afraid of confessions, emotional words. Uneasy. Meeting him, talking to him had become a need she was not comfortable with" (p. 108). Yet, she could not resist Rae's arms around her and his admission of his love for her. "This was what she feared all along, that everything under the surface would converge and break" (p. 114).

Sammar's attachment to her cultural rules confirms the debate set in the introduction of this dissertation, where we argued that cultural identity is defined in terms of:

(i) attachment to one's heritage-culture group (e.g., country, cultural group, religious group) and to the larger society in which one resides; (ii) engagement in practices reflecting one's

---

<sup>358</sup> Butt, 2009, p. 175.



heritage culture, the larger society in which one resides, or both; and (iii) value orientations referring to how the individual and the group should be prioritized.<sup>359</sup>

As we have seen, Sammar asserts her belonging to her cultural group, engages in practices that reflect her heritage culture, and prioritizes her cultural principles over her personal desire.

### *Family's and Friend's Factor*

Not only Sammar's cultural traditions make her reluctant to continue in her relationship with Rae, but also her surroundings whom she believes would oppose this relationship. It is observed throughout the novel that Sammar's aunt and mother-in-law is an authoritative figure who interferes in Sammar's decision and controls her life. As the narrator comments: "she [Sammar's aunt] was a woman who had an opinion on all things" (p. 5). She is typical of the elderly member in most Arab-Oriental extended families who should be respected and obeyed, just like Abdu's uncle in *The Pickup*. Sammar's aunt, Mahasen, has a strong personality as her niece describes her to Rae: "My aunt is a strong woman, a leader really. She is looking after my son now" (p. 7).

Moreover, Sammar is depicted as an obedient niece, as the narrator conveys her internal thoughts: "letting Mahasen decide what you should dress, how you should fix your hair. You were happy with that, content, waiting for the day you would take her only son away from her" (p. 7). Sammar is described as a helpless woman who does not dare to contradict her aunt or look up at her even if she shouts at her or humiliates her (p. 145). Her aunt wants her to go back to Scotland, work there, and send them things, even though Sammar does not want to. Mahasen thinks that Sammar is not mentioning the real reason for her return from Scotland; she thinks that she was fired and not because she was homesick as Sammar says. Sammar's "voice was sullen as a child, 'I didn't lose my job, they didn't dismiss me, I left of my own accord'" (p. 176).

In another instance, when Sammar had asked her aunt's permission to marry Ahmad Ali Yaseen, she refused saying: "An educated girl like you, you know English... you can support yourself and your son, you don't need marriage" (p. 13). The aunt's reply shows that she is not a traditional Arab woman who believes that widows should get married to avoid

---

<sup>359</sup> Schwartz, Zamboanga and Weisskirch, 2008, p. 637.

people's gossip. She wants her daughter-in-law to work and raise her son and be responsible for herself. She tells Sammar: "He can take his religiousness and build a mosque but keep away from us. In the past, widows needed protection, life is different now" (p. 13). Patriarchal structures are criticized in this quote and female autonomy is asserted by saying that while widows needed protection in the past, Sammar's economic situation is different and therefore the old rule does not apply to her any more. As we can see, the fact that Sammar's aunt is authoritative and Sammar is obedient who cannot refuse her aunt's orders and cannot even stand up to her plays a role in affecting Sammar's decisions.

Sammar would like to tell her family and friends about Rae: "at times with a friend, Nahla, even with Hanan, she would want to speak about him" (p. 167). However, "she was afraid of the sound of her voice talking about him, the silliness of it and feeling ashamed. She knew that they would stop at him being a foreigner, their mind would close after that. Wide eyes, surprise, a *foreigner*?" (p. 167). She imagines how they would respond: "I still can't believe it. A *Christian*?" (p. 167). Sammar knows beforehand how they would react toward this relationship: "You, Sammar, of all people. You're not like modern girls who marry foreigners. You're not the type" (p. 168).

In addition, Sammar's friend, Yasmin, has an indirect influence on Sammar by reminding her frequently that Rae is not suitable for her. Yasmin, who is of Pakistani origin, was born in and had lived in different parts of Britain. "She had a habit of making general statements starting with 'we', where 'we' meant the whole of the Third-World and its people. So she would say, 'We are not like them', or 'We have close family ties, not like them'" (p. 11). She always associates herself with her people and distinguishes herself from the "Other." She tells Sammar that Rae is an Orientalist, which makes Sammar recall that "Orientalists were bad people who distorted the image of the Arabs and Islam" (p. 22), but then thinks that "maybe modern Orientalists were different" (p. 22).

Yasmin disapproves of Sammar's interest in Rae; she frowns disapprovingly every time Sammar asks her about Rae, snapping: "Are you expecting him to become a Muslim so he could marry you?" (p. 75). She complains when Sammar visits Rae in the hospital: "You are the last person in the world I expected this from. What do you imagine you're doing?" (p. 91). Yasmin totally rejects Sammar's relationship with Rae because she knows that this relationship goes against the laws of Islam: "Are you going to marry someone who's not a Muslim?" (p. 91).

When Yasmin asked Sammar if she talked to Rae about converting to Islam, Sammar told her that Rae always says good things about Islam, things she didn't even know (p. 93). However, Yasmin believes that Rae's interest in Islam is just an academic interest because of his work, and his belief that the Koran is a sacred text is because of the way they do research nowadays: "It's a modern thing. Something to do with not being Eurocentric. They take what each culture says about itself. So they could study all sorts of sacred texts and be detached. They could have their own religious views or be atheists..." (p. 93). Yasmin believes that Rae would never convert to Islam because, as she convinces Sammar he is "an agnostic if not an atheist" (p. 92). She adds that even if he converted, everything in his life would remain the same as it was before. It would be the same scenario for many of the Scottish men who marry Muslim girls and who have to convert for marriage to take place, but nothing in their lives would change. She advises Sammar to forget about Rae and marry someone who is like her Sudanese: "If I were you, I'd avoid him like the plague till then. Go home and maybe you'll meet someone normal, someone Sudanese like yourself. Mixed couples just don't look right, they irritate everyone" (p. 93).

The effect that the aunt and Yasmin have on Sammar in making the right decision illustrates the fact that identity is affected by one's surroundings. Mary Jane Collier notes that one of the major premises of the cultural identity theory is that cultural identities are "historical, contextual, and relational constructions."<sup>360</sup> In other words, the prominence of one's identity rises and falls relationally, depending on the context. In fact, identity is dependent on the relationships one has with other people and is shaped and formed through social interaction. Similarly, Sammar's identity is shaped and dependent on her relationships with others, for she chooses to identify with Yasmin and her aunt, who share a common culture with her, and dissociates herself from Rae who does not belong to her cultural group.

### *Personal Factor*

Another factor that affects Sammar's relationship with Rae is her love for her late husband. Sammar's love for her husband is manifested in the novel through flashbacks and through her memories of him. She cannot get over his sudden death; she likes talking about him and keeps recalling him. He haunts her mind even when she is with Rae, which could be

---

<sup>360</sup> Collier, 1998, p. 131.

an indirect reason that influences her to leave for home when Rae rejected her marriage proposal even if it is not clearly stated in the novel.

Several instances in the novel show that the memory of Sammar's husband still haunts her: "Sammar lived with a young Tarig inside her head" (p. 25). Although it's been four years since her husband died, Sammar is overcome with grief when she reads "In Loving memory of this person or that" (p. 4) written on the benches in the Winter Gardens where she is sitting with Rae. This makes the reader wonder whether Sammar seeks Rae's company for the mere reason of finding someone to relieve her pain and grief over her husband—especially since she did not turn down the man, a friend of her family, who proposed to her after her husband's death, knowing that the man is much older than her and already has two wives (p. 154).

Sammar's words for Rae reflect her love for her late husband, Tarig, who is at the same time her cousin. She likes to imagine a different beginning for her life; make believe that she was born at home in Sudan, with Tarig waiting for her outside the delivery room, holding his mother's hand, impatient for her (p. 5). She tells Rae that she was born in Scotland but did not go back home until she was seven: "These were her words, the word 'until' as if she still could not reconcile herself to those first seven years of life without him" (p. 5). She fell in love with Tarig when they were kids (p. 26). She felt inclined to tell Rae about her past, about her aunt Mahasen, Tarig's mother, and her daughter Hanan and about Tarig. She wanted to tell him of their house in Sudan, where she had imagined herself living one day, Tarig's house. She needed to speak about everything related to Tarig; his bike, his room, his singing with imaginary microphones, guitars, and drums.

Sammar lives an internal struggle because she feels guilty for her husband's death. She still imagines her aunts' words: "'Take care of Tarig,' she whispered in your ear when you said goodbye. And you brought him back to her shrouded in the belly of an airplane" (p. 7). She keeps thinking that her husband would have survived if he had gone out a minute earlier or a minute later, or if the old man was not blinded by the sun, if it had been a cloudy day as usual (p. 58). To soothe her suffering, she keeps saying: "Only Allah is eternal, only Allah is eternal... this life is temporary, fleeting" (p. 9). A quote which reflects Muslims' belief that everyone will die at the end at a certain specified time and only God is immortal.

Everything reminds Sammar of her husband. When she was fasting, she remembered Tarig who would have joked about that for the day was short in Scotland (p. 32). She remembered how he used to fast for Ramadan when he was twelve and still go swimming,

and ride his bicycle in the burning heat of the afternoon, wanting to prove he was strong (p. 32). When she saw Rae's black cat, she remembered her husband telling her a story about stray cats that lived around the hospital where he worked. In addition, when she was talking with Rae about driving in Sudan, the conversation about driving and speed reminded her of Tarig and the way he died (p. 58). When she visited Rae in the hospital, she recalled the day when her husband died and she was waiting for someone from the mosque to come to do the washing and the ritual funeral (p. 8).

Moreover, Sammar's memories of her husband came back to her when she went back home to her aunt's house in Sudan: "Here in this house, in this language and this place, were all the memories. All that had been taken away from her. A photograph of Tarig when she had walked into the house for the first time. Smiling, sitting back in a chair, at ease with everything" (p. 141).

In short, Sammar's love for her husband is apparent through her persistent memories of him and through her desire to talk about him and about the past, which illustrates the notion of "time warp," discussed at the above. Sammar's past always intrudes into her present through flashbacks that remind her of her life with her loving husband. Thus, this could be another factor that makes Sammar leave Rae when he rejected her marriage proposal and insist on going back home.

We see that four factors have played a role in Sammar's rejection of crossing the cultural and religious barriers that separate her from Rae. These factors somehow justify the reason for which Sammar lived in a ghetto-like life in the host environment. To return to Anthias' notions of "ghettoisation and enclavisation," which are developed as a counter response to hybridity, and to Guibernau's definition of "ghettoisation," which asserts the isolation of ethnic minorities from the host culture and the maintenance of national identity through keeping the link with the country of origin, we can conclude that the factors discussed relate to these notions by the fact that Sammar experiences "ghettoisation" and dissociates herself from the host culture by maintaining her link with her homeland through following her religious and cultural rules as we have seen in the religious and cultural factors. In addition, Sammar lives in a "time warp," in Anthias' term, through her persistent memory of her husband as we have seen in the personal factor. To conclude, we can say that cross-cultural relationships do not always lead to the evolution of hybridity, for as we have seen in Sammar's case her relationship with someone from another culture leads her to experience the opposite of hybridity.

Thus, not all individuals are able to discard their cultural background in favor of a new one when they encounter newness. Reactions are relational and contextual and depend on several factors as we have seen in Sammar's case. We will observe, in the following section, a different case where the male protagonist was able to cross barriers and adopt a new religion and culture.

## II.a.II. Section Two: Rae's Hybrid Identity from Hall's Viewpoint

Section two analyzes Rae's hybrid experience within the framework of Hall's viewpoint of hybridity, and discusses the link between his relationship with Sammar and his hybrid identity.

In contrast to Sammar, the male protagonist, Rae, does not mind mixing culturally. In fact, he is an expert in Arab-Islamic culture, since he works as a Middle-East historian and lecturer in Postcolonial politics at the University of Aberdeen. However, his interest in Islam remains that of an objective, detached modern researcher. Rae's hybrid experience can be studied from Stuart Hall's viewpoint, who contends that the term hybridity refers to "the constant process of differentiation and exchange between the centre and the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions."<sup>361</sup> Rae's hybridity lies in the interaction between his position as a Scottish white man (the center) and the Arab-Islamic culture (the periphery), and his insistence on the presence of otherness within the dominant center. This is reflected in his interest in Islam and his frequent defense of it. It also lies in his cross-cultural relationship with Sammar, and his conversion to Islam at the end of the novel, where he chooses to cross cultural and religious boundaries. The fact that Rae is the one who converts at the end of the novel and accepts to convert himself culturally and religiously to marry Sammar asserts Hall's argument of the ability of the marginal position to undermine the center and impose its otherness.

---

<sup>361</sup> Hall, "New Ethnicities," cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274.

## II.a.II.a. Rae's Interest in Islam (his interaction with the periphery)

Aboulela admits: "Several of my friends were also British converts and I admired their articulate fresh faith and their ability to navigate between British and Muslim cultures with confidence and ease. It was from this angle that I approached the character of Rae Isles."<sup>362</sup>

As Aboulela declares, Rae can easily oscillate between British and Muslim cultures. His interest in Islam comes prior to his relationship with Sammar. He was curious about the word Islam when he was a kid in school, particularly when he read the word in his uncle's letter. Rae's uncle was in the army who fought in Egypt in the Second World War. When he arrived in Egypt, he became interested in Sufism, converted to Islam, and left the army. He married an Egyptian woman and had children. He sent a letter to his family in Scotland informing them of this. Rae was influenced by his uncle's story. He told Sammar and Yasmin that he was expelled from school because he wrote an essay entitled "Islam is better than Christianity" (p. 17) in which he plagiarized whole paragraphs from his uncle's letter and included them in his school essay.

Rae's interest in Arab-Islamic culture evolved due to his career as a Middle-East historian and a lecturer in Postcolonial politics. The titles of books lined up on the wall of his office such as *Religion in the Third World*, *Radical Islam*, and *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* assert his concern in Islam and the Third-World. "When he appeared on TV or was quoted in a newspaper he was referred to as an Islamic expert, a label he disliked because, he told Sammar, there could be no such monolith" (p. 5). Although Rae knows so much about Islam, he remains objective and detached from the religion. Yasmin told Sammar that Rae feels annoyed when Muslims expect him to convert just because he knows so much about Islam (p. 22).

However, several occurrences in the novel demonstrate that Rae has a personal interest in Islam and the Arab culture. This is manifested through his constant exchange with and defense of the Arab-Islamic culture.

He had written a book called *The Illusion of an Islamic Threat*. This book opposes extremist views and exaggerated prejudice toward Islam. This is revealed through Sammar's reading of the reviews of the book: "Brings a new understanding to the turbulent situation in the Middle East... Isles set out to prove that the threat of an Islamic takeover of the Middle

---

<sup>362</sup> Aboulela, "The Translator—Inspiration," n.p., accessed Feb. 15, 2012, < <http://www.leila-aboulela.com/books/the-translator/inspiration/>>.

East is exaggerated... his arguments are bold, his insights provocative” (p. 13). Rae’s defense of Muslim extremists is also evident when Sammar heard his voice on the radio speaking with nervousness and urgency: “... not the biggest threat facing the Western world. If we look at real terrorist damage, Muslim extremists have caused much less of it than the IRA, the Red Brigade, the Baader-Meinhof gang, the Basque separatist ETA...” (p. 35). Moreover, Rae’s stand during the Gulf war asserts his defense of Islam. Yasmin told Sammar that he had been on television and on the radio several times during the war. She added that in the next morning he would be jammed with angry voices of messages on the answering machine. Messages such as: “... *you don’t know what you’re talking about, fighter-planes aren’t enough for this war. We need to drop an atomic bomb once and for all*” (p. 100); and:

*You wog bastard, may I remind you that England is a Christian country, and it would be a good thing if you and all the rest of the odious wog bastards were to go back to the land of Allah. Since you bastards came to England this country has become the asshole of the West* (p. 100-101).

For Hall, the role of the hybrid position is to “undermine dominant formations by insisting on the presence of otherness within the dominant centre.”<sup>363</sup> By writing about Islam and defending it, Rae insists on introducing Islam (periphery) into the center (West); thus, asserting his hybrid position.

Rae tells Sammar that he studied Islam because he wanted to understand the Middle East. He adds that one of the reasons that struck him and made him admire Islam is that “the Koran and the authentic hadiths have never been tampered with. They are there as they had been for centuries” (p. 109). In addition, “Islam made a balance, something that kept things reasonable, steady” (p. 111). He explains to Sammar:

For capitalism to grow there must be an accumulation of wealth through inheritance that comes from dynasties and families surviving over a long time. But the sharia’s laws on inheritance and charity fragmented wealth so much that the necessary accumulation never took place. There was a blocking effect, like an internal thermostat or switch that stopped this excess. (p. 110)

Rae’s position as an intellectual confirms the position of Ulf Hannerz who regards diplomats and intellectuals as more cosmopolitans than migrants, and believes that their knowledge can be easily re-contextualized in different settings. He defines cosmopolitans as “a certain meta-cultural position, which implies a detachment from the culture of origin and a willingness to engage with the other—that is, an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness

---

<sup>363</sup> Hall cited in Frello, 2006, p. 7.



toward divergent cultural experiences.”<sup>364</sup> Likewise, Rae is easily detached from his native culture and shows a willingness to engage with the “Other” culture, which is represented by the Arab-Islamic culture.

Rae’s exchange with the periphery (Arab-Islamic culture) is not only manifested through his career, but also through his personal adventures in Morocco where he had plans to become a foreign journalist. Rae’s conversation with Yasmin reveals that he does not mind adapting to a new environment particularly when he says: “I would think the consensus is ‘in Rome do as the Romans do’” (p. 20). In other words, when you are in a new environment, you have to act like the host people in order to live with ease. This is evident when he was talking about his stay in Morocco. His integration and getting along with the Moroccans assert that he can cross cultures. He lived in a flat with three Air Moroccan pilots who were his link with the city: “with them he visited the caf  s, played dominos, smoked the hubble-bubble pipe. He went into mosques, learnt to take his shoes off, sit cross-legged on the floor” (p. 60). Rae was liked by the young, he “read newspapers, he was learning Arabic. Wandering into mosques, living with Moroccans” (p. 60). In addition, people there mistook him for an Arab, for he was dark enough. He could walk in Morocco as if disguised, none suspected he was Scottish as long as he did not speak and let his pronunciation give him away (p. 6).

Rae’s interaction with the periphery which is represented by his interest in Arab-Islamic culture does not signify that Islam has taken the place of the center, for according to Hall there is no dominant position which takes the place of the center; every position is a center in itself. Hall states: “We all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific. What we say is always ‘in context’, positioned.”<sup>365</sup> In fact, the hybrid position lies in the ability of the periphery to enter the center and in deconstructing the notion that the dominant position is always represented by the West. This goes along with Hall’s notion of hybridity which:

involves focusing on the relation between the ‘centre’ and the ‘margin’ in one way or the other – be it the relation between the West and the rest or between majority and minority. And it involves focusing on how the penetration of the centre by the marginalized undermines the naturalized dominant position of the centre.<sup>366</sup>

---

<sup>364</sup> Hannerz, 1992, p. 252.

<sup>365</sup> Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” accessed Dec. 19, 2011, p. 222, <[http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall\\_cultural\\_identity.pdf](http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall_cultural_identity.pdf)>.

<sup>366</sup> Cited in Frello, “Essentialism, Hybridism, and Cultural Critique,” p. 3, accessed Jan. 5, 2012, <<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ccsr/documents/FrelloEssentialism.pdf>>.

## II.a.II.b. Rae's Cross-cultural Relationship with Sammar

Rae's exchange with the periphery becomes more evident through his love relationship with Sammar, an Arab-Muslim woman.

When he first met Sammar, he was interested in her name because he knew that most Arabic names had familiar meanings (p. 5). He was curious to know its meaning and how she pronounces it. He was also curious about the pronunciation of her cousin's name, Tariq, for he knew the letters of the Arabic alphabet. In fact, he had lived in her part of the world. He knew the details, the correct dates, of her country's history more than she did (p. 52). He tells Sammar that for him there were only three places in the world: Scotland, North Africa, and the Middle East (p. 105).

Rae shows interest in Sammar from the beginning of the novel. When she knocked at his office after a long full day, he told her: "You I always have time for, I can't bear anyone else at this moment except you" (p. 35). Rae likes Sammar and feels good when talking to her. He says: "I trust you, you make me feel safe. I feel safe when I talk to you" (p. 52). He calls her at two o'clock in the morning to tell her that her voice is beautiful, but "he was feverish and the words came out of him in a jumble" (p. 57). He wants to take her out and show her places. He expresses his admiration for her by telling her that he likes the hijab because it is secretive (p. 108). He is so pleased to see Sammar when she visited him in the hospital. His voice was so loud when he welcomed her that she imagined people in the ward turning and looking at them (p. 82). He had also brought her a bottle of perfume as a present from Edinburgh.

Moreover, it is noticed that Rae is dependent on Sammar in several ways. First, she is his translator; he cannot have access to Arabic texts without her. Note the irony here, Rae works as a Middle East specialist, however, he ignores the Arabic language; Sammar helps him read and make sense of the Orient. In addition, Rae is depicted in a weak position because of his asthma and bronchitis, which sometimes make it difficult for him to breathe and speak. He is not a physically strong person; his conversations with Sammar are interrupted either by violent coughing fits or by his hospitalization. Smyth Brendan asserts: "Rae's illness is emblematic of a specific hegemonic notion of masculinity in crisis."<sup>367</sup> Because of his illness, Rae undergoes a process of dependency on Sammar; this happens

---

<sup>367</sup> Smyth Brendan, "To Love the Orientalist: Masculinity in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*," accessed Feb. 10, 2011, p. 174, <<http://www.jmmsweb.org/issues/volume1/number2/pp170-182>>.

through food and cooking. It is Sammar's soup that made him recover; when Sammar gave him the soup she prepared for him, he was so content and thanked her in a voice with too much emotion (p. 98). Sammar saves Rae both physically and spiritually, thus asserting her otherness.

Rae's dependency on Sammar confirms Hall's viewpoint that hybridity resides in the ability of the periphery to enter the center. It also illustrates Aboulela's project of validating her own Sudanese and Islamic worldview. In one of her essays, she reflects on her own writing: "[I want] to express, to show that Khartoum is a valid place, a valid way of life beyond the stereotypical images of famine and war, not a backward place to be written off."<sup>368</sup> This is manifested through Sammar's ability as a periphery to influence the center (Rae) and by making him convert to her religion at the end of the novel.

## II.a.II.c. Rae's Conversion to Islam

Rae's hybridity is asserted by his decision at the end of the novel to cross the religious barrier that separates him from Sammar and convert to Islam. However, his conversion was not only motivated by his love for Sammar and his longing for her—since he waited four months before he decided that he should tell her—but also because “he has opened his heart and mind to the teachings of her religion and has discovered Islam as the solution for his own problems with life.”<sup>369</sup> This is also manifested when Sammar asks him to say the *shahadah*, like many people in Aberdeen who get married this way, but he tells her that they were different and he has to be sure before he converts because he would despise himself if he was not sure. He explains to her: “It's not in me to be religious, I studied Islam for the politics of the Middle East. I did not study it for myself. I was not searching for something spiritual... I believed the best I could do, what I owed a place and people who had deep meaning for me, was to be objective, detached” (p. 128). He asks her to be patient with him: “Be patient with me, I don't know what to do... All this fumbling and I never had so much empathy for anyone in my life” (p. 129).

---

<sup>368</sup> Leila Aboulela, “Moving away from Accuracy,” *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, Vol. 22 (2002): p. 204.

<sup>369</sup> Stephan Guth, “Appropriating or Secretly Undermining, the Secular Literary Heritage? Distant Echoes of Mawsim al-Hijra in a Muslim Writer's Novel: Leila Aboulela, *The Translator*,” in Luc Dehevels, Barbara Michalak- Pikulska, and Paul Starkey (eds.), *Intertextuality in Modern Arabic Literature since 1967*, Durham: Durham University, 2006, p. 68.

Moreover, the reason that makes Rae convert at the end is perhaps because he is not firmly attached to his religion and culture. He admits to Sammar that he does not feel content or satisfied in his religion: “I’m not content, there are too many things I can’t justify to myself. Of course I’m not content. Isn’t it obvious to you?” (p. 130). He explains the toughness of his religion and culture which she has never thought of. Sammar tried to understand the new picture Rae is providing about his culture which she had never imagined:

Calvinism, a dour and oppressive brand of Christianity. An upbringing so different from hers. Things he was told. He must not be sullen, he must not be cheeky, he must not be contradictory. He must not complain of boredom, only bores get bored. The value of pretending that all was well when it wasn’t. Such pretence was an art, a form of courage. Don’t think too much. Lighten up, you are too intense. (p. 102)

Sammar had never thought of this picture of Rae’s world. She had imagined “freedom in this part of the world, not rules, not restrictions” (p. 102). Rae’s dissociation from his own culture illustrates what Pieterse calls “destabilizing hybridity” that “blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center.”<sup>370</sup> By showing an interest in Islam and converting to it, Rae is moving away from the center, which is represented by his Scottish culture that rejects Islam as manifested in the following quote addressed to Rae by one of his opponents:

*You wog bastard, may I remind you that England is a Christian country, and it would be a good thing if you and all the rest of the odious wog bastards were to go back to the land of Allah. Since you bastards came to England this country has become the asshole of the West (p. 100-101).*

In addition to Sammar, Rae’s friend Fareed influences him to convert. He always talks with him about Islam and tries to convince him of conversion. Rae wonders why Sammar is not like Fareed who every once in a while has an outburst over Rae to convince him to convert to Islam. She tells him that she knows it annoys him when Muslims expect him to convert just because he knows so much about Islam. He explains to her: “I view the Qur’an as a sacred text, as the word of God. It would be impossible in the kind of work I’m doing, in the issues I’m addressing for me to do otherwise but to accept Muslims’ own vision of the Qur’an, what they say about it” (p. 89). Fareed thinks that this is tantamount to Islam, and so he cannot understand why Rae is not a Muslim.

Rae found out that faith did not have anything to do with how much he knows about Islam. He tells Sammar: “Knowledge is necessary, that’s true. But faith, it comes direct from Allah” (p. 199). His use of the pronoun “ours” in the following quote indicates his association

---

<sup>370</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

with Muslims making Sammar feel that Islam has finally united them: “Ours isn’t a religion of suffering, nor is it tied to a particular place” (p. 199).

Rae’s conversion is a crossing over from the one to the other, a condition for the fulfillment of the cross-cultural romance.<sup>371</sup> Nadia Butt contends that Aboulela, “rather than blending Afro-Islamic culture into European-secular culture and vice versa, has opted for a different story: the wholesale conversion of a non-Muslim to Islam, which precludes any substantial form of blending, merging or mixing of cultures and religions.”<sup>372</sup> This is manifested in the conversion of the Western partner to Islam at the end of the novel as a solution for the couple to be together. Rae went to Sudan, proposed to Sammar, and asked her to go back with him to Aberdeen. For Rae, love means effacing the boundaries of language, nation, and religion; in other words, love translates.

Stotesbury reads a form of reverse colonization at work in the novel, where the only solution to bridging cultures is for a Western man to convert to Islam.<sup>373</sup> In fact, this again illustrates Hall’s argument that hybridity lies in the potential of the periphery (Islam) to displace the centered position (West).

---

<sup>371</sup> Hassan, 2008, p. 309.

<sup>372</sup> Butt, 2009, p. 168.

<sup>373</sup> Stotesbury, in Onega and Gutleben, 2004, p. 80.

## II.b. Part Two: Linguistic Hybridity

## Introduction to Part Two

While part one of this chapter explored the protagonists' hybrid identities, part two deals with the linguistic hybridity that pervades the novel. This is particularly represented by the notions of intertextuality and heteroglossia. These terms have been dealt with in chapter one, thus I will provide a brief definition to remind of the elements of them relevant to the novel at hand.

Note that the linguistic hybridity that characterizes the novel supports and complements the debate examined in the part devoted to cultural hybridity. The presence of intertextual elements, particularly through character and plot, complements Sammar's case. For instance, the character of Sammar is compared to Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre. Just like Jane who refused to cross her Christian teachings by her rejection of marrying Mr. Rochester because he is already married, Sammar rejected marriage to a non-Muslim because this goes against her Islamic laws. In addition, there is an allusion to Tayeb Salih's novel *A Season of Migration to the North* by the insertion of a paragraph from the novel as an introduction to part two of *The Translator* where Sammar is back to Khartoum after four years of absence in Aberdeen. The paragraph reveals that Sammar has roots that can only flourish in her native country Sudan. This asserts the argument placed at the beginning of this chapter that Sammar experiences the opposite of hybridity.

The fact that Aboulela's *The Translator* is intertextually related with Salih's and Brontë's novels indicates its potential to enter the "center," which is represented by well-established authors as Salih and Brontë. In addition, heteroglossia in the novel, represented by the insertion of Arabic words and expressions, plays as a resistance strategy to the dominant English language and culture; thus, asserting the ability of the marginal position to displace the center.

Having previously defined the term intertextuality in the chapter of *The Pickup*, I shall mention here a summary of the argument. Julia Kristeva, influenced by both Bakhtin's and Saussure's ideas, argues that authors do not create their texts from their own original minds, but rather compile them from pre-existent texts. She writes: "a text is a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text," in which "several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another."<sup>374</sup>

---

<sup>374</sup> Kristeva, in Léon Roudiez, 1980, p. 36.

According to Saussure, no sign has meaning of its own; for him, the linguistic sign is a non-unitary, non-stable, relational unit which constitutes the synchronic system of language. This also applies to the literary sign where authors of literary works do not just select words from a language system, they select plots, generic features, aspects of character, images, ways of narrating, even phrases and sentences from previous literary texts and from the literary tradition.<sup>375</sup>

Likewise, Bakhtin believes that one cannot understand an utterance or even a written work as if it were singular in meaning, unconnected to previous and future utterances or works. For him, all utterances are dialogic, their meaning and logic dependent upon what has previously been said and on how they will be received by others. Kristeva's notion of intertextuality is highlighted through Bakhtin's vision of language where a word is never wholly one's own, but is always permeated with traces of other words, other uses.<sup>376</sup> This brings in the issue of double-voiced discourse and speech genres, which are introduced in the essay "Discourse in the novel"<sup>377</sup> through the concept of heteroglossia.

Heteroglossia refers to the ideologies inherent in the various languages to which we all lay claim as social beings and by which we are constituted as individuals: the language and inherent ideologies of our profession, the language and inherent ideologies of our age group, of the decade, of our social class, geographical region, family, circle of friends.<sup>378</sup> The discourse of characters in a polyphonic novel is always heteroglot, double-voiced. It exemplifies the intertextual or dialogic nature of language by always serving two speakers, two intentions, two ideological positions, but always within the single utterance.<sup>379</sup>

My purpose is not to give a detailed discussion of Saussure's, Bakhtin's, or Kristeva's theories, but I find it useful in order to clarify the term "intertextuality" and its origin before examining its presence in the novel.

---

<sup>375</sup> Allen, 2000, p. 11.

<sup>376</sup> Allen, 2000, p. 28.

<sup>377</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, pp: 259-422.

<sup>378</sup> Park-Fuller, 1986, n.p.

<sup>379</sup> Allen, 2000, p. 29.



## II.b.I. Intertextuality

Intertextuality in the novel is present through allusions to other literary works such as Tayeb Salih's novel *A Season of Migration to the North*<sup>380</sup> and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.<sup>381</sup> Some readers regard *The Translator* as a counternarrative to Salih's novel. Ferial Ghazoul quotes Jamal Mohamed Ibrahim, the Sudanese ambassador in London, who described *The Translator* as "a dialogue of civilizations" in contrast to Tayeb Salih's novel, which depicts "the clash of civilizations."<sup>382</sup> Unlike Salih's novel, which reveals the impossibility of achieving a meaningful relationship between North and South, Aboulela's novel is a North/South romance with a happy ending. Both novels involve immigration of Sudanese characters to the UK. The contrast in weather, culture, and customs between the two countries is represented, and movement between them is recurrent and inevitable from one generation to the next. The opening paragraphs of both novels emphasize the contrast between North and South, starting with the weather where the fog and wind of the UK is contrasted with the sun and heat in Sudan.

Aboulela quotes Salih's writing in a direct and indirect way. The first part of *The Translator* is prefaced by a quotation by the tenth century Arab poet Abu Nuwas that Salih uses as an epigraph in *Bandarshah*:<sup>383</sup>

But I say what comes to me  
From my inner thoughts  
Denying my eyes.

The dates that Aboulela adds after the author's name—the year of his birth and the year of his death (757-814)—i.e. the 8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> centuries AD signify that Abu Nuwas is a representative of an ancient, deeply rooted literary tradition that produced poetry and wisdom.

In addition, the paragraph inserted at the beginning of part two of *The Translator*, where Sammar is back to Khartoum after four years of absence in Aberdeen, is borrowed from the translated version of Tayeb Salih's novel *A Season of Migration to The North* where the first-person narrator informs the reader that he has just arrived in his native village in

---

<sup>380</sup> Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*, trans. Denys Johnson-Davies, Oxford: Heinemann African Writer Series, 1969.

<sup>381</sup> Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008.

<sup>382</sup> Ferial Ghazoul, "Halal Fiction," *Al-Ahram Weekly Online* 542 (Jul. 12-18, 2001), <<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/542/bo4.htm>>.

<sup>383</sup> The epigraph appears in the Arabic original of Dau al-Beit, the first part of *Bandarshah*. It is omitted in the English translation.

Sudan after seven years spent in England. It signals the parallel tracks of the two novels: migrations to the UK and back home.

[...] the fog cleared and I woke, on the second day of my arrival, in my familiar bed in the room whose walls had witnessed the trivial incidents of my life in childhood and the onset of adolescence [...] I heard the cooing of the turtle-dove, and I looked through the window at the palm tree standing in the courtyard of our house [...] I looked at its strong straight trunk, at its roots that strike down to the ground, at the green branches hanging down loosely over its top, and I experienced a feeling of assurance. I felt not like a storm-swept feather but like that palm tree, a being with a background, with roots [...]. (p. 135)

The metaphor employed by Salih and Aboulela contrasts the rooted palm with the turbulent foreign experience. Sammar's rootedness offers her a mode of resistance and serves to guide her through the cultural conflicts that she experiences during her travels. She, like the palm tree in the courtyard, has a cultural background and roots which are established in her native country. In Sudan, she is no longer homesick or dissociated from society as she was in Scotland where she was living in a ghetto-like life. She returns home with a professional experience to contribute to the development of her postcolonial country.

The intertextual allusions to Salih in part one and part two of *The Translator* do not parody Salih's novel, in Bakhtinian sense of parody, but rather "stylize" it.<sup>384</sup> Bakhtin distinguishes between parody and stylization. In parody, "every statement about the object is constructed in such a way that, apart from its referential meaning, a polemical blow is struck at the other's discourse on the same theme, at the other's statement about the same object."<sup>385</sup> By contrast, in stylization, "the author's thought, once having penetrated someone else's discourse and made its home in it, does not collide with the other's thought, but rather follows after it in the same direction, merely making that direction conventional."<sup>386</sup> Aboulela does not attack Salih's text, but rather "stylizes" it and establishes it as an authoritative frame of reference.

According to Guth, Aboulela's main motive for quoting Salih is that she wanted "to drop an Arab, especially Sudanese, name, thereby telling the Western reader that it is not only Western writers who may serve as authors of reference but that there is also a great indigenous Arab literary heritage... which are [is] in no way inferior to their Western equivalents."<sup>387</sup> Another motive for quoting Salih, as Guth believes, is that Aboulela wanted

---

<sup>384</sup> Hassan, 2008, p. 302.

<sup>385</sup> Bakhtin, 1984, p. 195.

<sup>386</sup> Bakhtin, 1984, p. 193.

<sup>387</sup> Guth, in Deheuvels, Michalak- Pikulska, and Starkey, 2006, p. 71.

“to show herself as belonging to this tradition, to give the impression of a harmony between the great (though secular) tradition and her Islamic humanism.”<sup>388</sup>

The parallel between the two stories also lies in Aboulela’s rewriting of the storyline in which a widow (Hosna Bint Mahmoud) is forced to marry an older man (a marriage that ends in murder and suicide). By contrast, when Sammar loses her husband, her mother-in-law prevents her marriage to an older man. As a result, she returns to Scotland, falls in love with Rae, and asks him to convert to Islam. Moreover, both novels demonstrate the failure of cultural translation and the maintenance of nativism and cultural authenticity. The male characters in *Season of Migration to the North*, Mustafa Sa’eed and the narrator, experience isolation, trauma, and violence as a result of their migrations. Similarly, Sammar experiences homesickness, isolation, ghettoisation, and alienation from the host environment. They return to Sudan to live according to their cultural norms.

Aboulela also declares that her novel is intertextually related with Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*:

I was aware when I was writing *The Translator* that I was writing a Muslim Jane Eyre. Not only was Jane Eyre one of my favourite classics, but I had often been fascinated by the Christian elements in the novel: Jane’s strong faith and Mr. Rochester’s conversion at the end. I wanted to put Islam in fiction, to reflect Muslim dilemmas and choices. I knew that the average Sudanese girl was devout and that by moving to Britain, she would not shake off her faith. I visualized Sammar as the ordinary girl- next-door placed in a romantic predicament.<sup>389</sup>

Echoing *Jane Eyre*’s romantic end, *The Translator* details the cross-cultural love relationship between a Sudanese translator and her Scottish employer at the University of Aberdeen. Their relationship cannot last long because of Sammar’s religious beliefs that prohibit her from marrying a non-Muslim. Similarly, the problem in *Jane Eyre* is that Jane cannot marry Mr. Rochester because he is already married to Bertha; he cannot marry two women at the same time. Sammar’s exile from Scotland and Rae recalls Jane’s exile from Thornfield and Rochester. At the end of the novel, Mr. Rochester converts after he becomes blind and marries Jane. Like the story of Jane, Sammar’s dilemma is resolved when Rae converts at the end of the novel and proposes to her.

Aboulela, when being asked why it is necessary for Rae to convert, compares the situation to Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*:

From an Islamic point of view, why can’t Mr. Rochester be married to both Bertha and Jane?  
In the same way that I, as the Muslim reader, respect and empathize with Jane’s very Christian

---

<sup>388</sup> Guth in Deheuvels, Michalak- Pikulska, and Starkey, 2006, p. 71.

<sup>389</sup> Aboulela, “The Translator—Inspiration,” accessed Feb. 15, 2012, n.p.,  
<<http://www.leila-aboulela.com/books/the-translator/inspiration/>>.

dilemma, I want Western/Christian readers to respect and empathize with Sammar's very Muslim dilemma.<sup>390</sup>

Rae Isles, like Rochester, has a past although with no mad woman in the attic. He is twice divorced and suffers from an asthma, which makes him dependent on Sammar who makes him recover thanks to her soup. However, like Rochester, he is unready for the challenge posed by this woman from another culture; as Aboulela herself comments: "Sammar refuses the Western option of 'living together' and Rae refuses the option of a technical/token conversion to Islam—even though these are solutions which are feasible within the society they are living in."<sup>391</sup>

## II.b.II. Heteroglossia

Heteroglossia enters the novel through the use of Arabic words which create a literary effect that relates to conveying social and cultural elements to the reader as well as setting the mood of the narrative. Although Aboulela writes in English, she employs Arabic in her narrative to represent different aspects of the linguistic and cultural norms of the Sudanese culture.

Arabic religious expressions are prevalent in the novel and can be illustrated by such examples as *Ya Allah*, *Ya Arham El-Rahimeen* (p. 23), meaning "God is the most merciful"; *Masha'Allah* (p. 91), meaning "look what God has willed, as an expression of admiration for someone's achievement or good fortune"; *bismillah* (p. 171), meaning "in the name of God"; *insha'Allah* (p. 107), meaning "God willing"; *Alhamdulillah* (p. 140), meaning "thanks God." Aboulela's use of many of these expressions in Arabic shows the extent to which religious references are normalized in regular Sudanese non-religious discourse. Some Western readers might be surprised by the practice of regularly invoking the name of God (Allah) in Arabic conversations, but this is religiously accepted and a culturally approved discourse practice in Arabic culture. The use of Arabic words in their original language without providing their translation signifies that these words are not translatable, which illustrates and complements Sammar's "untranslatable" case.

Sammar's use of Arabic words makes her feel as though she were at home. She tells

---

<sup>390</sup> Stotesbury, in Onega and Gutleben, 2004, p. 81.

<sup>391</sup> Cited in Stotesbury, in Onega and Gutleben, 2004, p. 76.

Rae: “Yesterday when I spoke in Arabic to Fareed, I felt that home was close” (p. 107). “She had enjoyed talking in Arabic, words like *insha’Allah*, fitting naturally in everything that was said, part of the sentences, the vision” (p. 107). Sammar feels more natural when using Arabic words, for over the past days she senses that her sentence “I’m leaving on Friday” sounded incomplete without the word *insha’Allah*. Hewett asserts: “Sammar’s realization of how deeply she misses this ritual reveals how an entire way of being in the world can be lost because of the absence of one phrase.”<sup>392</sup> Note here that the situation is a bit ironic, as Sammar, a translator who was born and raised in England, reverts to Arabic. This also highlights the title of the novel, which has a double meaning: Sammar works as a translator, but refuses to translate herself culturally.

In addition, heteroglossia is manifested by the fact that the same language differs across national cultures. For instance, the pronunciation of certain Arabic letters differs from one culture to another, like when Sammar was clarifying to Rae how the name Tariq is pronounced: “It’s written with a *qaf* but we pronounce the *qaf* as a *g* back home” (p. 6). The *qaf* in Arabic is represented by the letter “Q” in English, which is pronounced differently in different Arab countries.

Moreover, there are several examples of idiomatic expressions that echo literal expressions from Arabic such as: “From what sort of clay have you been made of?” (p. 24); the divorced spouse “turned out to be a son of a dog” (p. 39); “electricity isn’t free” (p. 170); “Allah curse them and their day, is this a time for this?” (p. 181); “They’ve made us hate life” (p. 181); “Just say *insha’Allah* something like that won’t happen” (p. 186). As the examples illustrate, Aboulela carries Arabic native speech habits into English by having her characters verbally interact in English as they would in Arabic and by translating local Arabic concepts and idioms into English. In other words, the characters are in fact speaking Arabic but using English words.

Furthermore, the novel contains many Arabic references to local food, dress, places, and religious practices. Some of these references include: *habbahan* (p. 97) (whole green cardamom); *falafel* (p. 66) (a Middle Eastern dish of spiced, mashed chickpeas formed into balls and deep-fried); *tobe* (p. 10) (an oriental female dress); *jellaba* (p. 24, 149) (an oriental male dress); *kohl* (p. 90) (a black powder used as eye make-up); *Souk* (p. 60) (an Arab bazaar); *sallow* (p. 143) (saloon); *Ingelizi*, *Amrikani*, *Scotlandi*, *Irelandi* (p. 86) (mean English, American, Scottish, and Irish respectively); *Isha* (p. 21) (night-time daily prayer of

---

<sup>392</sup> Hewett, 2009, p. 271.

Muslims); *am* (p. 47, 153) (paternal uncle, but also used for older men to show respect); *azan* (p. 21) (Islamic call to prayer recited by muezzin at prescribed times of the day); *Allah akbar*. *Allah akbar* (p. 145) (first words of the *azan* which signify that God is the Greatest); *wudu* (p. 145) (ablution, a ceremonial act of washing and wiping the hands, face, arms, head and feet before praying or touching the Koran); *Jihad* (p. 109) (a war or struggle against unbelievers); *Eid Mubarak* (p. 180) (means Happy Eid where Eid is the Muslim celebration that happens when the month of fasting, Ramadan, ends and also when the pilgrims complete their pilgrimage in Makah).

The frequent use of these expressions in Arabic is perhaps due to Aboulela's concern with translation. The author chooses to maintain the original Arabic lexical items instead of translating them into English to preserve their connotations. Many of the words and phrases in the novel carry socio-cultural implications that would have been lost if represented by the equivalent English word or phrase. In addition, many of these cultural references add an exotic effect in an attempt to provide the original character of a different culture. The hybrid English, then, could become a means for bilingual writers to preserve their cultural identity while at the same time write about it in the dominant language.

Understanding any literary work is dependent on prior cultural knowledge. The employment of Arabic words in the novel, without providing explanatory notes, diminishes the readability of the text for some readers, because inserting foreign words would increase the difficulty of understanding for a reader not familiar with Arabic. This would require the reader to do a lot of work in searching for the meanings of the foreign words in order to understand the text. Aboulela's strategy could thus be seen to function as a discourse of resistance to the dominant English language and culture. This relates to the center/periphery metaphor set in the beginning, where Arabic words, considered marginal in an English dominated context, displace the centrality of the English language in the novel by asserting their presence. This also underscores and reflects the anti-hybrid experience of the female protagonist discussed in the first part of this chapter. Arabic words are associated with something that is not translatable; this is why Sammar remains an outsider in the host environment.

Several incidents in *The Translator* prove the impossibility of full inter-cultural communication due to cultural and linguistic incompatibility. For instance, Sammar cannot find a spice name in English which she knew in Arabic although she is a translator who should know: "At last, she found the habbahan. It existed, it had a name: whole green

cardamom” (p. 97). Also, when interpreting for the interrogators of terrorism suspects, she “worked hard pushing Arabic into English, English into Arabic” (p. 156). Although Sammar is a translator who is supposed to master the language she is translating to, there are words the meanings of which she cannot figure out either because they are slang terms or because she has never heard them before. Sammar did not know what agnostic means (p. 92); neither did she understand the word “empathy” (p. 129). She did not ask Rae about the meaning of the word; it sounded like “sympathy” and she thought that he felt sorry for her. “At times he said words she could not understand, words she would ask him to explain. Sixties’ scene, Celtic, chock-a-block” (p. 130). In addition, when she and Yasmin were in the library, Yasmin did all the talking. Sammar “felt like a helpless immigrant who didn’t know any English. She imagined the English words lifting away from her brain, evaporating, forming a light mist” (p. 13).

The effort required in finding the exact words when translating from one language to the other reflects the difficulty encountered by the translators in their job. Translation is figured as something that incites distance and departure from a source of origin, specifically within a religious context. Sammar, evoking the Koran as an example, states: “meaning can be translated but not reproduced” (p. 126). “Translations don’t do it justice. Much is lost...” (p. 126). There is something untranslatable and innate about the nature of faith. Sammar, in her response to Rae’s marriage proposal, writes two letters in two languages that say the same thing but are not a translation of each other. Her refusal to translate can be read as a commitment to the distinctness of cultural codes. Note that the title of the novel *The Translator* is ironic. Although Sammar works as a translator who is devoted to the task of translating Arabic texts, especially the Koran and the Hadith, into English, she never makes an effort to translate herself into the Western culture and prefers to maintain her cultural and religious identity.

## II.c. Conclusion to Chapter Two

As we have seen in this chapter, the change that occurs to the protagonists' identities when crossing cultures is not necessarily a hybrid experience, as in Sammar's case. Thus, the hypothesis: cross-cultural relationships lead to the evolution of hybridity does not always apply to all cases, for Sammar's relationship with someone from another culture leads her to experience the opposite of hybridity.

According to Bhabha, the transgression of national or ethnic borders is a precondition to the occurrence of hybridity. He states: "Persons who have lived in more than one culture or who straddle two or more cultures are 'hybrids' who create 'counter-narratives' that both evoke and erase cultural boundaries."<sup>393</sup> Although Sammar lives in more than one culture—Scottish-born but of Sudanese origin—she shows no signs of hybridity, for she does not transgress the cultural and religious barriers that separate her from Rae. She experiences what Floya Anthias calls "a ghettoisation and enclavisation," where she remains alienated from the host society and isolates herself in her room. This is manifested through her homesickness and living in the past, in a "time warp," in Anthias' terms. Sammar's nostalgia for her homeland disallows her from settling in the new environment. She is proud of her country and culture, for even when Rae proposes to Sammar after his conversion and asks her to accompany him to Aberdeen, she tells him: "If I was someone else, someone strong and independent I would tell you now, I don't want to go back with you, I don't want to leave my family, I love my country too much" (p. 199).

It cannot be denied that Sammar's relationship with Rae helps her to overcome her homesickness and her "ghettoized" life-structure; however, this does not lead her so far as to cross the religious barrier that separates her from Rae. When she has to choose between her religious teachings and marrying someone from another religion and culture, she prioritizes her religion over her personal desire even though this hinders her liberty and freedom. Having lived a life devoted to Islam, she never imagines joining Islam with secularism, but prefers to make Rae accept Islam so that she can marry him according to Islamic laws. Her refusal to surrender to love when Rae rejected conversion is motivated not only by the religious factor, which is the main element, but also by several other constituents such as: a personal factor represented by her love for her late husband; a cultural factor symbolized by her respect for

---

<sup>393</sup> Bhabha, 1994, cited in Bystydzienski, 2011, p. 50.



her cultural rules and traditions; and the family and friend factors represented by the influence of her aunt Mahasen and her friend Yasmin, who, she knows, would oppose her relationship with Rae. Thus, Sammar rejects the idea of translating herself, but accepts the translation of the other. No clue is provided to the reader as to what might happen after the couples' cross-cultural marriage which occurs at the end of the novel. The question of Sammar's evolution of a hybrid identity after her official marriage to Rae is left open to the reader's imagination.

In the case of Rae, his hybrid experience occurs prior to his intercultural relationship with Sammar. This is manifested by his interest in and defense of the Arab-Islamic culture and by his career as a Middle-East historian and lecturer, illustrating Hall's notion of hybridity that is based on the interaction between center and periphery. His love for Sammar brings out his hybrid identity and causes it to evolve, leading him to cross boundaries at the end of the novel. His final conversion to Islam is not only motivated by marriage to a Muslim woman, but because he has found inner peace in the new religion. This is why he didn't tell Sammar about his conversion for months. He wanted to be positive that he was sure of his decision.

Hall, as opposed to Ulf Hannerz, believes that migrants and refugees are the ones who are capable of occupying a transgressive position vis-à-vis conventional cultural categories, and are the ones who face cultural challenges as they move to new cultures. He states:

You have to be familiar enough with it [the centre] to know how to move in it. But you have to be sufficiently outside it so you can examine it and critically interrogate it. And it is this double move or, what I think one writer after another have called, the double consciousness of the exile, of the migrant, of the stranger who moves to another place, who has this double way of seeing it, from the inside and the outside.<sup>394</sup>

In contrast to this, Ulf Hannerz believes that migrants are likely to avoid cultural challenges because of their vulnerable position. He regards diplomats and intellectuals as more cosmopolitan than migrants, and he believes that their knowledge can be easily re-contextualized in different settings. He defines cosmopolitans as "a certain meta-cultural position, which implies a detachment from the culture of origin and a willingness to engage with the other—that is, an intellectual and aesthetic stance of openness toward divergent cultural experiences."<sup>395</sup>

Based on Hannerz' ideas, Rae can be regarded as an intellectual cosmopolitan who is able to detach himself from his native culture and shows a willingness to engage with a new

---

<sup>394</sup> Cited in Frello, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>395</sup> Frello, 2006, p. 3.

culture represented by his interest in Islam and his final conversion to it. In contrast, Sammar is the migrant who avoids cultural challenges and prefers to stick to her cultural identity. However, Hannerz' classification cannot be applied in all cases and to all migrants; for as we have seen with Gordimer's Abdu, he faces cultural challenges and does not mind crossing religious and cultural barriers that separate him from Julie. Thus, he fits Hall's view of migrants as capable of occupying a transgressive position. Choosing to identify with one's own cultural group or dissociating from it depends on the individuality of the person. As Maria Root states: "Although society may try to impose identity in an absolute way, individuals often differ in how they define group boundaries and how strongly they identify with their own and other groups."<sup>396</sup> Sammar as a practicing Muslim identifies strongly with her cultural group and refuses to cross religious barriers. However, Abdu, not being a religious character, is more flexible than Sammar and is open to the other culture. This is represented by his desire to enter the West and live a Western lifestyle.

This chapter has explored two aspects of hybridity: the opposite of hybridity, represented by the notions "ghettoisation and enclavisation," as in the case of Sammar, and Hall's notion of hybridity, as in the case of Rae. In addition, it analyzed the linguistic hybridity which is represented by the presence of intertextuality and heteroglossia. We have seen how the linguistic hybridity asserts and complements the argument initiated in the cultural hybridity part. First, the presence of intertexts, especially through character and plot with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, reflects Sammar's experience. Sammar, like Jane, refuses to cross religious boundaries and, like Mustafa Sa'id, returns home to her country Sudan to live by the norms of her culture and religion. This situation is reinforced by the role of heteroglossia through the employment of Arabic words without providing their translation and the use of expressions that reflect Arabic discourse are associated with something that is not translatable— a fitting reflection of Sammar's refusal to translate herself.

---

<sup>396</sup> Root, 1996, p. 115.

### Chapter Three:

Safi Abdi's *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*

## Introduction to Chapter Three

We have concluded in the previous two chapters that cross-cultural relationships are an assertion of the protagonists' hybrid experience or a means to either hybridity or its opposite. This chapter combines all three cases: the cross-cultural marriage in Abdi's novel is an assertion of the protagonists' hybrid experience and leads to the evolution of hybridity as we will see in the male protagonist's case and to, what I will call, the "religious rebirth" as in the female protagonist's case.

The chapter is divided into two parts: the first part deals with the female protagonist's hybrid experience, while the second studies the male protagonist's case.

Concerning the female protagonist, it is noticed that Anisa undergoes three stages of identity development. First, when she moves to the United States, she lives "in-between" her native lifestyle and the lifestyle of the host culture. Bhabha's notion of "in-between" space will be adopted to analyze this hybrid experience. Second, Anisa gradually abandons her cultural and religious practices and loses contact with her native culture to assimilate to the new culture.

I find Nederveen Pieterse's viewpoint of "assimilationist hybridity" relevant to apply to Anisa's assimilation stage. Pieterse suggests that we can construct a continuum of hybridities: "On one end an assimilationist hybridity that leans over towards the center, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony and, at the other end, a destabilizing hybridity that blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center."<sup>397</sup> Anisa, after a passage of time in the American culture, experiences an "assimilationist hybridity" in which she attempts to enter the center by assimilating the new cultural practices. However, Anisa, after engaging in a cross-cultural marriage, experiences a "religious rebirth," in which she is spiritually awakened and feels remorse for abandoning her religious practices and for crossing over her religious teachings. Anisa's "rebirth," which marks off the heroine from the previous protagonists I have dealt with, opens up a new dimension which Bhabha and other hybridity theorists have not taken into account. Thus, her experience will be analyzed from an Islamic point of view of the process of "repentance" or "tawbah," which literally means the "return."

In order to find out the relation between Anisa's cross-cultural marriage and her hybrid experiences and "religious rebirth," several factors will be studied. In the assimilation stage,

---

<sup>397</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

the hybrid society of Rako Island in which Anisa is living plays a role in her integration into the new culture. In the “religious rebirth” stage, several factors contribute to Anisa’s religious awakening: her conservative and religious family; the person in charge at the Islamic community’s office, Yusuf, whom Anisa meets by chance in a restaurant; and her converted husband who is unable to embrace faith and practice religion. The last factor will be discussed within the “religious rebirth” section.

In addition, there are interesting intertextual elements in the novel, mostly verses taken from the Koran, which play a role in highlighting Anisa’s repentance. Since most of these verses focus on Anisa’s situation, they will be studied in a separate sub-section under Anisa’s part.

With regard to the male protagonist, Mike, he goes through two hybrid experiences. He lives in Bhabha’s “in-between” space by oscillating between his peers’ and family’s ideologies and practices and those of his foreign wife. Then, after a period of internal struggle, he accepts the new religion, i.e. his wife’s religion, truly converts to it and practices it. Thus, he illustrates Pieterse’s notion of “destabilizing hybridity,” that “blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center.”<sup>398</sup> Two factors motivate Mike’s crossing of cultural and religious boundaries: his love for Anisa and his “unbelonging” to Western culture and being “unhomely” in his religion.

---

<sup>398</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

III.a. Part One:  
The Female Protagonist's Hybrid Identity and  
Religious Rebirth

## Introduction to Part One

As mentioned above, this part will be devoted to studying the female protagonist's hybrid experience and identity development from the viewpoint of several scholars, particularly through examining Bhabha's "in-between" space, Pieterse's "assimilationist hybridity," and her "religious rebirth" from an Islamic point of view by analyzing the elements of "repentance." But first we will explain what each notion means, and demonstrate why they are relevant to apply to Anisa's case and how she illustrates, confirms, and modulates these notions.

We have already explained Bhabha's notion of "in-between" space in the first chapter, but it is necessary to summarize the discussion again in order to understand how Anisa experiences this situation keeping in mind the particularities of the case at hand. According to Bhabha, crossing cultural boundaries is an essential step for hybridity to occur. When individuals move to a new environment, they might encounter new cultural and religious beliefs and practices. Adapting to these practices might be required in order to survive in the new environment, which results in developing a hybrid identity. Bhabha asserts: "[...] hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them."<sup>399</sup> The tension lived by the migrants between their native and the new culture results in what is called the "third space" or "in-between" space. It is in this space that the migrants oscillate between two cultures, and out of which they develop their new identity.

Bhabha's notion of "in-between" space is relevant to apply to Anisa's first stage of identity development. First, it is noticed that when Anisa moves to the United States, she encounters new ideologies and practices which are different from those of her native community. As a result, she lives in an "in-between" state in which she oscillates between the two set of beliefs and cultures. Moreover, Bhabha contends that identity is never fixed and is always in constant change. Identity formation is not constructed out of vacuum, either cultural or political. To Bhabha, identity always presupposes a sense of location and a relationship with others. However, this attention to place does not presuppose closure, for the representation of identity most often occurs precisely at the point when there has been a displacement.<sup>400</sup> Anisa witnesses change due to her displacement. With the passage of time,

---

<sup>399</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 216.

<sup>400</sup> Bhabha, cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 277.

she gradually discards her cultural and religious practices and adapts to those of the host culture.

Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity" is suitable to apply to this second stage of Anisa's identity development. "Assimilationist hybridity," according to Pieterse, is when the migrant leans over toward the center, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony. Anisa leans toward the center by establishing relationships with American friends and other hybrid people. This pushes her to forget about her own culture and integrate into the receiving culture. She ceases to perform the daily prayers, takes off the scarf, goes out to discos and clubs, and ends in marrying an American non-Muslim man.

Note that Gayatri Spivak cautions against migrant hybridity, fearing that the subaltern will be silenced once again. I find myself in agreement with Spivak's point, for when one adopts the new aspects of the host culture, this might weaken or even threaten the loss of one's native beliefs and practices. This is what happens in Anisa's case, for when she integrates into American society, she ceases her religious practices.

Anisa's transformation from being a conservative Muslim girl in her native culture to a westernized lady in American culture can be illustrated through Linda Alcoff's notion of "positionality." Alcoff contends that woman's position is relational according to the external situation in which she is present. Just as the position of a pawn on a chessboard is considered weak or strong depending on its position in relation to the other chess pieces, so is the position of woman: it is relative to a constantly shifting context. Contrary to the essentialists who believe that woman's identity is independent of the external situation, since her nurturing traits are innate, Alcoff argues that "the positional definition makes her [woman's] identity relative to a constantly shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions, and ideologies, and so on."<sup>401</sup> In my opinion, the identity of Anisa shifts according to context and is influenced by the external conditions in which she is present. Although Alcoff believes that woman's identity is influenced by the external context, she asserts that this does not mean that women are passive recipients of an identity determined merely by the external situation. Rather, women are part of the historicized fluid movement and play an active role in contributing to the context within which their position is delineated.<sup>402</sup> Alcoff's concept of "positionality" seems pertinent to apply to Anisa's identity shift. Although her identity is

---

<sup>401</sup> Linda Alcoff, "Cultural Feminism versus Post-Structuralism: The Identity Crisis in Feminist Theory," *Signs* 13.3 (Spring 1988): 433.

<sup>402</sup> Alcoff, 1988, p. 434.



influenced by external elements, nonetheless, Anisa actively engages in reconstructing her identity as we will see later in detail. Moreover, it is interesting to note that the concept of positionality is related to that of hybridity. Since hybridity opposes essentialism, so does positionality which, according to Alcoff, “allows for a determinate though fluid identity of woman that does not fall into essentialism.”<sup>403</sup>

Moreover, Marwan Kraidy’s notion of “cultural chameleons,”<sup>404</sup> which he uses in his study of the Lebanese Maronites community in Lebanon, can be applied to Anisa’s case. Kraidy finds that the Lebanese Maronites identify with Westerners or Arabs according to the context in which they are present. For example, one of the interviewees in Kraidy’s sample admits his reluctance to identify himself as an Arab when he is among Westerners because of his weariness of being associated with Western stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims.<sup>405</sup> Another interviewee confesses that he would deny his Arab identity if he is asked about his belonging by a Muslim because, he asserts: “if you are a Christian in an Arab country, you lose your rights and freedom...you are rated as second class citizen.”<sup>406</sup> Thus, Lebanese Maronites identity as Westerners or Arabs is context-bound. Identifying with one culture rather than the other according to the context in which one is present is useful to keep in mind while analyzing Anisa’s identity shift. Anisa has probably denied her Muslim identity when she settled in the American society in order to avoid being an underrated citizen.

However, Anisa’s hybrid state does not last long. After three months of marriage, she suffers from an internal struggle and agony that prompt her to return to her original religion and to abandon her converted non-practicing husband and go back to her home country. She goes through the process of “repentance,” which according to Nick Smith involves five elements: awe for the divine, recognition of sin, genuine remorse and contrition, resolve to right one’s actions, and the completion of restitution.<sup>407</sup> I will analyze how Anisa experiences these elements in the section devoted to religious rebirth.

Having defined Bhabha’s “in-between” space, Pieterse’s “assimilationist hybridity,” and the “religious rebirth” through the process of repentance, we will now study how these notions correspond to Anisa’s case in more details.

---

<sup>403</sup> Alcoff, 1988, p. 435.

<sup>404</sup> Kraidy, 2005, p. 139.

<sup>405</sup> Kraidy, 2005, 139.

<sup>406</sup> Kraidy, 2005, 139.

<sup>407</sup> Nick Smith, *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008, p. 118.

### III.a.I. Anisa's "In-between" Space

Displaced subjects, immigrants, refugees, exiles and most diasporic groups face cultural dilemma. When they move into a new culture, especially if they are members of a minority culture, they sense with cultural differences that exist between them and the host culture. Some might easily identify with the new cultural values and even choose to translate themselves culturally. If they choose to do so, they will have to form their identity in the tension between the already known and the new culture. They will struggle between maintaining their original cultural heritage alive while at the same time attempting to assimilate to the dominant culture. The result is that their identities become hybrid, for hybridity, according to Bhabha, is "bound to translating and transvaluing cultural differences."<sup>408</sup>

Anisa was shocked and surprised when she first arrived in the host country because of the cultural and religious differences that exist between her native culture and that of the receiving culture. Her first encounter with newness was through her roommate Florence, an American girl who is living a Western lifestyle that totally differs from Anisa's way of life. For instance, Anisa was surprised when she found out that Florence smoked and had a boyfriend, because those acts are not accepted in Anisa's Muslim community. In addition, Anisa was astonished when Florence told her that her mother left with a man and abandoned her when she was thirteen years old. What made Anisa more bewildered was that Florence's father lives with a woman, despite not being married to her: "Living under the same roof? And not married? Floor, please! I've had more than I can take for one night!"<sup>409</sup> Anisa's amazement at hearing such stories from her American friend Floor is justified by her conservative Muslim life back home. According to Islam, a woman can neither have a relationship with a man nor live with him without being married. Anisa has never had a boyfriend nor has she fallen in love with anyone. In fact, an arranged marriage was planned for her at the beginning of the novel. Moreover, Anisa is surprised when she notices that the host people do not have a sense of belonging to religion. She recognizes that their only fault is their complete ignorance of the One True God (p. 50) and that they are proud of this ignorance. She writes to her mother that she has never met a single Christian in the country.

---

<sup>408</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 252.

<sup>409</sup> Abdi, 2002, p. 47. The page number of further references to *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds* will be indicated in the text.

Anisa is a practicing Muslim, her personal belongings point to her religious affiliation. Her prayer mat and head scarf are neatly folded by her side, and the Koran is placed on the side table (p. 36). She always recalls her mother's advice about the importance of persistence in performing her daily prayers and reading the Koran and her promise for her that she would never neglect her duties (p. 35). However, with the passage of time, Anisa began to develop a hybrid identity by identifying with the new cultural values. She was learning more and more about the host culture: "Slowly but surely she was also beginning to understand and sometimes even adopt, albeit, unconsciously, some of the mannerisms and habits of her girlfriends" (p. 48). Bhabha asserts: "[...] hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them."<sup>410</sup> Anisa was translating herself culturally by adapting to and adopting some of the host people's habits. However, a tension was formed between her native way of life and the new lifestyle. This tension resulted in what is called the "third space" or "in-between" space, in which Anisa struggled between two cultures.

Anisa's "in-between" space lies in her attempts to maintain her cultural and religious background and her desire to assimilate to the host culture. Evidence from the novel illustrates this point. For instance, while no major change occurred to her outside outlook at the beginning, she took off the scarf when she began to hang out at discos and clubs. In addition, she abandoned her prayers unconsciously because she had no time to perform them except for the night time prayer which she completed like a thief for fear of being seen by the others. However, this too she later neglected although it was the only prayer out of the five daily prayers she used to performing during high school days. Due to her fear of hurting her parents' feelings, Anisa did not tell the truth about her prayers, which she abandoned, in her letters to her family back home. Anisa's link with her native culture and her commitment to follow her mother's advices made her lie at her when it came to informing her about her religious practices (p. 49). She exploited the fact that she has Muslim friends and acquaintances to persuade her mother that she is hanging out with Muslims, which would boost her remembrance of God (p. 55). Ironically, these Muslims are who encouraged her to adapt to the host ambiance, for they went to the nightspots and disco joints. "So brazen were they in their ways and mode of speech that you couldn't set them apart from their hosts" (p. 54). With time, Anisa became less and less detailed about her non-existent spiritual life (p. 53).

---

<sup>410</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 216.

Anisa struggled deep inside and did not feel at ease with herself because of her doings. Thoughts of life and death came into her mind, because she knew that she was acting against her religious principles. However, these thoughts would get dispelled and the good times with friends and the weekend disco continued (p. 54). Anisa became fascinated by the exciting, individualistic, Western lifestyle. She came to believe that her prayers and social life were things that concerned only her (p. 54). In addition, smoking and going out on a date with someone, which Anisa totally rejected at the beginning became an ordinary habit (p. 56). As Chambers contends: “The most conventional accounts assert hybridity as the process of cultural mixing where the diasporic arrivals adopt aspects of the host culture and rework, reform and reconfigure this in production of a new hybrid culture or ‘hybrid identities.’”<sup>411</sup>

Anisa’s “in-between” state is also revealed through her refusal of certain practices in the host culture despite the cigarette puffs, the discarded prayer mat, the disappearance of the Holy Book, and the new lifestyle she has adopted. This concerns the love before marriage practice, because when her friend Florence cautions her that she and Mike were sailing in opposite directions, Anisa expresses her alliance with the Muslim stance concerning this subject. She states that being engaged and wed in a traditional way by having children and falling in love after marriage is “superior to hop into bed first. Children second. Marriage third” (p. 61). This illustrates her refusal to marry Mike at the beginning, when she tells him that their marriage cannot be carried out because he is a *Kafir*, a non-Muslim (p. 65). The scene recalls Sammar’s proposal for Rae and her demand that he should convert in order for them to unite. Anisa, like Sammar, sticks to her religious identity and refuses to marry Mike because he is a non-believer. She tells Mike: “A *Kafir*’s a *Kafir*, that’s it, Mike. That’s your problem, you’re the sort of man I could never take to my folks” (p. 65). However, Anisa differs from Sammar in that the former did integrate into the host culture and embraced change while Sammar lived in her own “ghetto.”

Anisa’s “in-between” state persisted, since her rejection of marrying Mike did not end in their separation as in Sammar’s case. She maintained her relationship with him and they continued to go out together without formal marriage. However, thoughts from the past came into Anisa’s mind when she was on a date with Mike: “*leave a man and a woman alone and Shaitan becomes the third—it was an echo from the past. Leave a man and a woman alone and Shaitan becomes the third*” (p. 112). Anisa is enthusiastic and at the same time frightened to allow herself to go deeper into this prohibited interreligious relationship. When Mike

---

<sup>411</sup> Cited in Hutnyk, 2005, p. 81.

proposed to her again and wanted to introduce her to his parents, the words of Prophet Mohammad's hadith whispered in her ears again: "*leave a man and a woman alone and Shaitan becomes the third*" (p. 113). This signifies that although Anisa is living a Westernized life, her religious teachings are still in the back of her mind. Anisa's living in the "third space" does not allow her to settle into one fixed polarity, as Bhabha asserts: "This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy."<sup>412</sup> Anisa keeps oscillating between the two cultures until she completely abandons her cultural and religious background and assimilate to that of the host culture.

### III.a.II. Anisa's Assimilationist Hybridity

Bhabha, as we have seen, contends that identity is never fixed and that it is in a constant state of change.<sup>413</sup> Anisa's identity undergoes change after passing a considerable period in the American society, about five years. She is no longer living an "in-between" state, but she goes beyond this stage to become fully assimilated to the new culture. She experiences what Pieterse calls "assimilationist hybridity," where the migrant leans over toward the center, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony. This is illustrated by her consent to marry Mike even before he converts to Islam. Anisa "mimics hegemony" for her marriage is a civil one, which is considered void according to her religion. Unlike Sammar, Anisa surrenders to her personal desire of love across cultures. She accepts to translate herself religiously and culturally: "Her earlier resolve of first *faith and then wedding* forgotten in the meekness of utter pliancy" (p. 114). Anisa marries Mike despite the religious barrier; she knows that he is not Muslim, that he drinks beer and eats pork, but she accepts to wed him (p. 488). By doing this, she breaks her religious laws and leans over toward the center, which is represented by her husband's American culture.

Moreover, Anisa leans over toward the center by establishing relationships with the host people and hanging out at discos and clubs, and by ceasing to perform her daily prayers and taking off the scarf. Her integration into the Western society has changed her, because she has encountered "newness" which made her adopt the Western ideology of the importance of

---

<sup>412</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

<sup>413</sup> Bhabha cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 277.

individuality and freedom of choice. Anisa is no longer the obedient and subservient girl who is under her parents' control. She has become a wise woman who has her own opinion and can make her own decisions. When she went back home during summer vacation and her friend Faiza told her that they are planning to affiance her, she told Faiza: "I'm not the frightened Anisa they shipped off to America. I've learned quite a bit since, and one of the skills that I've picked up is how to say a simple no" (p. 81). In addition, When Anisa's uncle brought the groom home to introduce him to Anisa, the girl was bold enough to make him leave. She conveyed the message to him that if he is looking for a woman who would serve him and cook for him, then she is not the right one for that (p. 91). Anisa has her own life now; she rebels against her religious principles by rejecting to marry in a traditional way. She maintains her relationship with Mike and attends parties despite her mother's and uncle's advices for her to live an Islamic way of life (p. 111).

Anisa's identity-shift from being a practicing Muslim to a Westernized young lady can be illustrated through Linda Alcoff's notion of "positionality." Alcoff argues that a woman's position is relational according to the external situation in which she is present.<sup>414</sup> This is true in the case of Anisa, for Anisa's position as a religious person is influenced by external factors. When she is in Rako Island, Anisa's conservative family influences her to maintain her spiritual life. However, when she moves to the United States, she abandons her religious teachings and practices. Anisa declares to Khadija: "Since the day I came to this country, I'd been leading a double life, except for the few times I'd been home, even then it was for the sake of my family. Can you believe it?" (p. 201). Anisa admits that she has been living a hybrid life in the United States; because she has abandoned her religious and cultural practices and it is only when she goes back home that she practices them again merely because of her parents' influence.

Anisa's abandoning of her religious practices, we can say, is affected, to a certain extent, by the host society's reaction to her acts. They see her as picky for she does not eat everything and some sort of freak because of her prayers (p. 41). Thus, in order to gain the host people's acceptance of her, she finds it more practical to deny her religious belonging. This illustrates Kraidy's notion of "cultural chameleons," where the identification with one culture rather than the other is context-bound. In other words, one might deny his ethnic belonging in order to avoid being an underrated citizen in the dominant culture, or one might identify with his/her national belonging if that would place him in a dominant position. Anisa

---

<sup>414</sup> Alcoff, 1988, p. 433.

has probably denied her Muslim identity when she settled in the American society in order to avoid being an underrated citizen, and identified with her Islamic belonging when she went to Rako in order to be accepted by her community.

### III.a.III. Anisa's Religious Rebirth through Intercultural Marriage

Anisa's hybrid state and assimilationst phase did not last long. Stuart Hall notes that cultural identity is never complete and is always in continuous fluidity and flux, and so is the hybrid nature of one's identity. Hybrid identity is not stable; it might change with time, context, and border crossings. He writes:

Cultural identity... is a matter of "becoming" as well as "being". It belongs to the future as much as to the past. It is not something which already exists, transcending place, time, history, and culture. Cultural identities... have histories. But, like everything which is historical, they undergo constant transformation. Far from being eternally fixed in some essentialized past, they are subject to the continuous "play" of history, culture, and power.<sup>415</sup>

Thus, if hybrid identity is not stable as Hall contends, then one might develop a counter-reaction to hybridity, where migrants search for their roots to preserve their native identity rejecting any kind of change. This is what Anisa goes through especially when she enters a cross-cultural marriage. She experiences what I will call a "religious rebirth" where she "returns" to her religious laws and seeks to preserve her religious identity. Anisa's reaction opens up a new dimension that Bhabha and other hybridity theorists have not taken into account. Her case makes an interesting contrast with the other characters' reactions especially Julie who embraced hybridity when she encountered a new culture and Sammar who declined to convert herself in the host environment. Anisa embraced change when she encountered a new culture, but then "returned" to her religious belonging when she entered an intercultural and interreligious marriage.

Anisa, after marrying across cultures, realizes that she has lost her native identity and religious belonging particularly because of her husband's reluctance to convert to Islam. She attempts to impose her religion on her husband, but to no avail. Being unable to cope with the new situation, Anisa begins to re-identify herself with her religion by seeking repentance and rejecting the hybrid state in which she has placed herself.

---

<sup>415</sup> Hall, in Rutherford, 1990, p. 236.

Hall argues that one possible response by ethnic or marginal groups to globalization and modernity is ethnic fundamentalism:

When the movements of the margins are so profoundly threatened by the global forces of postmodernity, they can themselves retreat into their own exclusivist and defensive enclaves. And at that point, local ethnicities become as dangerous as national ones. We have seen that happen: the refusal of modernity which takes the form of a return, a rediscovery of identity which constitutes a form of fundamentalism.<sup>416</sup>

As Hall suggests, movements of subordinate groups return to the local by recovering their roots, rediscovering their places of origin and the histories that had been lost to the dominant cultures.

Anisa, an ethnic minority in the American society, feels that her cultural identity, and more particularly her religious identity, is threatened especially after being engaged in a cross-cultural marriage. This leads her to “return,” but not to her ethnic roots, in the sense employed by Hall in the previous quotation, as much as to her religious belonging. Her “return” takes the form of religious awakening, not in the sense of a spiritual quest, for Anisa was already a true believer and a practicing Muslim, but in the sense of repentance or *Tawbah*, which literally means “to return.” According to Akbar Husain, “Repentance is described as the awakening of the soul from the slumber of heedlessness, so that the sinner becomes aware of his evil ways and feels contrition for past disobedience.”<sup>417</sup> Anisa, having failed to convince her husband to embrace faith and practice Islam, recognizes the sin she has committed by marrying a non-Muslim. She goes through agony and experiences remorse, which pushes her to leave what God has prohibited and return to what He has commanded.

Anisa passes through what Nick Smith describes as the central elements of repentance in Islam: awe for the divine, recognition of sin, genuine remorse and contrition, resolve to right one’s actions, and the completion of restitution.<sup>418</sup> First, she has awe for the divine because she “fears” of being punished by God for discarding her religious practices and crossing her religious teachings. She recognizes her sin when her subconscious is suddenly awakened and realizes that her marriage is void because of marrying a non-Muslim (p. 117). In one of the sleepless nights, she wakes her husband up and shouts: “Our marriage is awful...in the eyes of God it’s null and void” (p. 184). Her “awe” is illustrated by the voices

---

<sup>416</sup> Stuart Hall, “The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity,” in Anthony Douglas King, *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997, p. 36.

<sup>417</sup> Akbar Husain, *Islamic Psychology: Emergence of a New Field*, New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2006, p. 132.

<sup>418</sup> Smith, 2008, p. 118.



that keep reminding her of her sin. “*Enormous! Unforgivable!* Thundered the voices. *Who can forgive such enormous sins!*” (p. 211). Anisa cannot get rid of the voices that fought for command over her, confronting her with conflicting messages, and ordering her with irrational do’s and don’ts (p. 228). She tells her doctor that she keeps hearing a metallic pounding in her head (p. 182), and that she is overwhelmed by a sensation of horror that prevents her from pronouncing the *shahada*.

In addition, she fears dying as a sinner before she has the chance to repent. She realizes that death is round the corner when she hears a vociferous voice warning of immense effect: “*Your time is up. We’ll delay it no more. Now’s the time for death! You either do it! Or we do it! The sinner must go!*” (p. 211). She has a conscious fit because she has discarded her prayers for a long time, especially when Mike tells her that he has never caught her praying (p. 69). Not only religion, but also psychological approaches to repentance illustrate Anisa’s reflex and her feelings of “fear.” One of the psychological approaches that interpret the process of repentance is the “Fear-theory,” which is mentioned in Max Scheler’s essay on “Repentance and Rebirth.”<sup>419</sup> According to the Fear-theory, repentance is nothing but a fear from punishment by a religious justice system: “Repentance is ‘nothing but’ a kind of wish that one hadn’t done something, which wish is founded in a fear, that has become as it were pointless, of possible punishment.”<sup>420</sup> Anisa wishes that she has not rushed the marriage decision: “Oh! My emotions where have you led me? These three months where was I?” (p. 117), and seeks repentance in fear of being punished by God.

Moreover, Anisa experiences the third element of Islamic “repentance” which is the feelings of “remorse” for her transgression. She is now conscious that faith is more important for her than her love for Mike: “I love Allah, and I love my faith. I just can’t understand why I chose you over my faith. *Ya Allah*, what have I done? All these years of my life, where have I been? *Ya Allah!* Rescue me just this once!” (p. 118-119). This illustrates the importance of religion in shaping and influencing how individuals live. As Phil Zuckerman states: “Sociologists are fascinated by the affects of religion on people’s sex lives, political views, national identities, economic activities, eating habits, career choices, marital relations, and, conversely, how such things affect people’s religious identities.”<sup>421</sup> Anisa goes through an agony and lives in a state of depression, for she cannot accept the fact that her husband used

---

<sup>419</sup>Max Scheler, “Repentance and Rebirth,” in Max Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010, p. 38.

<sup>420</sup> Scheler, 2010, p. 38.

<sup>421</sup> Phil Zuckerman, *An Invitation to Sociology of Religion*, New York: Routledge, 2003, p. 25.

Islam to get married and not to adopt it as a way of life. She blames herself for falling into the trap of his disbelief and for becoming one because of his doubting heart. She thinks that she has betrayed her religious belonging and “became like those of whom Allah says in the Qur’an: They see but see not, and hear but hear not” (p. 318). Her declaration to the psychiatrist reflects the inner struggle she is living: “You’re looking at a sinner. Look at this Muslim woman. She is a mother of two children and she’s doubts about her marriage. How does that grab you?” (p. 214). She adds:

Doctor, is being married to an unbeliever normal? Perhaps it’s so in your world, but certainly not in mine. My situation’s the opposite of normal. That’s why it’s so normal for me to feel so abnormal. But what amazes me is how did this abnormal situation ever come to pass? *Who* actually got married to Mike? Was it Anisa Ali Haaji or the real *me*? Who do you think got married to this man? (p. 214)

Her declaration reflects the “doubleness” of her identity, for she is now aware that she was not the real religious Anisa when she married across cultures. Anisa cannot believe that she has lived all these years with a non-believer. She feels that she is a dishonest Muslim and her husband is a big liar because four years passed and still there is no sign of change.

Anisa’s depression state can be analyzed from another psychological approach to repentance, the “Hangover-theory,” which views repentance as:

a state of depression which normally supervenes once the tensions accompanying an action have been relaxed, whenever the after-effects have proved harmful and unpleasant. Thus Repentance is by nature a kind of “moral hangover”, which admittedly finds a subsequent “higher significance” in the act of judgment.<sup>422</sup>

Scheler explains that excesses in the satisfaction of sensual instincts and their depressive after-effects form, in this view, the basis of a melancholy state of mind in which we afterwards refuse these excesses. Anisa having satisfied her instincts and personal desire of marrying the person she loves experiences a melancholic state of mind when she realizes the harmful effects of her act. She is finally aware that things are not right and need to be “resolved”: “I can’t deny it anymore. I know it as I must’ve always known that some things are just not right. That’s how they’re. Not right. Totally wrong, and there’s no way around them than to avoid them. I can’t even bring myself to tell my family” (p. 118). She declares that all what she wants is to be a willing servant as her God has intended for her in order to be fulfilled. She seeks to resolve what she has committed, which is the fourth element of repentance, by drowning herself more in religion; she turns to God and cries to Him:

---

<sup>422</sup> Scheler, 2010, p. 38.

O sole reformer of beings, recreate me and reform me and don't leave me to the mercies of my own nature. Bless me with a new heart, Ya Rabb! You're indeed the sole designer of hearts. Ya Rabb! When You choose to return my mind, don't give me back the mindset I had before you remembered me. (p. 231)

In addition, she changes her dressing style and wears the scarf despite her husband's rejection. She tells him: "Can't I be who I am? Haven't I run away from myself long enough? For once in my life, I'm really trying to be *who* I really am, and yet no one seems to appreciate it. For the first time in my life I'm really trying to rid myself of my duplicity..." (p. 235). She adds:

Whether you like it or not, Mike, the era of showcasing is over for this woman. My hair and my body belong to me and no one else. I'm not public property, not anymore. And if people find it so arduous, then that's their problem. I want to be me. I've just found myself, and I'm not letting go of me. This is the natural me. (p. 236)

Woodward refers to George Herbert Mead, an American social philosopher, who claimed that identities were produced in a social context and through the individual's thinking about what links him/her to the world. This is done through symbolizing. "We symbolize the sort of person we want others to think we are through the clothes we wear and the way in which we behave."<sup>423</sup> Anisa chooses to wear the hijab as a symbol to associate herself with Muslims.

Having failed to make her husband a practicing Muslim, Anisa could no longer be patient and handle her husband's non-belief; thus, in order to "complete her restitution" and repair her sin, she leaves her husband and goes back to her homeland. Anisa in her second letter to Mike insists that she is not regretful for what she did because it is her right to be herself and to choose the path she wants to follow (p. 360). She was glad for being away and prayed for Mike's soul day and night (p. 263). The situation resembles that of Sammar when she went back to Sudan because Rae refused to convert. She, too, prayed for Rae to convert for his sake and not for the sake of marrying her.

### III.a.IV. Factors Causing Anisa's Hybridity and Return to Religious Practice

We have seen that Anisa goes through a hybrid experience when she encounters newness in the American culture. She first lives "in-between" her cultural and religious

---

<sup>423</sup> Woodward, 2004, p. 12.

practices and those of the host culture. However, with time, she dissociates herself from her native culture and integrates into the new culture. This is asserted by her relationship with the host people and her love for someone from a different religion. After marrying across cultures, Anisa's religious beliefs are awakened and she finds herself living in sin. She undergoes an internal struggle and seeks repentance; thus, returns to her native belonging.

In order to find out the relation between Anisa's cross-cultural relationship and both her hybrid identity and religious awakening, different factors will be analyzed in this section. Each experience is motivated by certain factors. Anisa's hybrid experience, represented by her integration into the American culture, is motivated by the fact that she was living in a hybrid society in Rako Island. In addition, her relationship with the host people, particularly her cross-cultural relationship with Mike causes her to distance herself from her religious and cultural practices and identify with those of the host culture. Her decision of marrying him before even he converts to Islam asserts her hybrid experience. However, this cross-cultural and forbidden relationship is also the cause that makes Anisa aware of the sin she has committed and is the main reason that pushes her to seek repentance and return to her religion as we have seen in the "religious rebirth" section. In addition, other factors arouse Anisa's religious consciousness such as: the religious and conservative family she was raised in; and the person in charge at the Islamic community's office in the host culture and her friends Floor and Faiza.

### *The Hybrid Society in Rako Island*

There are two aspects in Rako's society that make Anisa integrates into American society and develop a hybrid identity. First, the fact that Anisa is not allowed to mix with the "other" culture in Rako is a reason for her to explore what "otherness" is about when she moves to the host country. The second aspect, as Anisa admits, is the missionary schools and their extra curriculum in Rako.

Anisa is living in a Muslim community that is considered a minority among the non-Muslim ruling elite in Rako Island. However, we notice in the novel that the two societies are not living in harmony, for they always clash and cannot tolerate each other. On the one hand, Anisa attends a Christian school and mixes with Christian friends in Rako; however, she is aware of the cultural and religious differences that exist between the two cultures and realizes that she should never imitate the others (p. 12). On the other hand, the Christian principal at

Anisa's school is shocked to learn that Anisa's name appears on the school exchange program's short list. She explains to Anisa's teacher, who included Anisa's name: "education's a waste on these people, and I'm amazed at your ignorance of that basic reality [...] the more you teach them, the more impudent they become. There's no place for our teachings in their hearts" (p. 14). She adds that the school's mission is to convert Muslim kids (p. 15) and people of other creeds (p. 17), and that the Muslim community in the Island should be kept at the bottom of the social hierarchy for they constitute an impediment to the Christian community's success (p. 16). Thus, total freedom is not practiced in Rako's society especially when it concerns the Muslim community, for they are marginalized and kept at the periphery.

Not allowed to mix with the other culture in Rako due to her mother's orders, Anisa manifests a counter reaction when she moves to the American culture by establishing relationships with the host people and falling in love with someone from a different religion, and by her specialization in English literature, which she believes is a window for her to acquaint herself with different cultures (p. 93). This illustrates Alcoff's notion of "positionality," where woman's identity is affected by the external situation in which she is present. Anisa is a teenager living under her conservative family's control and thus is obliged to follow their orders. However, when she moves to a new culture that celebrates heterogeneity and hybridity, Anisa finds herself free to associate herself with the cultural group she likes and develop a hybrid identity. This asserts Keri Smith's belief that exposure to global communication and cross-cultural contact plant the seed for hybridity to take root.<sup>424</sup>

Note also that the cultural tradition in Rako, which states that girls should be married at an early age, could be another reason for Anisa to escape her culture's rules and integrate into the host society. The novel begins with a plot of an arranged marriage for Anisa who is just fifteen years old. According to Anisa's Muslim community, girls should not go out with men without official marriage. Anisa's mother's two friends, the aunts, advise her that she should make her daughter marry to protect her reputation and virginity especially since they are living among a non-Muslim majority: "girls much younger than Anisa are being spotted everyday in the company of young men, sometimes even in the arms of the *Kafir*. Here's a good chance for you to steer her away from such foolishness" (p. 3). Thus, insisting on affiancing the girl even if Anisa dismisses the whole idea makes her rebel against this

---

<sup>424</sup> Keri Iyall Smith, "The Impact of Indigenous Hybridity on the Formation of World Society," Easton, Feb. 20, 2006, accessed Dec. 3, 2012, < [www.uzh.ch/wsf/WSFocus\\_KISmith.pdf](http://www.uzh.ch/wsf/WSFocus_KISmith.pdf) >.

tradition in the host culture by falling in love and marrying a man without her parent's knowledge.

The second aspect that makes Anisa dissociate from her cultural and religious beliefs is the missionary schools she attended in Rako Island. The missionary schools, with their extra curriculum and incessant homework, left no time for students to pursue spiritual knowledge at the *madrasah*. The *madrasah*, to Muslim students, was some sort of a pre-school institution, but many of the students never returned to it once their schooling began except for those whose parents were headstrong (p. 270). Because of this, many youngsters of Anisa's age did deviate from the strict path of their faith despite their strong belief in the perfection of their faith. In the past, the Christian elite ruled the Island and controlled the Muslim minority, but now they were forced to deal with the demands of the Muslim community who wanted to repeal the law that forbade the construction of Islamic schools (p. 267). For fear of rebellion, the state gave permission to build a standard school for its minority group who were supported financially by a rich Islamic state. The school would fulfill the specific needs of the Muslim child, offering a decent Islamic education that would strengthen his/her belief and spiritual leanings. Arabic was to be taught as a second language, for this would enhance students' comprehension of the Koran. Islamic culture, history, and literature were to replace the study of British history (p. 268).

Anisa did not attend the *madrasah*, for her spiritual knowledge was attained through her parents (p. 273). Thus, in search for a convincing reason that made her deviate from her religious teachings, Anisa realizes that it is the school environment that caused it: "Now that she could reason out her own deviation more objectively, Anisa was now able to pin down, at least, some of the things that might have attributed to and even started the wheel of the tremendous errors of her life" (p. 272). Thus, Anisa's education in a missionary school which involved a hybrid sample of the Island's society paved the way for Anisa's transgression of her religious teachings in the host environment.

### *Anisa's Family and Acquaintance*

In contrast to the hybrid life that Anisa confronted in the missionary schools and Rako's society, her family's conservative life assured that she should follow her religious teachings. This has played an important factor in Anisa's religious awakening and "return" to her religious spirit after she has lost it when she was crossing cultures.

First, Anisa's mother is depicted as a conservative religious person who opposes change and innovation. This is manifested through her description of the hybrid ambiance that dominates her island in an unsatisfactory manner:

Since the opening up of the island to the outside world, more and more scantily clad foreigners were pouring in [...] There the skimpy clothing in which they came was skinned away, and the flesh fully exposed to the sweltering rays of the sun—the unblushing bodies a common feast for all. No longer confined to the outlying strands, these sentinels of bad taste were now swarming the neighborhoods. (p. 7)

What bothers Anisa's mother is that the foreign influx to their Island introduces new cultural practices such as the style of clothing, drinking habits, and other traditions that oppose Islamic principles. She and the small Muslim community on the Island raised their complaints, but they were declined by the non-Muslim ruling elite who viewed them “as an archaic folk who refuse to change with the times” (p. 8). This recalls Nadia Butt's declaration: “A large majority of Muslims today consider it an obligation to keep Islam in a water-tight compartment lest any outside influence may tarnish its codes and character.”<sup>425</sup>

In addition, Anisa's mother rejects the idea of her daughter mixing with Christian friends and asks her to stick with the Muslim girls. She says: “When I was your age, we never did have the need to mix with the *kafir* population” (p. 11). As the quote reveals, Anisa's mother is not tolerant of others, because she herself was raised in an environment that taught her not to mix with the non-Muslim population in the Island. She also opposes the opportunity offered to her daughter (to travel to the United States as an exchange student) since she does not want her daughter to deviate from the right path and be lost in the Western culture. She expresses her worry that her daughter might not stick to her religious practices once she arrives in the new environment: “I'd be lying if I said was impressed with your daily prayers. Anisa, you're missing your *Salat* almost all the time. Now, I wonder, how you'd fare without me” (p. 33). However, when she is finally convinced to allow her daughter to travel abroad, she makes sure to remind Anisa of praying and reading the Koran. She preaches to her on the importance of prayers: “If you keep your Lord in your heart, He'll provide protection, so keep your link with Him and you'll be all right. *Salat* is what keeps a Muslim from going astray. *Salat* protects from evil. It purifies the body, cleanses the spirit and keeps one from bad deeds” (p. 33-34). Anisa's religious practices are guided by her mother who insures that her daughter does not miss them. However, Anisa seems to be merely complying with her

---

<sup>425</sup>Butt, 2009, p. 172.

mother's wishes (p. 12), for she abandons them once she is in the host environment, and when she goes back home from America, she acts as if she has not missed a single prayer (p. 76).

Not only her mother, but also her step-father, who is also her uncle, reminds her of hijab and of the importance of prayers in one of her summer visits to the Island. He tells her: "You also know that *Salat* is one of the five pillars of Islam, second only to the *Shahada*, and that it is a special favor conferred on the Muslims by the merciful Allah" (p. 102).

Anisa's family's constant reminders for her to persist with her prayers and follow her religious teachings affect her, as we notice that she hides the truth about the new life she has embraced in the American culture. She does not tell her family about her civil marriage and doesn't want Mike to inform them either until he converts to Islam (p. 123). This reflects her commitment to her family's trust which she promised not to break.

Anisa's religious upbringing in a conservative ambience is reflected in her fear to reveal to her family the sin she has committed. She hasn't written to them for months and they can't get in touch with her because she didn't leave a forwarding address. In addition, when she knew of Mike's letter to her uncle where he told him that Anisa was pregnant and that he is her wedded husband, she felt ashamed of what she had put her family through and wept because she is living in sin (p. 199). She felt guilty because she had failed her parents and betrayed the trust they had in her.

Anisa's influence from her family and by the conservative life she was raised in illustrates the notion that identity is shaped according to the social, cultural, economic, and religious norms of the environment in which the individual lives. It is nearly impossible for a person while growing up not to be influenced by his/her surroundings. The influence by one's environment results in what the sociologist N. Jayaram calls "the socio-cultural baggage"<sup>426</sup> that is carried by the individual wherever he goes. However, this does not mean that the individual is a passive recipient of what is surrounding him/her. People do actively engage in the construction of their own identities. They are capable of choosing the groups they want to identify with and the groups from which they want to distance themselves. "Although society may try to impose identity in an absolute way, individuals often differ in how they define group boundaries and how strongly they identify with their own and other groups."<sup>427</sup> We have seen that Anisa's conservative upbringing forces her to identify with the Muslim community and follow her religious teachings, but she was not a passive recipient of her

---

<sup>426</sup> Jayaram cited in Kulkarni, 2011.

<sup>427</sup> Root, 1996, 115.



environment and was able to cross the religious barrier and distance herself from her parents. However, it cannot be denied that the “socio-cultural baggage,” and religious baggage, I would add, have an influence on her in regretting the sin she has committed. She declared that she was born and raised by honest believing parents, but she did not follow their path. Not that she was a disbeliever in God, but she chose to walk in the darkness instead of the light which she knew was there. She admitted that she acted against her own nature and became her own oppressor (p. 317). She also declared that she would not have deviated from the right path if she had listened to her mother’s advice: “I’ve to be honest with you, Ali, my downward slip did not start with you. The slippery descent began long before our lives crossed. I very much doubt our paths would’ve ever crossed had I heeded my mother’s last words to me before my departure from Rako Island” (p. 317-318).

In addition to her family, Anisa’s acquaintance with Yusuf, the person in charge at the Islamic community’s office in the host culture, whom she met by chance at a restaurant, influenced her to arouse from her heedlessness. This illustrates Phil Zuckerman belief that “An individual’s personal religious identity (or lack thereof) is greatly influenced by where, when, and among whom that individual lives.”<sup>428</sup>

When Anisa told Yusuf her story, he offered her help and told her to get in touch with him: “don’t forget, I’m your brother, and I’m only a click away, and don’t forget it’s not too late for you to remedy the situation. You’ve only one life. Think hard” (p. 130).

Yusuf preached to her that emotions are not enough in a real marriage, and there should be inner compatibility between the couple in order for the marriage to succeed. Yusuf knew that people who converted and got married the same day were only using the center to get a marriage certificate (p. 135). He asserted that marriages between Muslims and new converts were no good. He added that he is not against love as long as it’s within the boundary of Allah’s limits (p. 131). He warned Anisa that “spiritual matters have a way of knotting things” (p. 132), and that she should think harder concerning her marriage to Mike especially if he was liable to gamble, drink, take drugs, and had foolish ideas about God and his prophets (p. 133). Yusuf’s talk and warnings influenced Anisa, but she did not realize their importance until she was immersed in her sin. She told Yusuf that she can’t explain what had happened to her and did not know why she got involved in this relationship.

In addition, Khadija, Yusuf’s wife, advised Anisa that as long as it concerns Mike’s heart she should leave that to God, because the man married her in a proper manner. She

---

<sup>428</sup> Zuckerman, 2003, p. 25.

should show him the true spirit of Islam by changing herself first and acting like a true Muslim despite her feeling that she had severed the bond with God. Khadija preaches that God's mercy transcends His wrath and that His door is never closed for those who ask forgiveness and repentance (p. 201).

Moreover, Anisa's friends, Floor and Faiza, played a role in reminding her of the incompatibility between her and Mike and of the dead end of their relationship. When Anisa asked Florence's opinion of Mike, she told her: "Cute, kind of exotic...very preserving. Not pushy. Not so bulky, if only he were a Muslim" (p. 59). Floor opposed Anisa's relationship with Mike, for she knows that they are travelling in two separate boats. While Mike believes in sex before marriage, Anisa cannot accept this practice because of her religious teachings. In addition, Faiza thought that it was strange for Mike and Anisa to be together: "My dear Anisa, you're disrupting nature... Mike Peterson & Anisa Ali Haaji, what the world's coming to!" (p. 80). She could not accept the idea of Anisa's relationship with Mike whom she called a "happy kafir" (p. 98). She reminded Anisa that Mike might refuse faith, because it is not that easy to switch from non-faith to faith without any motivation (p. 95). She advised her to consider the fact that faith had never entered his heart, otherwise she would regret it. Faiza's remarks flashed at the back of Anisa's mind when she became aware of her sin and realized the difficult situation she has placed herself in especially when Mike compared himself with God: "And if the interior's never been lit by faith won't one be left with a slacking unlit shell? Are you prepared for that my friend?" (p. 119).

To conclude the relation between Anisa's cross-cultural relationship and her two experiences of hybridity and repentance, we can say that Anisa's hybridity is not motivated by her cross-cultural relationship since Anisa was already living a hybrid life when she met Mike. Her hybridity is mainly caused by Rako's hybrid society and by her integration into the American culture which culminated in her marriage across cultures. However, Anisa's intercultural marriage has caused her to develop a counter-reaction to hybridity represented by the process of "return" or "religious rebirth" or what we shall call from an Islamic point of view "repentance," which is motivated by her conservative family's life and her acquaintances who reminded her of the importance of religion in one's life and of the incompatibility between her and Mike. It is interesting to note that Anisa's repentance stage is highlighted in the novel by the insertion of intertextual elements mainly verses from the Koran in order to emphasize the importance of repentance in Islam as we will see in the following sub-section.

### III.a.V. Intertextuality

Having defined what intertextuality is in the first two chapters, I am not going to provide a detailed definition of intertextuality here. Suffice it to say that the intertextual presence in Abdi's novel is represented by the employment of quotations by Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya, one of the famous figures in the Sufi tradition, and by the abundance of verses taken from the Koran and by the presence of Prophet Mohammed's hadith.

These intertextual elements contribute to and complement the previous discussion on Anisa's development of a hybrid and an anti-hybrid identity, especially her repentance and "return" to religion case. Most of the verses as we will notice revolve around the theme of committing sin and seeking repentance.

The first chapter of the novel begins with a quotation by Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya: "May God steal from you all that steals you from Him," which is mentioned in Charles Upton's *Doorkeeper of the heart—versions of Rabi'a* (2004).<sup>429</sup> Rabi'a was an eighth century major saint of Islam and one of the central figures of Sufi tradition. Her life is still a source of inspiration for many Muslim women. Muslim feminists like Leila Ahmed make references to her,<sup>430</sup> but so do women from 'fundamentalist' movements. Rabi'a introduced the actual concept of Divine Love, and was the first to introduce the idea that God should be loved for God's own sake, not out of fear. She devoted her life for prayers and was fully submitted to religious life. One of the aspects of her teachings is repentance, which she believes is a gift from God because no one could repent unless God had already accepted him and given him this gift of repentance. It is related that Rabi'a was always weeping and when it was said to her: "Why do you weep like this?" She said: "I fear that I may be cut off from Him to whom I accustomed and that at the hour of death a voice may say that, I am not worthy."<sup>431</sup> The concept of sin to Rabi'a was not sorrowful because of the punishment in the hereafter but because it separates the sinner from God.

The quote: "May God steal from you all that steals you from Him" is most probably a sort of prayer directed to Anisa to persist on practicing religion, and it also serves as an

---

<sup>429</sup> Charles Upton and Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya, *Doorkeeper of the Heart—Versions of Rabi'a*, n.p: Pir Press, 2004.

<sup>430</sup> Leila Ahmed, "Feminism and Cross-Cultural Inquiry: The Terms of the Discourse in Islam," in E. Weed (ed.), *Coming to Terms*, New York & London: Routledge, 1989; and Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992.

<sup>431</sup> Nusba Parveen, "The Contribution of Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya in Sufism," *Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan* 40. 1 (Jan. 27, 2009), accessed Dec. 11, 2012, <<http://www.jaihoon.com/1014.htm>>.

allusion for further events that will take place in the novel especially Anisa's diversion from the "right path" when she faces new conditions that steal her from her religious life.

In addition, it is interesting to show the intertextual relation between Rabi'a's biography and Anisa's character. Anisa is raised in a religious family just like Rabi'a, but when she moves to America she abandons her religious life, unlike Rabi'a who consecrates her life for prayers and devotion. Note also that Rabi'a's concept of repentance relates to Anisa's case, for repentance plays a major role in Anisa's life. The latter is awestruck by the divine when she recognizes the sin she has committed. She keeps hearing voices that remind her of her sin and is frightened that death may take her away before she repents, which reflects the above mentioned quote by Rabi'a when she is asked about her weeping. Just like Rabi'a who believes that sin separates one from God, Anisa thinks that her sin is the cause of her separation from God and blames herself for ignoring her religious teachings: "I love Allah, and I love my faith. I just can't understand why I chose you over my faith. *Ya Allah*, what have I done? All these years of my life, where have I been? *Ya Allah!* Rescue me just this once!" (p. 118-119).

The sin that Anisa committed as we have seen previously is marrying someone who is not a Muslim. This is reflected in the verse Anisa read when she was at Yusuf's office. Yusuf explained what the verse means because of Anisa's lack of Arabic:

And do not marry the idolatresses until they believe, and certainly a believing maid is better than an idolatress woman, even though she should please you; and do not give (believing women) in marriage to idolaters until they believe, and certainly a believing servant is better than an idolater, and Allah invites to the garden and to forgiveness by His will and makes clear His communications to men, that they may be mindful.<sup>432</sup> (p. 142-143)

The verse plays a central role as it deals with one of the dominant themes in the novel which is the prohibition of interreligious marriage in Islam. Since the Koran strongly premises the marriage principle on compassion, love, help, and care to the spouse, Islam constitutes and maintains rules that may help Muslims to achieve the goals of the religion. The theological discouragement to marry a *Mushrik* (idolater) is a kind of Islamic strategy to preserve the existence of the marriage institution and allow Muslims to better achieve the aims of their faith.

---

<sup>432</sup> The Koran, chapter 2, verse 221.

According to Ibn Kathir<sup>433</sup> explanation of the verse, Allah prohibited the believers from marrying Mushrik women who worship idols. Although the meaning is general and includes every Mushrik woman from among the idol worshippers and the People of the Scripture, Allah excluded the People of the Scripture from this ruling.<sup>434</sup> Allah then said: “And give not (your daughters) in marriage to Al-Mushrikin till they believe (in Allah alone).”<sup>435</sup> This means that do not marry Mushrik men to believing women because a believing man, even if he is an Abyssinian servant, is better than a Mushrik man, even if he was a rich master.<sup>436</sup>

The reason for allowing Muslim men, and not Muslim women, to enter in an interreligious marriage on condition that the wives belong to the people of the Scripture is justified under Islamic law by the fact that the children would take their father’s name and grow up in his religious and cultural environment. The situation would be reversed in the case of a Muslim woman marrying a Jewish or Christian man, where the children would be raised in a non-Muslim culture and most likely grow up to be non-Muslims.<sup>437</sup>

Moreover, Sayid Qutb relates that, in providing a historical explanation of this verse, Muslims in the early days of Islam in Makah could not disengage themselves socially although they had succeeded in detaching themselves spiritually and ideologically. In Madinah, however, where Muslims were to acquire an independent social as well as religious identity, the new social order began to take shape with the introduction of these Koranic verses prohibiting marriage of Muslims and idol worshippers. God does not want marriage to

---

<sup>433</sup> Note that there are many interpretations of the Koran according to different sects and schools. In order to avoid loss and ambiguity, I will depend on two of the most well-known Islamic scholars who provide a clear explanation of the Koran: Ibn Kathir and Sayid Qutb. Ibn Kathir (1301-1373), an Iraqi, was one of the leading scholars, historians, and exegetes of Islam. He wrote a famous commentary on the Koran named *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. Following is the link to the complete set of ten volumes online: <<http://kalamullah.com/Books/Tafsir%20Ibn%20Kathir%20all%2010%20volumes.pdf>>. Ibn Kathir relates, in his book, the verses of the Koran with ahadith, history, and scholarly commentary in order to provide a detailed explanation of the verses. My purpose is not to delve into the details of the verses I am interested in, but simply to provide historical background and an easy comprehensible explanation of the context of these verses and in what way they relate to the context of the novel under study. Thus, I will adopt Ibn Kathir’s explanation in addition to Sayid Qutb’s explanation, which I find more simplified. Sayid Qutb (1906-1966) was an Egyptian author, educator, Islamist theorist, and a leading member of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950’s and 60’s. His book *Fi Zilal al-Quran*, translated into English as *In the Shade of the Quran* by Adil Salahi & Ashur Shamis, is a highly influential commentary on the Koran written between 1951 and 1965. The link to the complete set of 18 volumes online: <<http://kalamullah.com/shade-of-the-quran.html>>.

<sup>434</sup> Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*, p. 548, accessed Dec. 12, 2012,

<<http://kalamullah.com/Books/Tafsir%20Ibn%20Kathir%20all%2010%20volumes.pdf>>.

<sup>435</sup> The Koran, chapter 2, verse 221.

<sup>436</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 550.

<sup>437</sup> Sayid Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran*, vol. 1 (Surah 1-2), p. 303, accessed Dec. 12, 2012,

<<http://kalamullah.com/shade-of-the-quran.html>>.

be based on mere physical attraction, so these marriages were considered devoid of spiritual meaning because the parties involved did not share the same beliefs and outlook on life.<sup>438</sup>

In addition, Qutb explains, believers and unbelievers move along two different paths: how can they meet together in a unit that is the foundation of life? The unbelievers take the route that leads to the fire, while those who believe in God take the way leading to His forgiveness and to heaven. The gap between the two is an ever-widening one.<sup>439</sup> In other words, associating and mingling with disbelievers makes one love this life and prefer it over the Hereafter, leading to the severest consequences.<sup>440</sup>

The detailed explanation of the verse reflects the situation lived by Anisa who could not disengage herself socially from the American culture nor preserve her religious identity. As a result, she entered into a spiritually devoid marriage because she and her husband did not share the same beliefs; Anisa and Mike “[were] travelling in two separate boats, sailing in opposite directions” (p. 60). Because of her mixing and mingling with a non-believer, Anisa was impressed by life and forgot about her religious practices; thus, she had to face an intense consequence of her act by experiencing physical and mental suffering. In addition, the issue of the children, discussed by Qutb above, is highlighted by the author through Anisa’s worries about her kids’ religious upbringing. Anisa asked her husband, while she was on the deathbed, to promise her to take care of the children because she does not want them to be raised in disbelief like their father: “Their spiritual need—you can’t provide, Ali, but whatever you do, promise not to ever take my children anywhere near your folks...” (p. 213).

Anisa’s suffering of affliction made her turn to God and pray: “*Ya Rabb! Ya Rahman!* I’m doomed, *Ya Allah*, don’t leave me! *Ya Allah*, don’t let go of me! You’re all I have! *Ya Allah*, don’t take up issue with me! *Ya Rabb*, I need You! Help me! Help this poor being, and she’ll serve you for life. *Ya Rabb!* Don’t let go of me!” (p. 184). This illustrates the insertion of the verse from the Koran at the beginning of chapter thirteen in the novel: “When trouble toucheth a man, he cried unto Us (in all postures)—lying on his side, or sitting, or standing. But when We have solved his trouble, he passeth on his way as if he had never cried unto Us for a trouble that touchet him!” (Koran: 10:12) (p. 181).

Qutb explains that the verse portrays the situation of those who suffer affliction. Yet when such affliction is removed, they revert to those practices which caused the affliction in the first place. It is normal that Man commits sin in life if he pays little attention to what is

---

<sup>438</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 1 (Surah 1-2), p. 302.

<sup>439</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 1 (Surah 1-2), p. 302.

<sup>440</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 550.

allowed and what is not and as long as he is in good health and enjoying life. Only those who are conscious of God remember that after health and strength there will be illness and weakness. But when affliction overtakes man he becomes weak and helpless; thus, he appeals earnestly to God, unable to endure the hardship. When his request is granted and the affliction removed, he does not reflect on the lessons of this experience. Instead, he reverts to his old ways, heedless of the consequences.<sup>441</sup>

Ibn Kathir summarizes the meaning of the verse by: “Man remembers Allah at times of adversity and forgets Him at times of prosperity.”<sup>442</sup> He shares a similar explanation of the verse with Qutb; he clarifies:

When man suffers adversity he becomes worried and anxious. So he supplicates more. He prays to Allah to lift and remove the adversity. He prays while standing, sitting or laying down. When Allah removes his adversity and lifts his distress, he turns away and becomes arrogant. He goes on as if nothing were wrong with him before.<sup>443</sup>

Anisa committed sin because she ignored what is permissible in her religion and what is not. She was living in good conditions and entertained herself in the new life she embraced in the host culture. However, when she was touched by affliction, she turned to God, seeking help. She became aware that after health and strength there will be illness and weakness especially when she saw the elderly people at the hospital beaten by life which they spent in play and amusement:

All the good things that happened to them in life were now a past memory. All the contribution they made to society; the graceful buildings they helped build, the beautiful lawns they mowed on the weekends; the golf clubs, the continental jaunts; the Sunday barbecues; the Christmas and birthday parties, the New Year fire works; the salty television crackers and the cinema popcorn [...]. Chronic sicknesses coupled with the specter of death and awaiting an end they mocked during their reckless years, and thought would never come. (p. 276)

Anisa understood that this was a warning from God to see with her own eyes what happened to people who ignored their God: “And I was ashamed of myself and knew instantly that God wanted me to see things with my own eyes...And the warning couldn’t have been made clearer. This is the reward of those who refuse to heed their Lord.” (p. 277).

Khadija, Yusuf’s wife, advises Anisa to pray and ask God for forgiveness for it is never too late. Note the role Khadija plays in contributing to Anisa’s religious awakening. She quotes a Koranic verse: “If my servants ask you concerning Me, I am indeed close (to them), I listen to the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me” (p. 202), which is the same verse

---

<sup>441</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 9 (Surah 10-11), p. 45.

<sup>442</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 2200.

<sup>443</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 2201.

inserted by the author at the beginning of chapter fifteen but in a different wording: “When My servant asks thee concerning Me, I am indeed near. I answer the prayer of every suppliant when he calls on Me. Let them also listen to My call” (Koran: 2: 186) (p. 247).

The verse, as Qutb believes, creates an atmosphere of intimacy and accessibility, with God Himself stating a direct contact between Him and His servants. When one obeys God and listens to what He orders, his prayers will be answered. However, one should not hasten God’s response, for He alone decides the most appropriate time to respond.<sup>444</sup> This is illustrated in another intertextual quote by Rabi’a Adawiyya placed at the beginning of chapter fourteen: “If I hate my sins, will God love me? No—but if He remembers you, Then you will remember Him—so stand in wait.” [Doorkeeper of the Heart (versions of Rabi’a)] (p. 203).

Moreover, Khadija quotes part of a Qudsi hadith in order to comfort Anisa that no matter how awful her sin is, God’s mercy transcends His wrath and He would forgive if people truly asked for forgiveness: “O sons of Adam, were your sins to reach the clouds of the sky and were you then to ask forgiveness of Me, I would forgive you” (p. 202). In this hadith, Allah tells us that no matter how many a person’s sins are, should they even reach the sky in heaps, Allah would forgive the sinner if they were to turn to Allah in repentance. In a different hadith, the Prophet tells us that Allah’s bounty is so vast that He would actually convert all the sins into good deeds, should the person truly repent. The only condition is that the human being must truly regret in his/her heart that they did what they did. The sinner should be ashamed of their misdeeds, and discontinue committing such sins. If the resolve to avoid the sin is not there then one has not actually repented. For the acceptance of repentance there are three conditions: cessation from the sin, remorse for what has preceded, and firm resolve not to return to performing the sin.<sup>445</sup>

Several other verses mentioned in the novel revolve around the same theme of the previous hadith, i.e. sin and repentance. For instance, the verse inserted on page 274 uttered by Anisa to explain what Allah says to forgive His erring servants: “And those who, having done something to be ashamed of, or wronged their own souls, earnestly bring God to mind, and ask for forgiveness for their sins—and who can forgive sins expect [sic] God?”<sup>446</sup> The verse asserts that none can forgive sins but Allah, so those who have committed indecency

---

<sup>444</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 1 (Surah 1-2), p. 213.

<sup>445</sup> Imâm an-Nawawî, “Imâm an-Nawawî’s 40 Hadîth Explanation,” accessed Dec. 12, 2012, <<http://abdurrahman.org/sunnah/nawawi40explanation.html>>.

<sup>446</sup> The Koran, chapter 3, verse 135.



should remember God and pray for the forgiveness of their sins. Qutb clarifies that Islam recognizes man's weakness and his inability to control his physical desires, temptations, and lust which may drive him to commit a gross indecency. Recognizing this weakness in man, Islam does not adopt harsh punishments rejecting the sinner altogether and depriving him of God's mercy, for the light of faith has not been put out completely in his soul. On the contrary, it shows him the way and provides him the light he needs to return back to his secure refuge as long as he remembers God and does not persist with his wrongdoing. It ensures that the door of hope is always open in front of man as it motivates him to exert his utmost in his aspiration toward the sublime.<sup>447</sup> The Koran and the hadith gave Anisa hope that if she "returns" to God and her religious teachings, she will find solace and comfort. She tells her friend Faiza:

If you only knew how much comfort and solace these words gave to the troubled soul that was mine during that hellish period, if you knew how much comfort I received from these words. I sometimes wonder what'd become of me if I, for instance, had neither the Qur'an nor the hadith to fall back on. (p. 274)

In addition, the verse inserted at the beginning of chapter twenty-eight almost signifies the same situation: "And He it is who accepts repentance from His slaves, and forgives sins, and He knows what you do" (Koran: 42: 25) (p. 513). Ibn Kathir explains that God knows all your deeds and actions and words, yet He still accepts the repentance of those who repent to Him.<sup>448</sup> The verse calls on people to "turn" to God and abandon their erroneous way before a final judgment is passed on them. The door to repentance is left wide open, and there is no need to despair or go further in disobedience, or panic because of what they have done.<sup>449</sup>

Moreover, the Qudsi hadith inserted at the beginning of chapter twenty-two focuses on the theme of sin's forgiveness and repentance:

I am as My servant thinks I am. I am with him when he makes mention of Me. If he makes mention of Me to himself, I make mention of him to Myself; and if he makes mention of Me in an assembly, I make mention of him in an assembly better than it. And if he draws near to Me a hand's span, I draw near to him an arm's length; and if he draws near to Me an arm's length, I draw to him a fathom's length. And if he comes to Me walking, I go to him at speed (Hadith Qudsi) (p. 343).

Imam Nawawi commented on the above hadith: "this means He [God] will forgive him [an individual] if he seeks such, will accept his repentance if he repents, will answer him if he supplicates, and will suffice him if he asks for something. It is also said that it refers to

---

<sup>447</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 2 (Surah 3), p. 186.

<sup>448</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 4550.

<sup>449</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 15 (Surah 40-47), p. 178.

having hope and longing for relief, and this is more correct.”<sup>450</sup> [Sharh Sahih Muslim]. Qutb elaborates:

As for the believers whose hearts are connected to ALLAH, whose souls are close to Him, who experience His constant bounty – they do not despair of the Mercy of ALLAH even if they are surrounded on all sides by disaster and severe hardship. The believer is in the mercy of the shade of his faith, the pleasure of his connection to his Lord, and the tranquility of his confidence in his Guardian even when he is in the throes of hardship and disaster.<sup>451</sup>

The repetition of the idea of “returning” to God and asking for his forgiveness in the previous verses and Qudsi hadith highlights the concept of “return” discussed in Anisa’s “religious rebirth” section in which she passes from one state to another, from living a hybrid life to reawakening religiously and returning to Islam’s teachings.

A different theme is expressed in the verse placed at the beginning of chapter seventeen which reflects the notion of hybridity through the combination of antonyms: “The blind and the seeing are not alike; Nor are the depths of darkness and the light; Nor are the (chilly) shade and the (genial) heat of the sun: Nor are alike those that are living and those that are dead...” (Koran: 35: 19-22) (p. 264). Allah says that these opposites are clearly not equal, the blind and the seeing are not equal, there is a difference and a huge gap between them. Darkness and light are not equal, neither are shade and the sun's heat. By the same token, the living and the dead are not equal. This is the parable Allah makes of the believers who are the living, and the disbelievers who are the dead.<sup>452</sup> Qutb adds: “There is a close link between the nature of unbelief and the nature of blindness, darkness, scorching heat and death, just as there is a contrasting link between the nature of belief and that of clear sight, light, cool shade and life.”<sup>453</sup>

The verse alludes to the gap that exists between Anisa and Mike and to the fact that they can never be alike for they are moving in two opposite directions. This is asserted by Anisa’s declaration: “we come from different worlds, being different earth-wares, and all that. And our ways will never meet” (p. 453). She adds: “Ours was a mighty collision. What happened to us can’t be called a meeting. In real life, our ways will never meet. Collisions do occur, but meetings? No way. A happy meeting isn’t for us. Only collisions. And sad stories” (p. 453). Just like the antonyms in the verse, Anisa and Mike form a similar opposition which

---

<sup>450</sup> Imam Nawawi, “40 Hadith,” accessed Dec. 15, 2012, <<http://my.opera.com/40%20HADITH/archive/monthly/?day=20110126>>.

<sup>451</sup> Sayid Qutb, “40 Hadith,” accessed Dec. 15, 2012, <<http://my.opera.com/40%20HADITH/archive/monthly/?day=20110126>>.

<sup>452</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 4154.

<sup>453</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 14 (Surah 33-39), p. 179.

cannot be resolved through hybridity or by combining the two polarities in a middle or in-between space. Although the novel ends in Mike's truthful conversion and assimilation to his wife's religious teachings, it is not clear whether Mike will eventually live according to Islam's teachings or go back to his secular lifestyle.

One more verse is introduced at the beginning of chapter twenty: "Nor can a bearer of burdens bear another's burden. If one heavily laden should call another to (bear) his load Not the least portion of it can be carried (by the other), Even though he be nearly related" (Koran: 35: 18) (p. 314). Ibn Kathir states that on the Day of Resurrection if the person who is carrying a heavy burden calls someone else to help him carry his load, all or part of it, nothing of it will be lifted even though he is near of kin for each person will be preoccupied with his own self and his own situation.<sup>454</sup> According to Qutb, each individual is responsible for his own actions and no individual needs to worry about answering for the actions of his community. As long as he has done his duty, giving advice to his community to follow divine guidance, no further responsibility is laid on him. God does not hold mankind to account for their collective actions; they account to Him individually, each for their own work.<sup>455</sup>

Thus, from an Islamic point of view, Anisa has done her duty by preaching her husband to follow the right path, but she bears no responsibility for his corruption if he does not respond to her advice.

The last verse which is employed by the author as an introduction to chapter twenty seven states:

...And nearest among them in love to the believers are those who say "we are Christians." Because amongst these are men devoted to learning. And men who have renounced the world, and they are not arrogant. And when they listen to the revelation received by the Messenger, thou wilt see their eyes overflowing with tears, for they recognize the truth: (Koran: 5: 82-85) (p. 428).

The verse states that Christians are the nearest of all people in their affection to the believers; however, this does not apply to all those who claim to be Christians. In fact, the verse provides a description of the group of Christians to which this verse applies. Among these are people who are fully aware of the true Christian faith, and were prepared to acknowledge the truth whenever they realized it. They are so deeply touched when they listen to the Koran that tears spring to their eyes in recognition of the truth they hear.<sup>456</sup> Perhaps this is an allusion that Mike does not belong to the group of people the verse describes.

---

<sup>454</sup> Ibn Kathir, p. 4153.

<sup>455</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 14 (Surah 33-39), p. 178.

<sup>456</sup> Qutb, *In the Shade of the Quran* vol. 4 (Surah 5), p. 191.

Consequently, he is not of the nearest people to Anisa who is depicted as a believer, and will thus remain as an outcast and his way will never meet Anisa's path.

The dominant presence of religious discourse in the novel is not only present through the employment of verses from the Koran, but also through the use of Islamic Arabic words that pervade the novel. I am going to list these words and the number of times they are mentioned in the novel in order to reflect how much religious discourse dominates everyday life in Rako's Muslim community. Safi Abdi provides the translation of most of these words at the end of the novel,<sup>457</sup> unlike Aboulela and Gordimer who make the readers search themselves for the translation of Arabic words they employ in their novels. In order to facilitate reading these words, I am going to classify them into: greeting words, words related to prayers, expressions that include the word "Allah," and other diverse words.

The greeting words are: *Salaam* (pp. 5, 75, 92, 94, 127, 129, 272, 474, 479) (Hello); *Ma'assalama* (pp. 6, 89, 94, 100, 284) (goodbye); *Assalamu alaikum, Wa'alaikuma salaam* (pp. 77, 89, 127, 167, 187, 316, 331, 357, 433, 458, 514) (Muslims greeting formula, it means peace be unto you).

The words which are associated with prayers are: *Salat* (pp. 12, 33, 34, 49, 76, 86) (prayers); *Jum'a prayers* (p. 6) (Friday prayers); *Fajr* (p. 49) (the first of the five daily prayers usually performed at dawn); *Dhuhur* (pp. 74, 76, 433) (midday prayer); *Asar* (pp. 49, 432) (afternoon prayer); *Maghrib* (p. 25) (sunset prayer); *Isha* (pp. 25, 514) (night prayer); *Wudu* (pp. 49, 76) (ablution, a ceremonial act of washing and wiping the hands, face, arms, head and feet before praying or touching the Koran); *muezzin* (p. 74) (the person who calls Muslims to prayer from the minaret of a mosque); *masjid* (pp. 86, 308) (mosque where Muslims pray).

Words that include the word Allah are: *Alhamdulillah* (pp. 6, 33, 139, 331, 426, 427, 432, 484, 504) (thanks God); *InshaAllah* (pp. 6, 27, 35, 75, 76, 86, 150, 306, 334, 354, 355, 367, 429, 475, 513) (God willing); *Ya Allah* (pp. 9, 118, 119, 125, 184, 311, 331, 429, 430, 437, 513, 515) (Oh God); *Ya Rabb* (pp. 12, 46, 97, 149, 184, 213, 231, 309, 312, 508) (Oh Lord); *Allah* (pp. 51, 86, 97, 310, 311, 312, 331, 332, 333, 335, 352, 353, 367, 429, 486, 500, 502, 508) (God); *MashaAllah* (pp. 87, 128, 335, 474) (Whatever God wills); *Ya Rahman* (pp. 97, 184, 430) (Oh Merciful); *La Ilaha Ila Allah* (p. 332) (there is no God but Allah), *Allahu Akbar* (pp. 345, 355, 486, 488) (God is the greatest); *Ina Allahu 'Ala Kuli Shayin Qadir* (p. 424) (God is capable of everything); *Subhanallah* (p. 486) (Glory be to God); *Azubillah* (p. 332) (I seek refuge in God).

---

<sup>457</sup> The words which are not translated at the end of the novel by Abdi are translated by me.

Other diverse words: *Kafir* (pp. 3, 65, 261, 265, 476) (unbeliever); *Shaitan* (pp. 33, 157, 222, 331, 332, 333, 345, 359) (devil, Satan); *Jinn* (p. 222) (demon, devil); *Kufr* (pp. 65) (atheism); *haram* (p. 66) (forbidden); *Madrasah* (pp. 77, 269, 270, 306, 373, 375, 377, 379, 381, 384, 385) (school); *Shaitanic* (p. 84) (diabolic, satanic); *shahada* (pp. 102, 141, 161, 183, 222, 502) (The shahada is to admit that there is no God except Allah and Muhammad is his messenger in order for someone to be initiated as a new Muslim), *adab* (p. 165) (manners, etiquettes), *ummah* (p. 168) (Islamic nation); *halal* (p. 277).

As we notice, Islamic words dominate the discourse of Anisa's people. These words, although they are Arabic words, are shared among most Muslim communities even if they are not Arabs just like the case of Rako's Muslim community. This reflects Bakhtin's definition of social language "as a discourse peculiar to a specific stratum of society (professional, age group, etc.) within a given social system at a given time."<sup>458</sup>

---

<sup>458</sup> Bakhtin, 1981, p. 430.

III.b. Part Two:  
The Male Protagonist's Hybrid Case

## Introduction to Part Two

Having studied Anisa's hybrid identity and the factors that have caused her hybrid and repentance experiences, it is necessary to look now at Mike's hybrid identity and analyze its development throughout the novel.

Falling in love with an alien is natural for Mike who is depicted as a materialist person embracing a hybrid way of life. However, he does not realize, or at least does not expect, that marrying across cultures involves facing new cultural and religious beliefs that may oppose one's way of life. Mike, after marrying Anisa, experiences Bhabha's "in-between" space in which he struggles between his wife's cultural and religious teachings and those of the West. It is observed that although Mike converts to Islam, he does not adopt Islam as a way of life. However, with time, he becomes more familiar with the teachings of Islam, and it is because of Anisa that he crosses the religious barrier that separates them and becomes a practicing Muslim at the end of the novel, thus moving away from the center which is represented by his American culture. He undergoes what Pieterse calls "destabilizing hybridity" that "blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the center."<sup>459</sup>

Mike's hybrid identity will be studied in this part from the viewpoints of Bhabha's theory, particularly by examining the notion of "in-between" space, and from Pieterse's concept of "destabilizing hybridity." In addition, I will study the factors which have played a role in the evolution of his hybridity with the aim of finding a relation between his hybrid identity and cross-cultural marriage.

### III.b.I. Mike's In-between Space

Bhabha's notion of "in-between" space is usually applied to migrants who encounter a new culture through crossing cultural boundaries. However, I suggest that we can also apply this notion to intercultural couples even if they are not migrants because these also encounter a new culture through their partnership with someone from another culture. Jill Bystydzienski asserts:

Those who cross cultures (e.g. move from one country to another or establish personal relationships with people of different social backgrounds) or who embody multiple differences (e.g. biracial or multiracial/ ethnic individuals) often do not see themselves as "belonging" to

---

<sup>459</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

specific groups but rather as residing in “in-between” or “third” spaces from which they develop new hybrid identities and establish innovative sites of collaboration and contestation. This perspective is highly useful for understanding intercultural couples whose identities are constructed subjectively by the partners out of the interrelations among gender, race, ethnicity, class, religion, and nationality and the blurring of boundaries between them. Intercultural couple partnerships can thus be conceived as border crossing between multiple categories of social difference.<sup>460</sup>

People who cross cultures, as when they move permanently to another country or establish personal relationships with those of different social backgrounds, are called upon to reinvent their identities. Thus, not only migration but also intercultural partnerships allow persons to cross cultures and incorporate aspects of the other’s cultural identity. Mike, being someone who faces a new culture and religion through his intercultural relationship with Anisa, experiences Bhabha’s “in-between” space by living a struggle between his wife’s strict rules and his family’s and society’s scornful derision at these rules: “Right from day one, he found himself walking on a tight rope, balancing himself between his wife’s taxing rules and his society’s unrelenting scoffs at those rules. True, he was Muslim only on paper, but that too was enough to give everyone the opportunity to badmouth the faith...” (p. 179).

Mike’s “in-between” space lies in being influenced by his wife’s cultural and religious belonging, yet he cannot totally conform to those practices as he has a life of his own. His interest in the new culture begins when he starts to date Anisa; he goes to the library to skim through literature on Islam to get an idea of the girl’s thinking (p. 57). His outlook has changed after his conversion to Islam; this becomes apparent through his defense of his wife’s beliefs against his mother’s accusations of Anisa’s heresy. He insists on his new adopted belief that Jesus was but a man and that he is developing a softer spot for him thanks to Islam (p. 175). He defends his point when his mother opposes him:

Muhammad never did become God anymore than Moses became one. According to Muslims, Muhammad’s the last Messenger of God. And there’s no way we can disprove that...that’s if we’re truly honest with ourselves. We weren’t there. I maybe Muslim only on paper, but I guarantee you I’d have less problem agreeing to this version. (p. 176)

In addition, Mike becomes more knowledgeable about Islam and can even provide explanations when asked about the religion. For instance, when his father wonders about the problem with dogs and Muslims, Mike explains according to Yusuf’s remarks: “Islam considers a dog’s saliva impure. So naturally, cuddling is out and so is licking. If one becomes in contact with a dog’s saliva, one must wash seven times: once with earth and six times with

---

<sup>460</sup> Bystydzienski, 2011, p. 10.



water” (p. 179); an explanation to which his mother yells from the kitchen to express her sorrow for her son.

Despite Mike’s conversion to his wife’s religion, it is later revealed that his conversion was only on paper; in other words, his conversion to Islam was done without any conscience. He accepted embracing the faith in order to please Anisa and marry her according to her religious teachings and not because he is a true believer (p. 191). “I promised to embrace faith...and at this stage of my life, any faith’s welcome to my heart, and if it’s my wife’s why the hell not? ...And marry you again, I shall, if I have to. You just say where, when and how, and I’ll do your bidding” (p. 123). As we can observe from the previous quote, Mike does not care what faith he embraces. He decides to embrace his wife’s faith to avoid her nagging, but, unlike Rae, he is not really convinced of what he is doing. He tells her: “If I were to marry my wife a thousand times, I’d do it. You’re a foreigner and we do have certain rules for foreigners here” (p. 126). He admits that he did promise to convert when he realized the importance of Islam in Anisa’s upbringing because he had nothing to lose (p. 147).

This conversion out of non-belief resulted in Mike’s later dissociation from the religion. He would not respond to his wife’s strict religious teachings; if she calls him to prayer, he tells her she is a fundamentalist (p. 242). He cannot stand his new name “Ali” in front of his people (p. 322), and of all the things Mike mostly hated was Anisa’s scarf which made him embarrassed when they were in public (p. 235). Anisa adds that he despises the Muslim world and makes fun of the Arabs; he does not even like real Christians nor holds any tender feelings for the Jews. With the intensification of quarrels and misunderstandings, Mike was not coming home anymore. He was back to the lifestyle he was living before converting, and his drinking habit, which became almost non-existent for sometime, is back with a vengeance. Mike drank more liquor when he knew of Anisa’s breakout to Rako with the children (p. 253), and his friends were happy to bring him back into the fold. He got rid of everything that would remind him of Anisa and of all that disturbed him the most especially the Islamic literature (p. 255).

It could be that Mike’s perception by the others especially his family and peers as someone different, because of his conversion to Islam, prevented him from successfully presenting his Islamic identity. According to Kath Woodward, how a person sees himself/herself and how others see that person does not always fit. There might be a tension between all these different conflicting identities. “Material, social, and physical constraints prevent us from successfully presenting ourselves in some positions—constraints which

include the perceptions of other.”<sup>461</sup> Even though social structures may constrain people’s ability to adopt certain identities there is also the notion of social change which affects the shape of these structures which means that opportunities are opened for people to adopt new or hybrid identities.

Bhabha states: “Persons who have lived in more than one culture or who straddle two or more cultures are ‘hybrids’ who create ‘counter-narratives’ that both evoke and erase cultural boundaries.”<sup>462</sup> Mike lives in a hybrid state, for he seems to evoke cultural and religious boundaries between him and his wife, yet at other times erases them. Mike is persuaded by Anisa not to eat pork because of its ill effects (p. 57), but when it comes to alcohol he ignores her advice. She tells him: “Once you’ve embraced the faith, you’ll expect no more folly from that fridge” (p. 124). However, Mike’s thoughts reflect the internal struggle he is living between following his wife’s orders to get rid of his Western practices and his insides which call for the opposite:

Come on, Mike, you’re not making sense. You can’t throw everything all at the same time; we can accept the throwing of the pig, but the wine? Have you lost your sanity? A glass of wine is exactly the right medicine for you now. Are your ears plugged? Haven’t you heard the professionals? (p. 492).

Mike is living in Bhabha’s “third space” or “in-between,” which is likened to the metaphor of the stairwell that represents connection between disparate cultures and in which interaction takes place:

The stairwell as liminal space, in-between the designations of identity, becomes the process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference between upper and lower, black and white. The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities. This interstitial passage between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy.<sup>463</sup>

Mike’s hybridity lies in entertaining difference without being obliged to fall into one fixed polarity; he is neither a Muslim nor a Westerner. He alternates between his Western norms and his wife’s religious teachings. Because of his love for his wife, Mike complied with everything his wife said was important in life. However, he admitted that this situation led him to lead a double life: “You turned me into a double dealer, when my fridge said, no, no, I turned to the streets and to my mother’s fridge” (p. 492). This “doubleness” reflects Mike’s “in-between” state, for he can neither act like a Muslim nor get rid of his Western

---

<sup>461</sup> Woodward, 2004, p. 7

<sup>462</sup> Cited in Bystydzienski, 2011, p. 50.

<sup>463</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

habits. However, as we will see in the next section, after his wife's departure to Rako, Mike becomes interested in knowing more about the faith that made his wife leave him. He, thus, converts himself, crosses barriers and assimilates the new religion.

### III.b.II. Mike's Destabilizing Hybridity

In this section, Mike's assimilation of his wife's religion will be studied from the viewpoint of Pieterse's notion of "destabilizing hybridity" that blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the centre."<sup>464</sup> According to Pieterse, the center is the hegemonic dominant culture which is now represented by the West. He remarks:

European and Western culture are part of the global *mélange*. This is an obvious case if we reckon that Europe until the fourteenth century was invariably the recipient of cultural influences from 'the Orient.' The hegemony of the West dates only from very recent times, from around 1800, and, arguably, from industrialization.<sup>465</sup>

In view of cultural hegemony, particularly the hegemony of the West, Pieterse constructs a continuum of hybridities. At one end of the continuum an assimilationist hybridity is located which "leans over towards the centre, adopts the canon and mimics hegemony" and at the other end, "a destabilizing hybridity that blurs the canon, reverses the current, subverts the centre."<sup>466</sup>

Mike, as a Westerner, belongs to the dominant center represented by his Western American society. However, his marriage to someone who belongs to the marginal groups and his assimilation of her religious teachings distance him from the center; thus, he illustrates Pieterse's notion of "destabilizing hybridity."

The first evidence of Mike's "reversing of the current" is his conversion to Islam, the most rejected religion in his society. Although he was still in a wavering state, Mike went to the Islamic center to declare the shahada: "*Ashahadu ana Laa Ilaha Ila Allah, Wa'Ashhadu anna Muhammadan RasulaAllah* (I bear witness that there is no god worthy of worship but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah" (p. 162). By saying this, Mike was issued a certificate attesting to his new identity as a Muslim and received a Muslim name; the American Mike Peterson is now named Ali Ahmed Peterson.

---

<sup>464</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

<sup>465</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 76.

<sup>466</sup> Pieterse, 2009, p. 79.

The second evidence is that Mike, two years after his separation from his wife, felt the urge to learn and know more about the religion that took his wife and children away from him. He was absorbed in the holy book of Islam, which he kept on his side of the bed (p. 288). He refused to touch anything that had any pork product in it, and he drank water and orange juice as if avoiding wine. He felt conviction swelling his heart in his outings to the woods and reflection on nature, for he saw how everything submitted to the natural laws of the Lord (p. 300). The change that took over him is noticed by those surrounding him; his mother noted how he has turned his place into a bookshelf and described her son as “an affirmed monk! Squatting in that cheerless home...” (p. 341).

In addition, by being defensive of people of color, Mike “blurs the canon,” which is symbolized by his family’s and society’s intolerance of the “Other.” He caught Daisy in the middle of her sentence and asked her to stop calling Anisa “the black fanatic”: “And please let’s cut the coloring... it wasn’t as though anyone had given us the license to color people at will” (p. 293). When she asked him if he likes colored folk, he said: “yes, I do have a soft spot for colored folk—I just can’t help it” (p. 293). This reflects Mike’s hybrid nature for, unlike his peers, he has nothing against colored people and is able to accept the others. In fact, he avoids visiting his parents in order not to meet his sister’s boyfriend who is racist and hates colored people (p. 339).

Moreover, Mike, contrary to his sister’s opinion, has his reservations about equating the religion of Islam with terrorism (p. 395). He tells her: “I can’t agree with you, there, Charlotte. I maybe knew [sic] [new] to the faith, but if there’s anything I’ve learned to be careful of it is the equation of Islam with Terrorism” (p. 396). Mike now realizes that the Islam he learned about is not the same Islam represented by the media (p. 417). In response to his mother’s assertion that all Muslims are going to hell, Mike declares: “No, Mother, I am too deeply in it now, the teachings of Islam are just perfect for me. And after all, this is America, and freedom of speech and thought, and freedom of religion is enshrined in our constitution, your son’s simply following the book...” (p. 400). Mike feels that he is a true Muslim, he confesses to Floor that Islam has changed his way of life: “You won’t believe it, but my whole world’s turned into a pulp—you name it, my buddies, my love life, my wine bar—Islam has kissed them all goodbye, and I haven’t even lifted a finger to protest” (p. 416). By following Islam, which is regarded as the religion of terrorists, Mike “subverts the center.” The center being his American society, which ironically provides the freedom of this subversion since it celebrates freedom of choice.

### III.b.III. Factors Affecting Mike's Hybridity

I have previously concluded that Anisa undergoes two hybrid experiences: Bhabha's "in-between" space and Pieterse's "assimilationist hybridity." Her marriage to Mike was not the cause of her hybrid experiences, as she was already living a hybrid state before establishing a relationship with Mike. On the contrary, her intercultural marriage played an essential factor in her religious rebirth and "return" to her cultural and religious practices which she discarded for a long time. In this section, I will study Mike's case, in particular, I will study the factors that have caused his hybrid experiences, and find out the role of his relationship with Anisa in the evolution of this hybridity.

The main factor that affects Mike's "in-between" state, which is represented by his wavering between his wife's beliefs and his family's and society's norms, is his love for Anisa. In addition, the evolution of his hybridity after his separation from Anisa, which is marked by his assimilation of Islam's teachings, is motivated by his "unbelonging" to a particular religion and his feelings of displacement in his own culture, and by his exchange with Anisa's people and the hospitable reaction of the host society.

#### *Mike's Love for Anisa*

It is because of Anisa that Mike lived in an "in-between" state, which is represented by both his association with his wife's religious practices and dissociating from them at the same time. First, his compliance with the new religious practices is due to his love for Anisa, which made him confront his family's and people's objection of his conversion, and of his relationship with the foreigner, and second his dissociation from Islam is also due to his wife, who imposed her strict religious teachings on him and which he could no longer handle.

We have previously demonstrated how Mike acted in accordance with the new religion due to his love for Anisa who deliberately obliged him to transgress religious barriers and convert to Islam. Bhabha states: "[...] hybridity is precisely about the fact that when a new situation, a new alliance formulates itself, it may demand that you should translate your principles, rethink them, extend them."<sup>467</sup> Mike, when faced with a new situation represented

---

<sup>467</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 216.

by his relationship with Anisa, had no choice but to rethink his principles and translate them, which made him struggle in-between the new religion and his surroundings' criticism.

Mike, however, had to face his people's rejection of his conversion and marriage to a spiritual Third World citizen, for his love for Anisa was real. His family thought that he would soon tire of Anisa and she would flee back home. However, they did not expect that they and not the foreigner would ultimately do all the compromising and adjustments, all in the name of family (p. 171). His mother who is "a firm believer in the division of people along race lines...a good race-organizer, like with like" (p. 67) is not really in favor of Anisa and always calls her names such as "foreigner" and "black alien" (p. 169). However, Mike defends Anisa when his mother criticizes her; he says: "Anisa is my wife, she doesn't hate you, she loves you, but we've to respect her way of life" (p. 169). Mike's respect of his wife's cultural and religious practices and compliance with them illustrates what Bhabha calls "cultural translation," which "opens up the possibility of articulating *different*, even incommensurable cultural practices and priorities"<sup>468</sup> (emphasis in the original). Mike through cultural translation opens a space for negotiation between two incommensurable cultures, his wife's Muslim culture and his Western culture. Still, his mother cannot accept translating her Western principles. She rejects Anisa as a family member and is piqued of how she had taken over their life and imposed her religion over her son: "Everything's forbidden, everything. We can't even have a decent family get-together without consultations as what to put on the dinner table! The whole thing stinks. You may keep that woman, but as far as we're concerned it's over" (p. 177). In addition, his mother could not bear her grandson's name, Mohammad, and the fact that it had come from her son's lips: "Another Muslim name, is it? My son, you're under a spell. You're being controlled, even from the deathbed" (p. 225). However, Mike yelled back at his mother that he is free to name his Muslim children whatever he pleases. His saying of Muslim children surprised him, for he had never thought of himself as a real Muslim.

Moreover, Mike had to endure not only his family's rejection of Anisa, but also the host society's negative reaction to their presence together. People on the streets would stare at them and regard the couple as a misfit, which sometimes makes Mike keep a safe distance from his wife and the kids. "If he was colored or looked foreign, the attention wouldn't have been so negative" (p. 233). It's not only in the American society that Mike and Anisa are seen as an odd couple, but also in Rako Island. When they entered the restaurant, Anisa tells Mike:

---

<sup>468</sup> Bhabha, cited in Rutherford, 1990, p. 210.

People just can't help staring when they meet us, look at that waiter over there? He's done nothing but stare and is probably waiting to be salaried for his endeavors. See the old couple in the corner? They haven't blinked once since we came in. Let's face it, we make an odd couple, Mike. (p. 455)

Mike's love for Anisa made him control his actions and resist many of his Western habits; however, this did not last long for he can no longer live under the strict dictates of Islam particularly because of his wife's orders. He says: "No compulsion in religion—but my wife, she just couldn't wait to lead me astray" (p. 498). This made him dissociate himself from the religion and adopt the lifestyle he was living before his conversion. He blames Anisa for imposing her beliefs on him: "You were pushing into me a faith without reasoning. Faith without conviction is a faith on a gold platter. Easy-come-easy-go-kind-of-thing" (p. 493). As the quote reveals, the reason for Mike's reluctance to practice faith is due to his wife's compelling attitude in making her husband comply with the rules of Islam without reasoning. The religion dominated their daily life whether it is on television, radio or video player. "They could no longer have a decent conversation without the intrusion of Islam into their lives. The invasion of Islamic literature into their home also meant one thing: READ" (p. 232). She was giving him orders about hygiene and rightful Islamic behavior (p. 164). "She was after him all the time, saturating him in Islamic literature, passing over to him every book that came her way, marking up things for him in yellow and red, as though he'd neither eyes nor intellect..." (p. 236). He admits to her: "No doubt, I was angry with Islam. Islam turned my life upside down. I've been on an emotional roller coaster since I met Islam" (p. 416). The previous quote reveals Mike's settling in the "third space" which is likened to the metaphor of the stairwell as Bhabha states: "The hither and thither of the stairwell, the temporal movement and passage that it allows, prevents identities at either end of it from settling into primordial polarities."<sup>469</sup> Mike's identity does not settle into one fixed polarity, neither the polarity of Islam nor the Western polarity, but remains in the "third space" oscillating between the two.

In short, Mike's "in-between" experience, represented by his defense of his wife and the new religion against his people's objections and at the same time his dissociation from the strict rules of Islam, is caused by his wife Anisa and by his interaction with her. However, his "destabilizing hybridity" represented by his final assimilation to Islam is not motivated by his wife, but, as I will show in the next section, by his "unbelonging" to any particular religion and by his sense of displacement in his own culture.

---

<sup>469</sup> Bhabha, 1994, p. 4.

### *Mike's "unbelonging"*

Bhabha stresses the “unhomely” lives of migrants when the boundaries between cultures, their native culture and the host culture, become blurred. He states:

To be unhomed is not to be homeless, nor can ‘unhomely’ be easily accommodated in that familiar division of social life into private and public spheres... In that displacement, the borders between home and world become confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting.<sup>470</sup>

I would add that it is not only through migration or geographical displacement that one might feel “unhomely,” but this state can occur even to anyone living in his own country. Mike experiences “disorientation” and feels “unhomely” in his homeland. It is noticed that he does not have a sense of belonging to his religion. This is manifested through Anisa’s descriptions of him and through his own declarations of being dissociated from his family’s and ancestors’ religion. Anisa believes that Mike is not happy with his condition as a non-believer. She tells Faiza: “I don’t think Mike’s happy with his lot, at all, there’s always been something missing, he told me once. I think he’s looking for something and he doesn’t know it” (p. 98).

In addition, when Anisa asks him if he is a religious person, he says: “What kind of religion are we talking about?” (p. 58) as if chasing after a lost object. Perhaps the factor that Mike is living in a multicultural society where different religions are practiced contributes to his state of loss or his state of indifference of belonging to a certain religion. In contrast, Sammar remains attached to her religious beliefs being raised in a society which is dominated by Islam’s rules and teachings. Mike is not even interested in learning about the Bible; when Anisa attempts to acquaint him with the Bible, he reacts: “When the time comes for me to consult a Bible, I’ll give my Sunday school teacher a call. How many times do I’ve to tell you: I don’t need your Bibles!” (p. 237). He admits to her that his baptism did him little good, because his Sunday school teacher was a pervert. Anisa thinks if Mike was a Christian, things would have been easier to convince him of faith, but he scoffs at the Trinity and sneers at the priesthood (p. 243). He is neither a Jew nor a Christian, not even a freethinker. For Anisa, Mike is a cynic materialist (p. 243).

Moreover, when Anisa rejected his marriage proposal because he is a non-believer, he explained: “I was born into unbelief, Anisa. I live and drink it everyday. This air is thick with

---

<sup>470</sup> Bhabha, 1992, p. 141.



unbelief. This condition's part and parcel of life in my home turf. I can't help it" (p. 66). As we can deduce, Mike is "religiously" homeless rather than "physically" homeless. His upbringing in a society which does not impose any particular religion allows him the freedom of choice of not belonging to any religion. He asserts this in his letter to Anisa's uncle; to introduce himself, he states that "he never had the NEED to belong to any religious category" (p. 147) and that the closest he ever came to the supposed faith of his land was his nametag. Peterson is a patronymic surname meaning "son of Peter." He also admits that he knows very little about Christianity and about other faiths (p. 147). Thus, it could be that Mike's feelings of being "unhomely" in his own religion makes him curious to learn about Islam especially that it is because of this religion that his wife and kids departed from him and went to Rako. By learning about Islam, Mike embraced a "destabilizing hybridity" that made him reverse the current and subvert the center. He tells Anisa that she was not the cause of his faith; it was God that turned him to the books and showed him the way (p. 503).

#### *The Host Society's Reaction to Mike*

Another factor which contributes to Mike's evolvment of a hybrid identity is the hospitable reaction of Anisa's people. Mike's exchange with the periphery represented by Anisa's family and Muslim acquaintance contribute to his interest in Islam and to his assimilation to the new religion. Hall contends: "hybridity refers to the constant process of differentiation and exchange between the centre and the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions."<sup>471</sup>

Mike became more acquainted with Islam thanks to Anisa's uncle and Yusuf. He became familiar with the formalities that were necessary for the ritual prayers because of Anisa's uncle who taught him while they were in Rako Island. Anisa's family liked Mike and he proved to be more than they bargained for. He was the sole charge of Anisa's uncle who treated him like royalty, personally escorting him everywhere (p. 166). In addition, the uncle defended Mike despite Anisa's crisis and struggle. He thinks that Mike is willing to learn about Islam, but because Anisa had forced it on him he did not respond to her. He tells her: "Ali did seem promising the few times he was here. He prayed with us at the *masjid*. Willing

---

<sup>471</sup> Hall, "New Ethnicities," cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274.

to learn. I myself taught him how to pray, and I still have that first letter he sent me and your mother” (p. 308). Her uncle advises her to show a fair treatment because religion cannot be forced on anyone: “No one can force Islam. The Messenger of Allah couldn’t convince his own dear uncles. Learn from that fact” (p. 310). He convinces her that even prophet Mohammad failed to save his uncle from disbelief: “Even at the deathbed of his most beloved uncle, Abu Talib, the holy Prophet couldn’t save the hardened soul of his uncle from the justice of God. Anisa, what the holy Prophet failed to do, you can’t do” (p. 311).

Yusuf also believes that Mike is a nice man from what he had seen of him. He hoped that one day in the future Ali would join him in the Friday prayers, but he did not want to push him. He explained things about Islam and other existing beliefs in order to bring home to him the unity of God’s message. He did not use Ali’s aversion to his former faith as an opportunity to spring Islam on him, but felt it best to let him be guided by his own reasoning powers (p. 189). Yusuf realizes that the matter needs patience, especially with someone who converts to be married. He gave Anisa a book entitled *Islam in Focus*<sup>472</sup> and the translated version of the Koran by Abdullah Yusuf Ali<sup>473</sup> for Mike to read. The foreword of the former book states that the purpose of this work is to acquaint the average reader with the basic teachings of Islam. Yusuf found it best for Mike to read the book and once he develops the initial interest, he can pursue the course of deeper knowledge on his own.

Anisa’s uncle and Yusuf’s attempts to acquaint Mike with Islam without pushing him or imposing the belief by force on him, in opposition to Anisa’s way, made Mike gradually realize the importance of faith until he himself sought to learn what Islam is about and assimilated to the new religion.

Moreover, the host people in Rako Island crowded over Mike when he visited the Island, for they viewed his conversion as a kind of miracle, since they saw the white race as inherently non-believers. Mike liked the simple community life in Rako Island and began to adapt to life there. He was pleasantly surprised by the fact that people were spiritually tied. Piety alone could put man above another man; neither race nor wealth could bring man closer to God (p. 168). The hospitable reaction of the Islamic community in Rako created in Mike a fellowship feeling that he had never felt before. This recalls Julie’s feelings of being integrated into Abdu’s Islamic community in the village. She discovered the meaning of community and social ties which she has never found in South Africa. This shows the

---

<sup>472</sup> Hammudah Abd Al-Ati, *Islam in Focus*, Maryland: Amana Publications, 1998.

<sup>473</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali (trans.), *The Holy Qur’an*, Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions, 2000.

difference between Arab-Islamic culture with its strong social ties as opposed to Western culture where individuality is more dominant. Another parallel between the two characters Mike and Julie is that they were both accepted by the host culture and by their partners' families, as opposed to Abdu and Anisa who were rejected by white Western societies and by their in-laws.

To conclude the role of Anisa in Mike's hybrid experiences, we can deduce from the above data that his wife and his love for her was the main factor for his "in-between" state. As we have seen, his intercultural relationship with Anisa placed him in the middle of two polarities, his wife's beliefs and his family's and society's opposition of those beliefs. Mike's identity kept oscillating between the two without falling into one fixed entity. However, due to Mike's "unhomely" life in his own culture and religion and to his exchange with the periphery which is represented by Anisa's people and Muslim acquaintances, Mike sought to learn more about Islam and to acquaint himself with its teachings. This led him away from his wife's imposing attitude of her belief on him, to assimilate to the new religion and become a truly practicing Muslim at the end of the novel.

### III.c. Conclusion to Chapter Three

To sum up, we have seen that Anisa undergoes two hybrid experiences in the host culture: first, by living in an “in-between” space that makes her oscillate between her cultural and religious teachings and those of the receiving culture; and an “assimilationist hybridity” in which she abandons her religious practices and adapts to the new cultural practices. This is manifested through her outings to discos and clubs, neglecting her prayers, taking off the hijab, and marrying someone from a different religion. We can conclude that her intercultural marriage asserts her hybrid experience. But is not the cause of it, for Anisa has crossed cultural and religious barriers before she met Mike. However, this marriage plays a role in developing a counter-reaction to hybridity when Anisa finds that living with a non-believing husband is unbearable and suffers from feelings of remorse and guilt for being neglectful of her religious teachings. She seeks repentance and returns to her religion influenced by her conservative upbringing and her acquaintances’ warnings against her forbidden relationship.

Concerning Mike, we have seen in the previous section how his wife played an essential role in his “in-between” experience. His hybridity is motivated by his wife who convinced him to embrace Islam and at the same time caused him to dissociate from it because of her compulsive attitude in introducing him to the new religion. In addition, Mike’s “unhomely” feelings in his own culture and religion made him comply with his wife’s religious teachings for he found himself more comfortable in the new religion.

Thus, we can say that intercultural marriage in this chapter leads to both: crossing over cultural and religious boundaries to develop a hybrid identity as in the case of Mike who converts to Islam and becomes a truly practicing Muslim at the end of the novel, and to “religious rebirth” or “return” to one’s native belonging as in Anisa’s case, for when faces newness through her intercultural marriage becomes aware that she has lost her religious identity and attempts hard to get it back.

## General Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the subject of cross-cultural marriage and hybrid identities in three Anglophone novels written by three women authors: Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2002), Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999), and Safi Abdi's *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds* (2002). My aim has been three fold: first, I analyzed the nature of change that occurs to the protagonists in the novels when they engage in an inter-cultural relationship within the framework of hybridity theory, particularly from the viewpoints of Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Nederveen Pieterse, and Marwan Kraidy; second, I studied the factors which cause this change; and third, I examined the relation between cross-cultural marriage and hybrid identities.

Previous studies, mostly sociological, have been done on the subject of cross-cultural marriage and on hybridity. However, none of these works has studied the relation between the two in literary works; most of them are devoted either to intercultural marriage or to the issue of hybridity. Although the doctoral dissertation "Identity Negotiations and Third Culture Building in Intercultural Marriages"<sup>474</sup> combines the two issues, it focuses on real-life people rather than on fictional characters. In addition, no study so far has examined the three novels, chosen for analysis here which, together, offer a unique opportunity for new insights. This study seeks to fill a gap in existing research by examining the theme of cross-cultural marriage according to the theory of hybridity in these three particular novels rather than through empirical studies. Also, we have seen that the fictional characters in the novels reveal dimensions that are not explored or even perceived by the hybridity theoreticians, particularly in the case of the Muslim female characters, Sammar and Anisa, whose experiences are quite the opposite of hybridity.

The literature on the subject of cross-cultural marriage is not limited to sociological works only. For, in fact, a good number of autobiographies by people who have married cross-culturally have been published. A comprehensive article, which mentions many of these autobiographies is, J.E. Ellettha and Shoustra-van Beukering's "Life Stories and Cross-Cultural Marriages: A Discussion of Betty de Hart, 'Not without My Daughter: On Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama.'" <sup>475</sup> The author points out that most of the published autobiographies dealing with these questions are written by Western women who were once married to Oriental men. These women decided to share their personal experience

---

<sup>474</sup> Seward, 2008.

<sup>475</sup> J.E. Ellettha and Shoustra-van Beukering, "Life Stories and Cross-Cultural Marriages: A Discussion of Betty de Hart, 'Not without My Daughter: On Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama,'" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 9.1 (1994): 69-78.

with the world, especially after the publication of Betty Mahmoody's work *Not without my Daughter* in 1987. They wrote about the circumstances of the encounter with their husbands and about married life in their home country as well as in their husband's country, about the problems that arose because of their mixed marriage, about the divorce, and its aftermath. However, Ellettha states: "although most of these women have seen their marriages fail and admit that they had made a wrong choice, they do not necessarily portray their former Oriental husbands as unreliable characters and themselves as heroines."<sup>476</sup>

Betty Mahmoody's *Not without my daughter* is regarded as one of the most famous works published by people who have had a real experience with cross-cultural marriage. The book is an account of the author's own experience with her Iranian husband. Betty traveled with her Iranian husband and her daughter to Iran in 1984 for a short visit to her husband's family. However, once they arrived in Iran, Betty's husband revealed his true intentions, namely his desire to stay with his family in Iran for good. Betty refused the idea and decided to leave with her daughter for the United States despite her husband's intense objections. Eventually, Betty managed to flee with her daughter overland to Turkey and back to America.

Marianne Alireza's *At the Drop of a Veil* (1971), is another classic autobiography of cross-cultural marriage and is still considered one of the established works that reflect on Saudi Arabian culture during the 1940s and 50s. Alireza married an Arab Prince during his stay in California in 1943 during the Second World War. The couple then moved to settle in Saudi Arabia. Alireza then details the events that led to the end of her marriage, the abduction of her children, and the attempts she faced in order to escape to the United States. Although her marriage ended in an unexpected divorce, she did not provide a negative image of her husband or of his Arab family.

Another interesting autobiography is written by the white French author Claude Bergeret, who married the African Cameroonian King François Njike Pokam in 1978. Bergeret was born in Cameroon as, the daughter of a Frenchman who was a missionary. After her French marriage broke up, she returned to her birth country to work as a teacher in a missionary school. There she met her future husband, King Pokam who was highly polygamous. Claude shared her life with about forty other wives despite the French disapproval of this union; the missionary school sacked Claude. Ten years later, her husband died, and Claude stayed in Cameroon as a development worker.

---

<sup>476</sup> Ellettha and Beukering, 1994, p. 69.

Comparing the above autobiographies to the experiences of the fictional characters in the novels, we notice that the experience of cross-culturally married couples vary as much in real life as they do in fictional works. While the fictional character, Julie, managed to integrate into the host culture, adapt to the new beliefs and traditions, and settle in the new environment, Mahmoody and Alireza could not stay in their husbands' countries and thus decided to go back home. However, Bergeret, like Julie, accepted her husband's traditions by agreeing to live with forty other wives despite her people's disapproval of her marriage. Sammar's experience, on the other hand, can be likened to those of Mahmoody and Alireza, who could not adapt to the host culture and who chose to stick to their native way of life. Similarly, Anisa discovered that she could not assimilate to her husband's beliefs after three months of marriage despite her initial integration into the American culture.

A fair number of autobiographies that have been published on the subject of cross-cultural marriage which reveals the spread and importance of this phenomenon in present-day society. Contact across cultures has increased considerably as compared to the past, particularly with the increase in migration and with the development of technology, which have increased the opportunities for people to get together and marry across cultures. It is the pervasiveness and popularity of the subject that led me to choose it as a topic of my doctoral research.

Overall, my dissertation asks and provides answers to the following questions: first, how do the protagonists' identities change when they encounter a new culture and marry inter-culturally?

We have seen that the protagonists in the novels show different reactions to cross-cultural encounters. Most of them go through a hybrid change such as Julie, Abdu, Rae, Anisa, and Mike; however, we notice that Sammar experiences an anti-hybrid reaction, and that Anisa undergoes religious awakening, after living a hybrid experience, or what is called "repentance" from an Islamic point of view.

Julie, for instance, experiences what Bhabha calls "in-between" space or "third space" and "unhomely" life. She is living in an "in-between" state in her country between her parents' bourgeois life and her friends' hybrid lifestyle. When she marries Abdu and moves with him to his Arab-Islamic village, she goes through another hybrid experience as a result of being integrated into the host culture. She adapts to Abdu's cultural and religious practices by learning to read the Koran, fasting during Ramadan, wearing a scarf, and helping the



women with housework. Her experience illustrates Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity."

Julie's assimilation into the new religious and cultural beliefs and her encounter with "newness" make her experience another "in-between" state. She feels that she belongs to her homeland, yet also feels dissociated from it. Living in such an "in-between" state makes Julie experience Bhabha's "unhomely" state in which she senses that she is "culturally" displaced. She feels that she neither belongs to her homeland, nor to the L.A. Café, not even to Abdu's country. However, she chooses Abdu's village, in the end, as a "third space" to live in, a space where she develops a sense of community not found in the Suburbs or at the Table.

Similarly, Abdu's hybrid experience, which is represented by his alternation between his cultural and religious beliefs and those of the West, confirms Bhabha's "in-between" or "third space." Abdu attempts to adapt to male roles in Western countries by not exerting his power over his wife, although at other times he could not but impose his authority, which matches with his male role in Arab cultures. In addition, he seeks to climb the social ladder by developing his ties with the milieu of Julie's upper-middle class. He also insists on her teaching him English, the language of the Western countries he is seeking to enter, which illustrates Pieterse's notion of "assimilationist hybridity." Abdu's dissociation from his homeland and his people and his mission in finding a life in the West make him experience an "unhomely" life, in which he feels estranged from his own society, yet not a member of Western society.

Concerning Mike, the American protagonist also lives in an "in-between" state in which his identity keeps oscillating between two polarities: his Muslim wife's beliefs and his family's and society's opposition of those beliefs. However, his marriage to someone who belongs to a marginal group and his assimilation of his wife's religious teachings and conversion to Islam distance him from the center that is represented by his Western American society, illustrating Pieterse's notion of "destabilizing hybridity."

In the case of Rae, his experience cannot be described in terms of the "in-between" or "third-space." His hybrid identity is based on the interaction between center and periphery. It lies in his interaction with and defense of the Arab-Islamic culture (periphery) and by his acceptance of the "Other." It also lies in his cross-cultural relationship with Sammar (the periphery) and his conversion to Islam at the end of the novel where he chooses to cross cultural and religious boundaries. Thus, his experience illustrates Hall's notion of hybridity which refers to "the constant process of differentiation and exchange between the centre and

the periphery and between different peripheries, as well as serving as the metaphor for the form of identity that is being produced from these conjunctions.”<sup>477</sup>

Contrary to the above cases, Sammar develops an anti-hybrid reaction, for she does not transgress the cultural and religious barriers that separate her from Rae. She experiences what Floya Anthias calls “a ghettoisation and enclavisation” in which she remains alienated from the host society and isolates herself in her room. This is manifested through her homesickness and living in the past, in a “time warp,” in Anthias’ terms.

Anisa, on the other hand, undergoes two hybrid experiences in the host culture: first, by living in an “in-between” space that makes her oscillate between her cultural and religious teachings and those of the receiving culture, on the one hand, and an “assimilationist hybridity,” on the other, in which she abandons her religious practices and adapts to the new cultural practices. This is manifested through her outings to discos and clubs, abandoning her prayers, taking off the hijab, and marrying someone from a different religion. However, Anisa’s hybrid experience does not last; she develops a counter-reaction to hybridity, seeks repentance, and returns to her religion when she finds that living with a non-believing husband is unbearable, suffering from feelings of remorse and guilt for being neglectful of her religious teachings.

The second question this dissertation seeks to answer is the following: what are the factors that play a role in the evolution of the change that occurs to the protagonists’ identities? Various factors of cultural, religious, personal, and social nature affect the protagonists in the novels to either develop a hybrid identity or maintain their native way of life.

In the case of Julie and Abdu, we can say that Julie’s “in-between” state in South Africa is mainly motivated by her life in post-apartheid society and by her membership in the L.A. Café, which influence her to dissociate herself from her parents’ generation racist life and to seek a hybrid life in post-apartheid South Africa. However, the alteration in Julie’s identity when she moves to Abdu’s country and her development of an “assimilationist hybridity” is encouraged by her integration into the host culture, by the hospitable reaction of the host community toward her presence, and by her special relationship with the desert which make her discover a new sense of her identity.

Concerning Abdu, we have seen that the main factor that plays a role in his hybrid

---

<sup>477</sup> Hall, “New Ethnicities,” in Bill Aschcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin (eds.), *The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, 1995, cited in Papastergiadis, in Werbner and Modood, 1997, p. 274.

experience before meeting Julie is his contempt for his country and people and his desire to live in the industrialized world in any possible way. In addition, the evolution of Abdu's hybridity after his encounter with Julie, which is represented by his oscillation between his cultural and religious beliefs and those of the West, is a result of his interaction with Julie. His wife plays an essential role in the evolution of his hybridity, even if it is an indirect role. She does not deliberately ask him to transgress his cultural traditions and religious laws, but seems to suggest things that oppose his culture and he accepts and yields to it.

Sammar's maintenance of her native identity and her refusal to translate herself across cultures can be justified not only by the religious factor which is the main factor that oppose her marriage to a non-Muslim, but also by several other factors such as a personal factor represented by her love for her late husband; a cultural factor symbolized by her respect for her cultural rules and traditions; and the family and friend factors represented by the influence of her aunt Mahasen and her friend Yasmin, who, she knows, would oppose her relationship with Rae. Rae, on the other hand, does not mind crossing cultures; his conversion to Islam at the end of the novel is not only motivated by the mere reason of marriage to a Muslim woman, but also because he has found inner peace in the new religion. This is why he doesn't tell Sammar about his conversion for four months to make sure that he is convinced of his decision.

Moreover, it is noticed that each of the stages that Anisa passes through is stimulated by certain factors. Her "assimilationist hybridity" which is represented by her integration into the American culture is motivated by the fact that she was living in a hybrid society in Rako Island, which encouraged her to distance herself from her religious and cultural practices and identify with those of the host culture. Also, her relationship with the host people, particularly her cross-cultural relationship with Mike causes her to further dissociate herself from her native culture. However, this cross-cultural and forbidden relationship is also the cause that makes Anisa aware of the sin she has committed and is the main reason that pushes her to seek repentance and return to her religion. In addition, other factors arouse Anisa's religious consciousness such as: the religious and conservative family she was raised in; the responsible at the Islamic community's office in the host culture; and her friends Floor and Faiza.

In the case of Mike, the main factor that affects his "in-between" state, which is represented by his wavering between his wife's beliefs and his family's and society's norms, is his love for Anisa. In addition, the evolution of his hybridity after his separation from Anisa, which is marked by his assimilation of Islam's teachings, is motivated by his

“unbelonging” to a particular religion and his feelings of displacement in his own culture, and by his exchange with Anisa’s people and the hospitable reaction of the host society.

Having studied the factors that have a role in the protagonists’ evolution of hybridity, we can deduce the role of cross-cultural marriage in the evolution of this hybridity, which gives answer to the third question of my dissertation: what is/are the relation(s) between cross-cultural marriage and hybridity?

We can conclude that cross-cultural marriage and hybridity are correlated. The former can be both a manifestation of hybridity, where the protagonists’ cross-cultural marriage is seen as an assertion of their hybrid experience as in the case of Julie, Rae, and Anisa, and a means to hybridity, as in Abdu’s and Mike’s cases. Contrary to expectations, we have also seen that cross-cultural relationships lead to an anti-hybrid reaction as in Sammar’s and Anisa’s situations.

Julie’s cross-cultural marriage to Abdu came as an assertion of her hybrid experience, which she was already living in South Africa before she met Abdu. The marriage was but a means to further distance herself from her father’s life, and not an end in itself. In addition, Julie’s evolution of her hybrid experience in Abdu’s country is not motivated by her husband who opposed her integration into his culture and refused to regard his wife as the foreign “Other.” We have seen that other factors play a role in Julie’s evolution of her hybrid experience in the new culture.

In the case of Rae, we have seen that his love for Sammar asserts his hybrid identity, which is manifested by his interest in and defense of the Arab-Islamic culture and by his career as a Middle-East historian and lecturer, and causes it to evolve to cross boundaries at the end of the novel through his conversion to Islam.

Similarly, Anisa’s intercultural relationship with Mike asserts her hybrid experience, which is represented by her integration into the American culture, but is not the cause of it, as Anisa has crossed cultural and religious barriers before she met Mike.

On the other hand, Abdu’s cross-cultural marriage to Julie turns out to be a means to achieve his goal of getting a visa to the West and embracing a Western lifestyle and not an end in itself, hence, a means to hybridity. Yet, it cannot be denied that his relationship with his wife has played an indirect role in his transgression of his cultural and religious practices, hence in the evolution of his hybridity.

Likewise, Mike's experience of marriage across cultures leads him to develop a hybrid identity, which is represented by his conversion to Islam and by his dissociation from his parents' and society's rules and principles.

An unexpected result occurs in the case of Sammar, who develops an anti-hybrid reaction to cross-cultural encounter. It cannot be denied that Sammar's relationship with Rae helps her to overcome her homesickness and her "ghettoized" life-structure; however, it does not lead her so far as to cross the religious barrier that separates her from Rae. In fact, Sammar refuses to translate herself and prefers to maintain her native way of life than becoming hybrid. Similarly, Anisa's marriage to Mike influences her in developing a counter-reaction to hybridity when she finds that living with a non-believing husband is unbearable and suffers from feelings of remorse and guilt for being neglectful of her religious teachings. Thus, she seeks repentance and returns to her religion.

The theory of hybridity, particularly cultural hybridity, proves to be revealing when analyzing the three novels. As we have seen, being exposed to a new culture through migration and cross-cultural relationships leads most of the protagonists in the novels to develop a hybrid identity or assert their hybrid experiences. I have adopted different notions of various hybridity theorists in order to analyze the protagonists' identities whose experiences differ from one character to the other. The notions are: Bhabha's "in-between" space or "third space" and "unhomely" aspect, which apply to Julie's, Abdu's, Mike's, and Anisa's cases; Hall's "periphery and center" metaphor that fits in Rae's situation; Pieterse's "assimilationist hybridity" that illustrates Julie's and Anisa's states, and his notion of "destabilizing hybridity" that reflects Rae's and Mike's experiences; Kraidy's "cultural chameleons" and the concept of "repentance" that reflect Anisa's case; in addition to Floya Anthias' notions of "ghettoisation and enclavisation" that apply to Sammar's condition.

In addition to cultural hybridity, linguistic hybridity is also adopted in order to analyze the discourse of the novels, particularly the notions of polyphony, heteroglossia, and intertextuality. Mikhail Bakhtin and Wolf Schmid are the main linguistic hybridity theorists whose viewpoints are followed in the analysis of Gordimer's and Aboulela's novels. Analyzing the linguistic discourse in the novels complements and backs up the main argument of this study. On the one hand, we notice that in *The Pickup* linguistic hybridity confirms the hybrid experience of its protagonists, while in *The Translator* and *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds*, it plays as a resistance strategy and highlights the anti-hybrid reaction of the female characters in the two novels.

In *The Pickup*, polyphony generates ambiguity and bi-textuality as the narrator's text and the character's text interfere, resulting in many voices in the same segment of text. This reflects the experience lived by the characters concerning their hybrid identities, which generates ambiguity as two identities "interfere," resulting in a third hybrid identity that does not settle into one fixed end, but oscillates in Bhabha's "third space" between two cultures. Just like identity "interference" occurs in cultural hybridity, text interference occurs in linguistic hybridity. The protagonists' identities experience aspects or features of two different cultures that mix together, interact, or even struggle in the third space. Like cultural hybridity that allows the emergence of two different identities in the characters' psyche, polyphony allows the emergence of two different voices. In addition, heteroglossia, which is represented by the insertion of foreign words, mostly Arabic, and treating them as part of the expanded vocabulary of English asserts the otherness of languages and the intertextual aspect. Exchange occurs across languages just like it occurs across cultures.

In *The Translator*, the presence of intertexts, especially through character and plot with Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, reflects Sammar's experience. Sammar, like Jane, refuses to cross religious boundaries, and like Mustafa Sa'ad returns home to her country Sudan to live by the norms of her culture and religion. In addition, the role of heteroglossia through the employment of Arabic words without providing their translation and the use of expressions that reflect Arabic discourse are associated with something that is not translatable, which reflects Sammar's anti-hybrid reaction and her refusal to translate herself culturally and religiously.

In *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds*, intertextual elements, represented by an abundance of verses from the Koran and by the presence of Prophet Mohammed's hadith, contribute to and complement the discussion on Anisa's development of a hybrid and an anti-hybrid identity, especially her repentance and "return" to religion. Most of the verses, it is noticed, revolve around the theme of committing sin and seeking repentance, which highlights Anisa's "religious awakening."

The theoretical framework I have adopted has its own limitations. For instance, the factors that influence the protagonists to develop a hybrid identity are not taken into account by the hybridity theorists. In addition, two of the fictional characters in the novels manifest reactions to cross-cultural encounters which are not considered by Bhabha and other theorists of post-colonialism. This kind of material could be good for post-doctoral research which will involve studying the social and psychological aspects of persons/characters in narrative

contexts. In addition, more novels that deal with cross-culturally married couples and their hybrid experiences could be studied. Further study of autobiographies written by people who have gone through the experience of inter-cultural marriage is also necessary as well as examining how these real-life stories can be compared to fictional narratives. Moreover, instead of focusing on the couples themselves, it would be interesting to study the hybrid identity or the anti-hybrid reaction of their offspring and the struggle they encounter between their parents' cultures. People of mixed-race have the potential to develop a hybrid identity more than their parents, who tend to maintain their native identity and stick to their cultural and religious practices, as we have seen in post-apartheid South African society in *The Pickup*.

## Bibliography



## I. Primary Sources

Abdi, Safi. *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*. Bloomington: 1<sup>st</sup> Books, 2002.

Aboulela, Leila. *The Translator*. Johannesburg: Heinemann, 1999.

Gordimer, Nadine. *The Pickup*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002.

## II. Secondary Sources

### A. Cross-Cultural Marriage

Barbara, Augustin. *Les Couples Mixtes*. Paris: Bayard, 1993.

Barbara, Augustin. *Mariages Mixtes*. Thèse 3ème cycle. École des Hautes études en Sciences Sociales: Paris, 1978.

Barbara, Augustin. *Marriage across Frontiers*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1989.

Bardis, Panos D. "Attitudes toward Dating among Foreign Students in America." *Marriage and Family Living* 18. 4 (1956): 339-344.

Barnett, Larry D. "Research on International and Interracial Marriages." *Marriage and Family Living* 25. 1 (1963): 105-107.

Benson, Susan. *Ambiguous Ethnicity: Interracial Families in London*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Brown, Phil, and John S. Shalett, eds. *Cross-cultural Practice with Couples and Families*. Vol. 2. New York: The Haworth Press, 1997.

Buijs, Gina. *Migrant Women: Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities*. Vol. 7. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1993.

Bystydzenski, Jill. *Intercultural Couples: Crossing Boundaries, Negotiating Difference*. New York and London: New York University Press, 2011.

Childs, Erica Chito. *Navigating Interracial Borders: Black-White Couples and their Social Worlds*. 1vol. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2005.

Cortell, Baker A. "Cross-National Marriages: A Review of the Literature." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* XXI. 2 (1990): 151-169.

Crowder, Kyle D., and Stewart E. Tolnay. "A New Marriage Squeeze for Black Women: The Role of Racial Inter-marriage by Black Men." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 62. 3 (2000): 792-807.

Dabel, Jane. "A Superior Colored Man... and a Scotch Woman: Interracial Marriages in New York City, 1850-1870." *International Social Science Review* 80. 3-4 (Sep. 2005): n. pag.

Donnan, H. "Mixed Marriage in Comparative Perspective: Gender and Power in Northern Ireland and Pakistan." *Journal of Comparative Family Studies* XXI. 2 (1990): 207-226.

Driskill, J. Lawrence. *Cross-Cultural Marriages and the Church: Living the Global Neighborhood*. Southern California: Hope Publishing House, 1995.

Duan, Ni, and Glenda Claborne. "Marital Interaction in Intercultural Marriage: An Application of Expectancy Violation Theory." University of Arizona. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://glendaclaborne.com/portfolio/arabismo/projects/grad/610.pdf>>.

Ellettha, J.E., and Schoustra-Van Beukering. "Life Stories and Cross-Cultural Marriages: A Discussion of Betty de Hart, 'Not without My Daughter: On Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama.'" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 9. 1 (1994): 69-78.

Fox, Robin. *Kinship and Marriage: An Anthropological Perspective*. Harmondsworth [Midd.]: Penguin Books, 1974.

Fu, Vincent Kang. "Racial Intermarriage Pairings." *Demography* 38. 2 (2001): 147-159.

Le Gall, Josiane. "Transmission Identitaire et Mariages Mixtes: Recension des Écrits." Université de Montréal, 2003. Accessed April 25, 2011. <<http://www.mapageweb.umontreal.ca/meintel/publications/LeGall%20r%C3%A9cension.pdf>>.

Hyslop, Jonathan. "White Working- Class Women and the Invention of Apartheid: 'Purified' Afrikaner Nationalist Agitation for Legislation against 'Mixed' Marriages, 1934-9." *The Journal of African History* 36. 1 (1995): 57-81.

Jones, Gavin Willis, Heng Leng Chee, and Maznah Mohamad, eds. *Muslim-Non-Muslim Marriage: Political and Cultural Contestations in Southeast Asia*. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009.

Kalmijn, Matthijs, Paul M. de Graaf, and Jacques P. G. Janssen. "Intermarriage and the Risk of Divorce in the Netherlands: The Effects of Differences in Religion and in Nationality, 1974-94." *Population Studies* 59. 1 (2005): 71-85.

Karis, Terri, and Kyle D. Killian. *Intercultural Couples: Exploring Diversity in Intimate Relationships*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Kellner, Judith. "Gender Perspective in Cross-Cultural Couples." *Clinical Social Work* 37 (2009): 224-229.

Kulczycki, Andrzej, and Arun Peter Lobo. "Patterns, Determinants, and Implications of Intermarriage among Arab Americans." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 64. 1 (2002): 202-210.

Kuo, Eddie C. Y., and Riaz Hassan. "Some Social Concomitants of Interethnic Marriage in Singapore." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 38. 3 (1976): 549-559.

Laxmi Khulpateea, Veda. *State of the Union: Cross-Cultural Marriages in 19th Century Literature and Society*. Doctoral dissertation. State University of New York: Binghamton, 2007.

Libeyre, Jean-Marie. *J'ai Deux Amours ou la Fascinante Etrangeté : Du Lien Filial à la Révélation Amoureuse dans le Cadre de la Relation Matrimoniale Interculturelle*. Mémoire DUFRA. Université de Tours : Tours, 1992.

Mcnamara, Robert, P., Maria Tempenis, and Beth Walton, eds. *Crossing the Line: Interracial Couples in the South*. Westport London: Praeger, 1999.

Misagon, RoseAnne. "Cross-Cultural Marriage: Identity and Choice." *Journal of Family Studies*. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://jfs.e-contentmanagement.com/archives/vol/5/issue/1/review/667/crosscultural-marriage-identity-and-choice>>.

Neyrand, Gerard, and Marine M'Sili. "Mixed Couples in Contemporary France: Marriage, Acquisition of French Nationality and Divorce." *Population: An English Selection* 10. 2 (1998): 385-416.

Nguyen, Nathalie Huynh Chau. "Vietnamese Women: Narratives of Cross-Cultural Marriage." *Intersections: Gender and Sexuality in Asia and the Pacific* 21 (2009). Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue21/nguyen.htm>>.

Piller, Ingrid. "Cross-cultural Communication in Intimate Relationships." Basle University, 2007. Accessed Jan. 5, 2011. <[http://languageonthemove.com/downloads/PDF/piller\\_2007\\_intercult%20comm%20intimate%20relationships.pdf](http://languageonthemove.com/downloads/PDF/piller_2007_intercult%20comm%20intimate%20relationships.pdf)>.

Qian, Zhenchao, and Daniel T. Lichter. "Social Boundaries and Marital Assimilation: Interpreting Trends in Racial and Ethnic Inter-marriage." *American Sociological Review* 72. 1 (2007): 68-94.

Resnik, Reuben B. "Some Sociological Aspects of Inter-marriage of Jew and Non-Jew." *Social Forces* 12. 1 (1933): 94-102.

Romano, Dugan. *Intercultural Marriage: Promises and Pitfalls*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Boston: Intercultural Press, 2008.

Rosenblatt, Paul C., Terri A. Karis, and Richard Powell, ed. *Multiracial Couples: Black and White Voices*. London: Sage Publications, 1995.

Roussel, Pauline. *Interracial Couples: Sexuality and Power, the Example of Sally Hemings and Thomas Jefferson*. Master thesis. University of Tours: Tours, 2008.

Safi, Mirna. "Inter-marriage and Assimilation: Disparities in Levels of Exogamy among Immigrants in France." *Population (English Edition)* 63. 2 (2008): 239-267.

Schmidlechner, Karin Maria. "Cross-cultural Marriages in Austria." Gender and Power in the New Europe, the 5th European Feminist Research Conference. Lund University: Sweden, 2003. Accessed Feb. 16, 2011. <[http://www.iiav.nl/epublications/2003/gender\\_and\\_power/5thfeminist/paper\\_440.pdf](http://www.iiav.nl/epublications/2003/gender_and_power/5thfeminist/paper_440.pdf)>.

Spickard, Paul R. *Mixed Blood: Inter-marriage and Ethnic Identity in Twentieth-Century America*. London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1989.

Suksomboon, Panitee. *Thai Migrant Women in the Netherlands: Cross-cultural Marriage and Families*. Doctoral dissertation. Leiden University, 2009.

Tharakan, Tony. "Book Talk: Mixed marriage and a Real-Life Love Story." *Reuters*. Aug. 20, 2010. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2010/08/20/us-books-authors-doshi-idUSTRE67J37420100820>>.

Therrien, Catherine. *Des Repères à la Construction d'un Chez-soi : Trajectoires de Mixité Conjugale au Maroc*. Doctoral dissertation. Université de Montréal, 2009.

Uddin, Emaj M.D. "Cross-Cultural Comparison of Marriage Relationship between Muslim and Santal Communities in Rural Bangladesh." *World Cultures Ejournal* 17. 1 (2009): n. pag. Accessed Feb.10, 2011. <<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/0w13d105>>.

Vu, Huong. "Cross-cultural Marriage Acceptance Growing for Asian-Americans." *Medill Reports Chicago*. Feb. 11, 2010. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://news.medill.northwestern.edu/chicago/news.aspx?id=156390>>.

Watson, James L. *Between two Cultures: Migrants and Minorities in Britain*. Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1977.

Whyte, Martin King. *Dating, Mating, and Marriage*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, Inc., 1990.

Wilcox, Quenby. "Women's Rights- Cross-cultural Marriage." *World Pulse*. Accessed Feb. 15, 2011. <<http://www.worldpulse.com/node/13177>>.

Yamani, Mai. "Cross-Cultural Marriage within Islam: Ideas and Reality." In Rosemary Breger and Rosanna Hill, eds. *Cross-Cultural Marriage : Identity and Choice*. Oxford: Berg, 1998.

Yancey, George A, Sherelyn Whittum Yancey, and Curtiss Paul DeYoung. *Just Don't Marry One : Interracial Dating, Marriage, and Parenting*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2002.

## B. Hybridity

Afrin, Zeenat. "Hybridity, Liminality, and Gulliver's Travels: Swift's Quest for his 'Cultural Identity.'" *Literary Paritantra* 1. 1-2 (2009): 92-103.

Alghamdi, Alaa. *Configurations of Home and Identity for Muslim Characters in British Postcolonial Fiction: Transformations of the Liminal Self*. Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011.

Al-Joulani, Nayef Ali. "Diana Abu-Jaber's *Arabian Jazz*: An Orphic Vision of Hybrid Cultural Identity." *Neophilologus* 94 (2010): 637-652.

Ancellin, Karine. "Hybrid Identities of Characters in Muslim Women Fiction Post 9-11." *TRANS- Revue de Littérature Générale et Comparée* 8 (2009): n. pag. Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <<http://trans.revues.org/344>>.

Anthias, Floya. "Diasporic Hybridity and Transcending Racism: Problems and Potentials." In Floya Anthias and Cathie Lloyd, eds. *Rethinking Anti-Racism: From Theory to Practice*. London: Routledge, 2002.

Bahmanpour, Bahareh. "Fluid Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*." Accessed Sep. 30, 2010. <<http://dalea.du.se/theses/archive/169a2ec1-c26e-4ac6-8173-6f525b263a2c/bf9ee670-23dc-42d7-a6e9-5c7138204168.pdf>>.

Ben Beya, Abdennebi. "Mimicry, Ambivalence and Hybridity." Accessed Sep. 25, 2011. <<http://english.emory.edu/Bahri/1WEBPAGE.HTML>>.

Beukema, Taryn. "Men Negotiating Identity in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*." *Postcolonial Text* 4. 3 (2008): n. pag.

Bhabha, Homi K. "Culture's In-Between." In Stuart Hall and Paul Du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage publications, 1996.

Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

Bhabha, Homi K. "The Third Space." In Jonathan Rutherford, ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Bounse, Sarah Habib. "Hybridity and Postcoloniality: Formal, Social and Historical Innovations in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*." University of Tennessee, 2009. Accessed Mar. 5, 2012. <[http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2254&context=utk\\_chanhonoproj](http://trace.tennessee.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2254&context=utk_chanhonoproj)>.

Brun, Marilyne. *Playful Ambiguities: Racial and Literary Hybridity in the Novels of Brian Castro*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Toulouse-le Mirail and the University of Melbourne: Toulouse, 2010.

Brun, Marilyne. "Racial Ambiguity and Whiteness in Brian Castro's *Drift*." *The Journal of the European Association of Studies on Australia* 2. 2 (2011): n. pag.

Casimir, Fred. "Foundations for the Study of Intercultural Communication Based on a Third Culture Building-Model." *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 23. 1 (1999): 91-116.

Casimir, Fred. "Third Culture Building: A Paradigm Shift for International and Intercultural Communication." *Communication Yearbook* 16 (1993): 407-428.

Clarke, Roger. "Hybridity—Elements of a Theory." *Rogerclarke.com*. May 10, 2005. Accessed Sep. 26, 2011. <<http://www.rogerclarke.com/SOS/HAHTh0505.html>>.

Fajar, Yusri. "The Dialectics between the West and East: Cultural Hybridity in Contemporary Asian British Fiction." University of Brawijaya. Accessed Mar. 5, 2013. <[http://elearning-fib.ub.ac.id/file.php/1/moddata/forum/1/234/Cultural\\_Hybridity\\_in\\_Contemporary\\_Asian\\_British\\_Fiction.pdf](http://elearning-fib.ub.ac.id/file.php/1/moddata/forum/1/234/Cultural_Hybridity_in_Contemporary_Asian_British_Fiction.pdf)>.

Farahzad, Farazaneh. "Hybridity in Immigration Literature and Translated Literature." Accessed Nov. 8, 2011. <<http://www.translationdirectory.com/articles/article2277.php>>.

Fatmawati, Nurul. "Reading Hybridity in Jean Kwok's *Girl in Translation*." Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia.

Fernandez, Irene Perez. "Exploring Hybridity and Multiculturalism: Intra and Inter Family Relations in Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*." *Odisea* 10 (2009): 143-154.

Fludernik, Monika. "Hybridity." In David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Frello, Birgitta. "Essentialism, Hybridism, and Cultural Critique." Accessed Jan. 5, 2012. <<http://www.uel.ac.uk/ccsr/documents/FrelloEssentialism.pdf>>.

Friedman, Jonathan. "Global Crises, the Struggle for Cultural Porkbarrelling: Cosmopolitans versus Locals, Ethnic and Nationals in an Era of de-Hegemonisation." In Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, eds. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*. London: Zed books, 1997.

Garrigos, Cristina. "The Dynamics of Intercultural Dislocation: Hybridity in Rabih Alameddine's *I, The Divine*." In Layla Al Maleh, ed. *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspective*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

Grassian, Daniel. *Hybrid Fictions: American Literature and Generation X*. North Carolina: McFarland, 2003.

Guignery, Vanessa, Catherine Pessoa-Miquel, and François Specq. *Hybridity: Forms and Figures in Literature and the Visual Arts*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2011.

Gutiérrez, Kris D., Patricia Baquedano-Lopez, and Carlos Tejeda. "Rethinking Diversity: Hybridity and Hybrid Language Practices in the Third Space." *Mind, Culture, and Activity* 6. 4 (1999): 286-303.

Ha, Kien Nghi. "Crossing the Border? Hybridity as Late-Capitalistic Logic of Cultural Translation and National Modernisation." Nov. 2006. Accessed Dec. 27, 2011. <[http://eipcp.net/transversal/1206/ha/en/base\\_edit](http://eipcp.net/transversal/1206/ha/en/base_edit)>.

Hannerz, Ulf. "Flow, Boundaries, and Hybrids: Keywords in Transnational Anthropology." Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk/working%20papers/hannerz.pdf>>.

Huddart, David. *Homi Bhabha*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Hutnyk, John. "Adorno at Womad: South Asia Crossovers and the Limits of Hybridity-Talk." In Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, eds. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*. London: Zed books, 1997.

"Hybrid." *Merriam Webster*. Accessed Dec. 2, 2011. <<http://www.merriam-webster.com>>.

"Hybridity." *The New Oxford Dictionary of English*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

Kapchan, Deborah A., and Pauline Turner Strong. "Theorizing the Hybrid." *The Journal of American Folklore* 112. 445 (1999): 239-253.

Karanja, Lucy. "'Homeless' at Home: Linguistic, Cultural, and Identity Hybridity and Third Space Positioning of Kenyan Urban Youth." Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <[http://www.academia.edu/392727/Homeless\\_at\\_Home\\_Linguistic\\_Cultural\\_and\\_Identity\\_Hybridity\\_and\\_Third\\_Space\\_Positioning\\_of\\_Kenyan\\_Urban\\_Youth](http://www.academia.edu/392727/Homeless_at_Home_Linguistic_Cultural_and_Identity_Hybridity_and_Third_Space_Positioning_of_Kenyan_Urban_Youth)>.

Khulman, Keely Susan. *Transatlantic Travel and Cultural Exchange in the Early Colonial Era: The Hybrid American Female and her New World Colony*. Doctoral dissertation. Washington State University, May 2006.

Kraidy, Marwan M. "Hybridity in Cultural Globalization." *Communication Theory* 12. 3 (2002): 316-339.

Krieg Passau, Michael. "Hybrid Identities in the Novels of Salman Rushdie." Accessed Jan. 6, 2012. <<http://www.gradnet.de/papers/pomo99.papers/Krieg99.htm>>.

Krige, Nadia. *Hybridity, the Uncanny and the Stranger: The Contemporary Transcultural Novel*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Stellenbosch, 2009.

Laragy, Elizabeth. "Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies: Hybridity." Accessed Dec. 27, 2011. <<http://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/SchoolofEnglish/imperial/key-concepts/Hybridity.htm>>.

Lkas, Karin, and Gerhard Wagner, eds. *Communicating in the Third Space*. New York: Routledge, 2009.

Mabardi, Sabine. "Encounters of a Heterogonous Kind: Hybridity in Cultural Theory." In Rita De Grandis and Bernd Zila, eds. *Unforeseeable Americas: Constructing Cultural Hybridity in the Americas*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2000.

Meredith, Paul. "Hybridity in the Third Space: Rethinking Bi-cultural Politics in Aotearoa/New Zealand." Massey University July 7-9, 1998. Accessed Apr. 10, 2012. <<http://lianz.waikato.ac.nz/PAPERS/paul/hybridity.pdf>>.

Moeke-Maxwell, Tess. "InSide/OutSide Cultural Hybridity: Greenstone as Narrative Provocateur." 2003. Accessed Mar. 4, 2013. <<http://www.aare.edu.au/03pap/mcc03306.pdf>>.



Moreman, Shane T. *Performativity and the Latina/o-White Hybrid Identity: Performing the Textual Self*. Doctoral dissertation. University of South Florida, Jan. 1, 2005.

Mushtaq, Hammad. "Othering, Stereotyping, and Hybridity in Fiction: A Postcolonial Analysis of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (1899) and Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980)." *Journal of Language and Literature* 3 (2010): n. pag.

Naranjo, Juan Meneses. "Walking Down the Borderline: Hybridity and the Modulation of the Self in Three Canonical Chicano Novels." *Odisea* 9 (2008): 167-178.

Papastergiadis, Nikos. "Restless Hybrids." In Rasheed Araeen, Sean Cubitt, and Ziauddin Sardar, eds. *The Third Text Reader: On Art, Culture, and Theory*. London: Third Text, 2002.

Papastergiadis, Nikos. "Tracing Hybridity in Theory." In Pnina Werbner and Tariq Modood, eds. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*. London: Zed books, 1997.

Pataki, Eva. "Caught between two Worlds: The Confusion of Cultural Identity in Three British Asian Novels." Accessed July 28, 2011. <[http://www.theroundtable.ro/Archive/literary\\_studies/eva\\_pataki\\_caught\\_between\\_two\\_worlds.doc](http://www.theroundtable.ro/Archive/literary_studies/eva_pataki_caught_between_two_worlds.doc)>.

Pérez-Anzaldo, Guadalupe. "Diasporic Subjects and Hybrid Identities in We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This? By Achy Obejas." *Label Me Latina/o* 1 (2011). Accessed Jan. 5, 2012. <<http://labelmelatin.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Diasporic-Subjects-and-Hybrid-Identities-guadalupe-perezanzaldo.pdf>>.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. "Globalization as Hybridization." In Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash, and Roland Robertson, eds. *Global Modernities*. London: Sage publications, 1995.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. "Hybridity, So What? The Anti-Hybridity Backlash and the Riddles of Recognition." *Theory, Culture, and Society* 18. 2-3 (2001): 219-245.

Piller, Ingrid. *Bilingual Couples Talk: The Discursive Construction of Hybridity*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2002.

Prabhu, Anjali. *Hybridity: Limits, Transformations, Prospects*. Albany: State University of New York, 2007.

Prabhu, Anjali. "Interrogating Hybridity: Subaltern Agency and Totality in Postcolonial Theory." *Diacritics* 35. 2 (2005): 76-92.

Puri, Shalini. *The Caribbean Postcolonial: Social Equality, Post-Nationalism, and Cultural Hybridity*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Raab, Joseph, and Martin Butler, eds. *Hybrid Americas: Contacts, Contrasts, and Confluences in New World*. Berlin: Bilingual Press, 2008.

Radojkovich, Leanne. "The Literary Benefits of Linguistic and Cultural Hybridity." Auckland University, 2010. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012.

<<http://www.slideshare.net/leanneradojkovich/literary-benefits-of-linguistic-and-cultural-hybridity>>.

Ramos, Rufel F. "Homi Bhabha: The Process of Creating Culture from the Interstitial, Hybrid Perspective." Nov. 20, 2000. Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <<http://rowenasworld.org/essays/newphil/bhabha.htm>>.

Ramsay, Raylene, and Deborah Walker. "Translating Hybridity: The Curious Case of the First Kanak Novel (Dewé Gorodé's *L'épave*)." *The AALITRA Review: A Journal of Literary Translation* 1 (2010): 44-57.

Rios, L. Danyel. "Cultural Hybridity: Arab/Latino – A Reflexive Approach." Issue 2006. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <[http://www.unt.edu/honors/eaglefeather/2006\\_Issue/rios.shtml](http://www.unt.edu/honors/eaglefeather/2006_Issue/rios.shtml)>.

Samee, Sabir Abdus. "Fluid Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's *Interpreter of Maladies*." Autumn 2004. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://du.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:517785/FULLTEXT01>>.

Sandset, Tony. "Some Thoughts on Hybrid Identity." *New Narratives*. Accessed Mar. 1, 2013. <<http://newnarratives.wordpress.com/issue-1-hybrid-identity/some-thoughts-on-hybrid-identity/>>.

Sayegh, Pascal. "Cultural Hybridity and Modern Binaries: Overcoming the Opposition between Identity and Otherness?" *Cultures in Transit Conference*. Liverpool, 2008.

Seward, MaryAnn. *Identity Negotiations and Third Culture Building in Intercultural Marriages*. Doctoral dissertation. Southern Illinois University: Carbondale, 2008.

Shameem, Mahmud. "Globalization and Cultural Hybridity in the Context of New Digital Media." Aarhus University. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <[http://smahmud.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/6/8/416873/globalization\\_culture\\_media.pdf](http://smahmud.weebly.com/uploads/4/1/6/8/416873/globalization_culture_media.pdf)>.

Singh, Amardeep. "The Valve - A Literary Organ: 'Mimicry' and 'Hybridity' in Plain English." Aug. 5, 2009. Accessed Mar. 1, 2013. <[http://www.thevalve.org/go/valve/article/mimicry\\_and\\_hybridity\\_in\\_plain\\_words/](http://www.thevalve.org/go/valve/article/mimicry_and_hybridity_in_plain_words/)>.

Smith, Keri E. Iyall, and Patricia Leavy, eds. *Hybrid Identities: Theoretical and Empirical Examinations*. Leiden: Brill Publishing, 2008.

Smith, Lindsey Claire. "Cross-cultural Hybridity in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans*." *The American Transcendental Quarterly* (2006). Accessed Sep. 26, 2011. <[http://eresource.lcu.edu.cn/resource/E\\_Course/meiguowenxue/content/wenxian/8.pdf](http://eresource.lcu.edu.cn/resource/E_Course/meiguowenxue/content/wenxian/8.pdf)>.

Stross, Brian. "The Hybrid Metaphor: From Biology to Culture." *The Journal of American Folklore* 112. 445 (1999): 254-267.

Tratner, Michael. "What's Wrong with Hybridity? The Impotence of Postmodern Political Ideals in *Ulysses* and *Midnight's Children*." In Leonard Orr, ed. *Joyce, Imperialism, and Postcolonialism*. New York: Syracuse University, 2008.

Trigo, Abril. "Shifting Paradigms: From Transculturation to Hybridity: A Theoretical Critique." Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/trigo1/pdffiles/ShiftingParadigms.pdf>>.

Wade, Peter. "Hybridity Theory and Kinship Thinking." *Cultural Studies* 19. 5 (2005): 602-621.

Wagner, Tamara. "Nostalgia, Historicity, Hybridity: Representations of Asian Identities in the Historical Novels of Kazuo Ishiguro and Catherine Lim." University of Cambridge. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/uk/ishiguro/wagner1.html>>.

Wei, C.Y. *Mobile Hybridity: Supporting Personal and Romantic Relationships with Mobile Phones in Digitally Emergent Spaces*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Washington: Seattle, WA, 2007.

Werbner, Pnina, and Tariq Modood, eds. *Debating Cultural Hybridity: Multicultural Identities and the Politics of Anti-racism*. London: Zed books, 1997.

Wolfgang Stockhammer, Philipp, ed. *Conceptualizing Cultural Hybridization: A Transdisciplinary Approach*. Berlin: Springer, 2012.

Zeidanin, Hussein Hasan. *Rethinking Hybridity from a Pluralistic Perspective in Selected Twentieth Century Multiethnic American Fiction and Criticism*. Doctoral dissertation. Indiana University of Pennsylvania, 2011.

## C. Literary Theory

Abbott, Pamela, Claire Wallace, and Melissa Tyler. *An Introduction to Sociology: Feminist Perspectives*. New York: Routledge, 2005.

Abbott, Porter. *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Aczel, Richard. "Polyphony." In David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. London: Cambridge Mass, 1968.

Bakhtin, Mikhail, and Michael Holquist, ed. *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. Trans. by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Bakhtin, Mikhail. *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Trans. by Caryl Emerson. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984.

Beasley, Chris. *What is Feminism? An Introduction to Feminist Theory*. London: Sage, 1999.

Blodorn, Andreas, Daniela Langer, and Michael Scheffel, ed. *Stimme(n) Im Text: Narratologische Positionsbestimmungen*. Berlin, New York: W. de Gruyter, 2006.

Booker, Keith M. *Techniques of Subversion in Modern Literature: Transgression, Abjection, and the Carnavalesque*. Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1991.

Bullough, Vern L. *The Subordinate Sex: A History of Attitudes toward Women*. 1 vol. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1973.

Butler, Judith P. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. 1 vol. New York: Routledge, 1990.

Carol, Adlam. *The Annotated Bakhtin Bibliography*. London: Maney Publishing, 2000.

Code, Lorraine. *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Cohn, Dorrit. *Le Propre de la Fiction*. Trans. by Claude Hary-Schaeffer. Seuil, 2001.

Cohn, Dorrit. *Transparent Minds: Narrative Modes for Presenting Consciousness in Fiction*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978.

Cros, Edmond. *Theory and Practice of Sociocriticism*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1983.

Cros, Edmond. "Towards a Sociocritical Theory of the Text." Jul. 28, 2006. Accessed April 25, 2011. <<http://sociocritique.fr/spip.php?article3>>.

Ellis, John Martin. *The Theory of Literary Criticism: A Logical Analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977.

Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. Aylesbury: Penguin Books, 1963.

Goldmann, Lucien. *Pour une Sociologie du Roman*. Paris: Gallimard, 1973.

Gómez-Moriana, Antonio. *Discourse Analysis as Sociocriticism: The Spanish Golden Age*. London: University of Minnesota Press, 1993.

Guerin, Wilfred L., Earle Labor, Lee Morgan, Jeanne C. Reesman, and John R. Willingham, eds. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Heinen, Sandra, and Roy Sommer. *Narratology in the Age of Cross-Disciplinary Narrative Research*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009.

Herman, David. *The Cambridge Companion to Narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Herman, David, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Hirschkop, Ken, and David G. Shepherd, eds. *Bakhtin and Cultural Theory*. Oxford: Manchester University Press, 1989.

Jones, Malcolm V., and Garth M. Terry. *New Essays on Dostoyevsky*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983.

Kristeva, Julia. "The Bounded Text." In Léon Roudiez, ed. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Trans. by Alice Jardine, Thomas Gora, and Léon Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Kristeva, Julia. "Word, Dialogue, Novel." In Léon Roudiez, ed. *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*. Trans. by Alice Jardine, Thomas Gora, and Léon Roudiez. New York: Columbia University Press, 1980.

Lewin, Ellen, ed. *Feminist Anthropology: A Reader*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2006.

Meijer, Maaïke. "A Manual for Self-Defence: Feminist Literary Theory." In Rosemarie Buikema and Anneke Smelik, eds. *Women's Studies and Culture: A Feminist Introduction*. London: Zed Books, 1993: 26-39.

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2003.

Moraru, Christian. "Intertextuality." In David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London: Routledge, 2005.

Morris, Pam. *The Bakhtin Reader: Selected Writings of Bakhtin*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

- Neumann, Birgit, and Ansgar Nünning. *An Introduction to the Study of Narrative Fiction*. Stuttgart: Klett Lernen und Wissen, 2008.
- Page, Ruth E. *Literary and Linguistic Approaches to Feminist Narratology*. 1 vol. Basingstoke [England]: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Park-Fuller, Linda M. "Voices: Bakhtin's Heteroglossia and Polyphony, and the Performance of Narrative Literature." *Literature in Performance* 7 (1986): 1-12.
- Richardson, Brian. *Unnatural voices: Extreme Narration in Modern and Contemporary Fiction*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2006.
- Robinson, Andrew. "In Theory Bakhtin: Dialogism, Polyphony and Heteroglossia." *Ceasefire Magazine*. Jul. 29, 2011. Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <<http://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-bakhtin-1/>>.
- Ruthven, K.K. *Feminist Literary Studies: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984.
- Schmid, Wolf. *Narratology: An Introduction*. Berlin/New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2010.
- Scott, John. *Sociology: The Key Concepts*. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Selden, Raman, Peter Widdowson, and Peter Brooker. *A Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. 4<sup>th</sup> ed. Prentice Hall: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1977.
- Surdulescu, Radu. "Mikhail Bakhtin and the Formalist Theories." Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <<http://ebooks.unibuc.ro/lls/RaduSurdulescu-FormStructuality/Mikhail%20Bakhtin%20and%20the%20Formalist%20Theories.htm>>.
- Toolan, Michael, ed. *Language, Text, and Context: Essays in Stylistics*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Toolan, Michael. *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge, 1988.
- Walters, Margaret. *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Williams, Patrick. "Dialogism." In David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan, eds. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. London: Routledge, 2005.
- Zérafra, Michel. *Roman et Société*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1971.

## D. Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*

Altnöder, Sonja. *Inhabiting the "New" South Africa: Ethical Encounters at the Race-Gender Interface in Four Post-Apartheid Novels by Zöe Wicomb, Sindiwe Magona, Nadine Gordimer and Farida Karodia*. n.p: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag Trier, 2008.

Ball, Magdalena. "The Mute Desert: A Review of Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*." *The Compulsive Reader*. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://www.compulsivereader.com/html/index.php?name=News&file=article&sid=123>>.

Bazin, Nancy Topping, and Marilyn Dallman Seymour, eds. *Conversations with Nadine Gordimer*. n.p: University Press of Mississippi, 1990.

Berg, Mari-Ann. "Exploring the Mind: Self, Other and Social Context in Nadine Gordimer's 'An Image of Success.'" *English in Africa* 29. 1 (2002): 55-72.

Caro de la Barrera, José L. Venegas. "Identity as Liminality in Post-colonial Fiction: Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* and Bessie Head's *A Question of Power*." 2005. Accessed Feb. 20, 2012. <[http://www.ual.es/odisea/Odisea06\\_Venegas.pdf](http://www.ual.es/odisea/Odisea06_Venegas.pdf)>.

Chuang, Sarita. "The Vicissitudes of Identity: Boundary-crossing between Self and the Other in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*." Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://hermes.hrc.ntu.edu.tw/lctd/asp/works/397/study.htm>>.

Cloete, M.J. "A study of Identity in Post-Apartheid South African English literature: *The Pickup* by Nadine Gordimer." *Findarticles.com*. April 2005. Accessed Feb. 14, 2011. <[http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_7020/is\\_1\\_26/ai\\_n28321386/?tag=content;coll](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_7020/is_1_26/ai_n28321386/?tag=content;coll)>.

Dannenberg, Hilary P. "Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* and the Desert Romance Tradition in Post/colonial Anglophone Fiction." *Highbeam Research*. Jan. 1, 2008. Accessed Feb. 14, 2011. <<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-187844980.html>>.

Genty, Stéphanie. "Genre/Gender in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*." *Commonwealth: Essays and Studies* 26. 2 (2003): 83-89.

Godderis-toudic, Hélène. "Turning the Tables in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*." *Anglophonia: French Journal of English Studies* 21 (2007): 189-195.

Gordimer, Nadine, and Stephen Clingman. "The Future is Another Country." *Transition* 56 (1992): 132-150.

Herlitzius, Eva-Marie. *A Comparative Analysis of the South African and German Reception of Nadine Gordimer's, André Brink's and J.M. Coetzee's works*. LIT Verlag Münster, 2005.

Hunt, Emma. "Post-Apartheid Johannesburg and Global Mobility in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* and Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*." 2006. Accessed Feb. 14, 2012. <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Post-apartheid+Johannesburg+and+global+mobility+in+Nadine+Gordimer%27s...-a0169211570>>.

Isidore, Diala. "Interrogating Mythology: The Mandela Myth and Black Empowerment in Nadine Gordimer's Post-Apartheid Writing." *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 38. 1 (2004): 41-56.

Jacobs, J.U. "Picturing the African Diaspora in Recent Fiction." Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Picturing+the+African+Diaspora+in+recent+fiction.-a0221205450>>.

Jeyifo, Biodun. "An Interview with Nadine Gordimer: Harare, February 14, 1992." *Callaloo* 16. 4 (1993): 922-930.

Knox, Alice. "No Place Like Utopia: Cross-Racial Couples in Nadine Gordimer's Later Novels." Accessed Feb. 18, 2011. <<http://ariel.synergiesprairies.ca/ariel/index.php/ariel/article/viewFile/2785/2730>>.

Lazar, Karen. "Feminism as 'Piffling'? Ambiguities in Nadine Gordimer's Short Stories." Feb. 6, 1990. Accessed Feb. 14, 2011. <<http://wiredspace.wits.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10539/7905/HWS-242.pdf?sequence=1>>.

Lazar, Karen. "Jump and Other Stories: Gordimer's Leap into the 1990s: Gender and Politics in Her Latest Short Fiction." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 18. 4 (1992): 783-802.

Lebdai, Ben. "Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*: Immigration/Emigration in Today's World." In Stella Borg Barthet, ed. *A Sea of Encounters: Essays towards a Postcolonial Commonwealth*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009: 105-116.

Martinez Marin, Natividad. "Nadine Gordimer's Later Novels or, the Fiction of Otherness." In Dunja M. Mohr, *Embracing the Other: Addressing Xenophobia in the New Literatures in English*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.

Mazhar, Syeda Faiqa. *A Study of the Theme of Borderland in Nadine Gordimer's Fiction*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Bedfordshire, 2007.

Meier, Franz. "Picking up the Other: Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup*." 2003. Accessed Feb. 20, 2011.

Noor, Ronny. "*The Pickup* by Nadine Gordimer." *World Literature Today* 76. 1 (2002): 115.

Nutall, Sarah. "City Forms and Writing the 'Now' in South Africa." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 30. 4 (2004): 731-748.

Sharpe, Patricia Lee. "Gordimer Trashes Absolutism in '*The Pickup*.'" *Whirled View*. Nov. 28, 2004. Accessed Feb. 20, 2011. <[http://whirledview.typepad.com/whirledview/2004/11/gordimer\\_trashe.html](http://whirledview.typepad.com/whirledview/2004/11/gordimer_trashe.html)>.

Sullivan, Andrew. "How the Other Half Loves." *New York Times.com*. Dec. 16, 2001. Accessed Feb. 21, 2011. <<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9D04E4DE123CF935A25751C1A9679C8B63&pagewanted=1>>.



Worsfold, Brian. "Peeking Behind the Veil: Migratory Women in Africa in Nuruddin Farah's *From a Crooked Rib* (1970), *A Naked Needle* (1976), and *Knots* (2007), and Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001)." *Journal of English Studies* 8 (2010): 159-173.

York, Anthony. "'The Pickup' by Nadine Gordimer." *Salon.com*. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://dir.salon.com/books/review/2001/12/06/gordimer/index.html>>.

## E. Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*

Aboulela, Leila. "Moving Away from Accuracy." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 22 (2002): 198-207.

Aboulela, Leila. "The Translator—Inspiration." Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <<http://www.leila-aboulela.com/books/the-translator/inspiration/>>.

Ball, Anna. "'Here is Where I am.' Rerooting Diasporic Experience in Leila Aboulela's Recent Novels." In Janet Wilson, Cristina Sandru, and Sarah Lawson Welsh, eds. *Rerouting the Postcolonial: New Directions for the New Millennium*. New York: Routledge, 2009: 118-127.

Butt, Nadia. "Negotiating Untranslatability and Islam in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*." In Elisabeth Bekers, Sissy Helff, and Daniella Merolla, eds. *Transcultural Modernities: Narrating Africa in Europe*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009. 167-179.

Ghazoul, Ferial J. "Halal Fiction." *Al-Ahram Weekly Online*. July 12, 2001. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/542/bo4.htm>>.

Glover, Kaiama L. "Love's Language." Nov. 12, 2006. Accessed Jan. 20, 2011. <[http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/12/books/review/Glover.t.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/12/books/review/Glover.t.html?_r=1)>.

Guth, Stephan. "Appropriating, or Secretly Undermining, the Secular Literary Heritage? Distant Echoes of Mawsim Al-Hijra in a Muslim Writer's Novel: Leila Aboulela, *The Translator*." In Luc-Willy Deheuvels, Barbara Michalak-Pikulska, and Paul Starkey, eds. *Intertextuality in Modern Arabic Literature Since 1967*. Durham: Durham University, 2006: 65-82.

Hewett, Heather. "Translating Desire: Exile and Leila Aboulela's Poetics of Embodiment." In Charlotte Baker, ed. *Expressions of the Body: Representations in African Text and Image*. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2009.

Klinck, Sabine. "Asserting the Self: The Importance of Religion for Migrant Women in the United Kingdom." Accessed Feb. 13, 2012. <<http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/klinckpaper.pdf>>.

Lewkowicz, Sherry. "The Experience of Womanhood in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*." 2004. Accessed Feb. 15, 2011. <<http://www.victorianweb.org/neovictorian/rhys/lewkowicz14.html>>.

Al-Maleh, Layla, ed. *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

Nash, Geoffrey. "Leila Aboulela: Islam and Globalisation." In Geoffrey Nash, *The Anglo-Arab Encounter: Fiction and Autobiography by Arab Writers in English*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2007: 135-152.

Russell, Elizabeth. "The Translation of Seduction and Desire in Cross-Cultural European Contexts." In Elizabeth Russell, *Loving against the Odds: Women's Writing in English in a European Context*. Bern: Peter Lang, 2006: 55-64.

Smyth, Brendan. "To Love the Orientalist: Masculinity in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator*." *Jmms the Intimate Connection*. June 2007. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://www.jmmsweb.org/issues/volume1/number2/pp170-182>>.

Steiner, Tina. "Strategic Nostalgia, Islam and cultural translation in Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* and *Coloured Lights*." *Highbeam Research*. July 1, 2008. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-194279515.html>>.

Stotesbury, John A. "Genre and Islam in Recent Anglophone Romantic Fiction." In Susana Onega Jaén and Christian Gutleben, eds. *Refracting the Canon in Contemporary British Literature and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004: 68-82.

Syrotinski, Michael. "Interview with Leila Aboulela." University of Aberdeen, 2007. Accessed Jan. 25, 2011. <<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sll/complit/leila.shtml>>.

Vera, Yvonne, ed. *Opening Spaces: An Anthology of Contemporary African Women's Writing*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1999.

Wilce, Hilary. "My Best Teacher Leila Aboulela." *TES Magazine*. Aug.11, 2000. Accessed Jan. 20, 2011. <<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=337481>>.

## F. Safi Abdi's *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*

Stotesbury, John A. "Genre and Islam in Recent Anglophone Romantic Fiction." In Susana Onega Jaén and Christian Gutleben, eds. *Refracting the Canon in Contemporary British Literature and Film*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2004: 68-82.

## G. Miscellaneous

Abdel Naser, Tahiya. "Language and Identity in Yasmine Zahran's *A Beggar at Damascus Gate* [My English Translation of the Article's Arabic Title]." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 20 (2000): 103-116.

Abdul-Rahman, Muhammad Saed. *The Meaning and Explanation of the Glorious Qur'an*. Vol 4. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: MSA Publication Limited, 2009.

Afonja, Simi. "Gender and Feminism in African Development Discourse." Nov. 2005. Accessed Apr. 25, 2011. <<http://www.efiko.org/material/Gender%20and%20Feminism%20in%20African%20Development%20Discourse%20by%20Simi%20Afonja.pdf>>.

Ahmed, Leila. "Feminism and Cross-Cultural Inquiry: The Terms of the Discourse in Islam." In E. Weed, ed. *Coming to Terms*. New York & London: Routledge, 1989.

Ahmed, Leila. *Women and Gender in Islam*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992.

Ambursely, Ulla. "The Search for Identity in *Anita and Me* and *The Buddha of Suburbia*." 2006. Accessed Nov. 10, 2011. <<http://epubl.ltu.se/1402-1552/2006/127/LTU-DUPP-06127-SE.pdf>>.

An-Nawawî, Imâm. "Imâm An-Nawawî's 40 Hadîth Explanation." Accessed Dec. 12, 2012. <<http://abdurrahman.org/sunnah/nawavi40explanation.html>>.

Anthias, Floya. "Belongings in a Globalising and Unequal World: Rethinking Translocations." Mar. 31, 2006. Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <[http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/11786\\_ChapterOne.pdf](http://www.corwin.com/upm-data/11786_ChapterOne.pdf)>.

Anthias, Floya. "New Hybridities, Old Concepts: The Limits of 'Culture.'" *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24. 4 (2001): 619-641.

"Aoodhu billah." *Islamic-Dictionary.com*. Accessed June 7, 2012. <<http://www.islamic-dictionary.com/index.php?word=audhu>>.

Arimbi, Diah Ariani. *Reading Contemporary Indonesian Muslim Women Writers: Representation, Identity and Religion of Muslim Women in Indonesian Fiction*. Amsterdam University Press, 2009.

Arndt, Susan. "Boundless Whiteness? Feminism and White Women in the Mirror of African Feminist Writing." In Flora Veit-Wild and Dirk Naguschewski, eds. *Body, Sexuality, and Gender*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005: 157-172.

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1995.

“Astaghfar allah.” *Islamic-Dictionary.com*. Accessed June 7, 2012. <<http://www.islamicdictionary.com/index.php?word=astaghfirullah>>.

Bahi, Riham Ashraf. *Networking for Power and Change: Muslim Women Activism and the Transformation of Muslim Public Sphere*. Doctoral dissertation. Northeastern University: Boston, Massachusetts, 2008.

Balogh, Andrea P. “The Im/possibility of Native American Identity in Louise Erdrich’s *Love Medicine*.” *Americana* IV. 2 (2008): n. pag. Accessed Sep. 26, 2011. <<http://americanajournal.hu/vol4no2/pbalogh>>.

Bantz, Nathalie. *Les Nouvelles de Thomas Hardy : Choix Stratégiques d’une Ecriture sous Contrainte*. Doctoral dissertation. Université de Nancy II. 2009.

Barker, Chris. *Television, Globalization and Cultural Identities*. Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999.

Barsky, Robert F. “What Can Literature Do? What Does Literature Know? Sociocriticism, Politics, and the Text.” Accessed April 25, 2011. <<http://discoverarchive.vanderbilt.edu/jspui/bitstream/1803/129/1/barskywhatdsv5n1-2.pdf>>.

Ben Driss, Hager. “Women Writing/Women Written: The case of Oriental Women in English Colonial Fiction.” *Scribd.com*. 2001. Accessed Feb. 14, 2011. <<http://www.scribd.com/doc/12688577/Women-WritingWomen-Written-The-case-of-Oriental-Women-in-English-Colonial-Fiction>>.

Bentley, Nick. “Translating English: Youth, Race and Nation in Colin MacInnes’s *City of Spades* and *Absolute Beginners*.” *Connotations* 13. 1-2 (2003): n. pag.

Bhabha, Homi K. “The Other Question: Difference, Discrimination, and the Discourse of Colonialism.” In Houston A. Baker, Manthia Diawara, and Ruth H. Lindeborg, eds. *Black British Cultural Studies: A Reader*. London: The University of Chicago Press, 1996.

Billings, Alan, and Andrew Holden. “The Contribution of Faith to Integration and Cohesion and the Threat Posed by ‘Enclavisation’ in Some Northern Towns.” Accessed Nov. 10, 2012. <<http://www.chorley.eu/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=1401&p=0>>.

Black, Shameem. *Fiction across Borders: Imagining the Lives of Others in Late Twentieth-Century Novels*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2010.

Blake, William. “The Sick Rose.” In William Blake, *Songs of Innocence and Experience with Other Poems*. London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1866.

Borges, Jorge Luis. “Happiness.” In Jorge Luis Borges and Alexander Coleman, ed. *Jorge Luis Borges: Selected Poems*. New York: Viking, 1999.

Bourdrez, Béatrice. “La Représentation de la Relation du Couple chez la Femme.” *Mémoire de Diplôme Universitaire de Formation aux Relations Humaines et à l’Animation de Groupe: Sciences de l’éducation et de la Formation*. Tours, 2002.

Britton, Celia. *Edouard Glissant and Postcolonial Theory: Strategies of Language and Resistance*. Virginia: University of Virginia Press, 1999.

Brontë, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. Radford: Wilder Publications, 2008.

Cassity, Kathleen J. "Emerging from Shadows: The 'Unhomed' Anglo-Indian of 36 Chowringhee Lane." Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <<http://home.alphalink.com.au/~agilbert/chowri~1.html>>.

Chambers, Iain. *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

Chen, Kuan-Hsing, and David Morley, eds. *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Taylor & Francis, 2005.

Churchich, Nicholas. *Marxism and Alienation*. Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Presses, 1990.

Clark, Peter. "The Shahrur Phenomenon: A Liberal Islamic Voice from Syria." Sep. 1997. Accessed Oct. 2, 2012. <<http://www.wluml.org/node/287>>.

Collier, Mary Jane. "Researching Cultural Identity: Reconciling Interpretive and Postcolonial Perspectives." In Dolores V. Tanno and Alberto Gonzalez, eds. *Communication and Identity across Cultures*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage publications, 1998.

Collingwood-Whittick, Sheila, ed. *The Pain of Unbelonging: Alienation and Identity in Australasian Literature*. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007.

Connolly, William. "Identity/Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox." In Apud Rajchman, ed. *The Identity in Question*. New York: Routledge, 1995.

Cooke, Miriam, Fawzia Ahmad **Erreur! Signet non défini.**, Margot Badran, Minoo Moallem, and Jasmin Zine. "Roundtable Discussion: Religion, Gender, and the Muslim woman." *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 24. 1 (2008): 91-119.

Cooper, Brenda. "'Birthed in the Third Space': Myth and Language in Diasporic Women Writers of African Background Or 'The Frog who dreamed she was an Opera Singer.'" 2006. Accessed Jan. 5, 2012. <<http://www.english.pitt.edu/news/africannovels/conf1006papers/Cooper%20--%20African%20Novels%20paper.pdf>>.

Côté, James E., and Charles G. Levine. *Identity Formation, Agency, and Culture: A Social Psychological Synthesis*. Mahwah, NJ: Routledge, 2002.

Das, Bijay Kumar. "Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's 'Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value': A Note." In Bijay Kumar Das, *Twentieth Century Literary Criticism*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2005.

Deardorff, Darla K., ed. *The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2009.

Dostoevsky, Feodor. "The Meek One." In Feodor Dostoevsky, *The Diary of a Writer—Feodor Dostoevsky*. Trans. by Boris Brasol. New York: George Braziller, 1954.

El-Solh, Camillia Fawzi, and Judy Mabro, eds. *Muslim Women's Choices: Religious Belief and Social Reality*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 1994.

England, Kim V.L. "Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality, and Feminist Research." *The Professional Geographer* 46. 1 (1994): 80-89.

Esposito, John L., and Natana J. DeLong-Bas. *Women in Muslim Family Law*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Syracuse University Press, 2001.

Etzioni, Amitai. "Other Americans Help Break Down Racial Barriers." *International Herald Tribune* May 10, 1997: n. pag.

Fagan, Patrick, Robert Rector, and Lauren Noyes. "Why Congress Should Ignore Radical Feminist Opposition to Marriage." *Heritage Foundation*. June 16, 2003. Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://www.heritage.org/research/reports/2003/06/why-congress-should-ignore-radical-feminist-opposition-to-marriage>>.

Fina, Anna De. *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2003.

Fink, Michael. *Narratives of a New Belonging: The Politics of Memory and Identity in Contemporary American Ethnic Literatures*. Grin Verlag, 2007.

Fong, Mary, and Rueyling Chuang, ed. *Communicating Ethnic and Cultural Identity*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2004.

Franks, Myfanwy. "Feminisms and Cross-ideological Feminist Social Research: Standpoint, Situatedness and Positionality— Developing Cross-ideological Feminist Research." Accessed July 21, 2010. <<http://www.bridgew.edu/soas/jiws/June02/feministsocialresearch.pdf>>.

Freud, Sigmund. "The Uncanny." Accessed Sep. 6, 2012. <<http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~amtower/uncanny.html>>.

Friedman, Jonathan. *Cultural Identity and Global Process*. London: SAGE, 1994.

Gayatri, Spivak. "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Accessed Feb. 15, 2012. <[http://www.mcgill.ca/files/crclaw-discourse/Can\\_the\\_subaltern\\_speak.pdf](http://www.mcgill.ca/files/crclaw-discourse/Can_the_subaltern_speak.pdf)>.

"Ghetto." *Britannica Concise Encyclopedia*. Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 2006.

Gianmaria, Benedetti, Silvana Russo, and Daniele Losco. "An Atypical Psychic Breakdown of Adolescents in Immigrant Families: The Cultural Alienation Syndrome." *Adolescence Florence Conference*. Oct. 9, 2010. Accessed Nov. 10, 2012. <<http://neuropsic.altervista.org/drupal/?q=node/362>>.

Gil, Ana Cristina. "Cultural Identity and Globalization." Accessed Nov. 12, 2011. <[http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/ana-gil\\_paper.pdf](http://www.inter-disciplinary.net/wp-content/uploads/2009/02/ana-gil_paper.pdf)>.

Giles, Howard, and Kimberly Noels. "Communication Accommodation in Intercultural Encounters." In J. Martin, T. Nakayama, and L. Flores, eds. *Readings in Cultural Contexts*. Mountain View, CA: Mayfield, 1998.

Golchin, Simin. "The Process of Identity Formation in Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*." 2011. Accessed Feb. 20, 2012. <<http://hig.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:447084/FULLTEXT01>>.



- Gordon, Milton. *Assimilation in American Life*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1964.
- Green, Kathleen Eileen. *A Comparative Examination of the Novels of Farida Karodia, Rayda Jacobs, Pamela Jooste*. Master thesis. Rand Afrikaans University, 2004.
- Gudykunst, William B. *Cross-Cultural and Intercultural Communication*. California: Sage Publications, 2003.
- Guibernau, Montserrat. *The Identity of Nations*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007.
- Gupta, Ramesh Kumar. *The Novels of Anita Desai: A Feminist Perspective*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2002.
- Hadjetian, Sylvia. *Multiculturalism and Magic Realism? Between Fiction and Reality*. GRIN Verlag, 2005.
- Hall, Stuart. *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge, 1996.
- Hall, Stuart, and Paul Du Gay, eds. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage publications, 1996.
- Hall, Stuart. "Culture, Community, Nation." In David Boswell and Jessica Evans, eds. *Representing the Nation: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1999.
- Hall, Stuart. "New Ethnicities." In Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, eds. *The Postcolonial Studies Reader*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." Accessed Dec. 25, 2011 <[http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall\\_cultural\\_identity.pdf](http://www.unipa.it/~michele.cometa/hall_cultural_identity.pdf)>.
- Hall, Stuart. "Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities." Accessed Feb. 20, 2011. <[http://missingimage.com/files/mi/hall\\_identities.pdf](http://missingimage.com/files/mi/hall_identities.pdf)>.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity." In Anthony Douglas King, ed. *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1997.
- Hall, Stuart. "The Question of Cultural Identity." In Stuart Hall, David Held, Don Hubert, and Kenneth Thompson, eds. *Modernity: An Introduction to Modern Societies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996.
- Hall, Stuart, David Held, and Tony McGrew, eds. *Modernity and its Futures*. London: Polity Press, 1992.
- Hall, Stuart, and Naoki Sakai. "A Tokyo Dialogue on Marxism, Identity Formation and Cultural Studies." In Kuan-Hsing Chen, *Trajectories: Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Hannerz, Ulf. *Cultural Complexity: Studies in the Social Organization of Meaning*. New York: Columbia University, 1992.

Hassan, Wail S. *Immigrant Narratives: Orientalism and Cultural Translation in Arab American and Arab British Literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Husain, Akbar. *Islamic Psychology: Emergence of a New Field*. New Delhi: Global Vision Publishing House, 2006.

Ibn Kathir, Hafiz. *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*. vol. 1-10. Islamic Books, 2000.

Imamura, Anne E. "The Loss That Has No Name: Social Womanhood of Foreign Wives." *Gender and Society* 2. 3 (1988): 291-307.

"in sha allah." *Islamic-Dictionary.com*. Accessed June 7, 2012. <<http://www.islamic-dictionary.com/index.php?word=inshalla>>.

*Islamic Beliefs, Practices, and Cultures*. Singapore: Marshall Cavendish, 2010.

Jamili, Leila Baradaran, and Sara Faryam Rad. "Unhomeliness: Deconstructing Western Master Narratives in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*." *International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics*, Singapore, 2011.

Janssen, Jacques. "Enlightenment Past and to Come." *Le Monde Diplomatique*. English edition. Nov. 6, 2004.

Jayaram, Narayana. "Introduction: The study of Indian Diaspora." In Narayana Jayaram, *The Indian Diaspora: Dynamics of Migration*. New Delhi: Sage publications, 2004.

Johnson, Fern L. *Speaking Culturally: Language Diversity in the United States*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage publications, 1999.

Johnson-Roullier, Cyrania. "Identity Politics, Feminism, and the Problem of Difference." *SURFACES* VII. 108 (1997): n. pag.

Jondot, Jacqueline. *Les Ecrivains d'Expression Anglaise au Proche-Orient Arabe*. Doctoral dissertation. Université Lyon II Lumiere, 2003.

Kalekin-Fishman, Devorah. "Tracing the Growth of Alienation: Enculturation, Socialization, and Schooling in a Democracy." In Felix Geyer, ed. *Alienation, Ethnicity, and Post-modernism*. London: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Kantar, Dilek. "Bridging the Gap between Literature and Linguistics: A Bakhtanian Approach to Orhan Pamuk's *White Castle*." *Septet* 1.1. Accessed Sep. 29, 2011, <<http://septet.yeditepe.edu.tr/articles/Kantar.pdf>>.

Karahayerlian, Asdghig. *Large Worlds/Small Places: Critical Cosmopolitanism and Stereoscopic Vision in the Global Postcolonial Novel*. Doctoral dissertation. Case Western Reserve University, 2010.

Karim-Ahlawat, Mariam. "The Ghettoization of Literature." *The Hindu*. April 30, 2011. Accessed Feb. 28, 2013. <<http://www.thehindu.com/books/the-ghettoization-of-literature/article1980714.ece>>.

Kearney, Jack. "Representations of Islamic Belief and Practice in a South African Context: Reflections on the Fictional Work of Ahmed Essop, Aziz Hassim, Achmat Dangor and Rayda Jacobs." *The Free Library*. June 1, 2006. Accessed Feb. 17, 2011. <<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/Representations+of+Islamic+belief+and+practice+in+a+South+African...-a0156204970>>.

Keller, Catherine, Michael Nausner, and Mayra Rivera, eds. *Postcolonial Theologies: Divinity and Empire*. Danvers, MA: Chalice Press, 2004.

Kerskens, Christel. *Escaping the Labyrinth of Deception: A Postcolonial Approach to Margaret Atwood's Novels*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Bruxelles, 2007.

Kersten, Carool. "Islam, Cultural Identity and Cosmopolitanism: New Muslim Intellectuals on Globalization." Accessed Sep. 28, 2011. <<http://www.lindenwood.edu/jigs/docs/volume1Issue1/essays/89-113.pdf>>.

Khandelwal, Meena. "Arranging Love: Interrogating the Vantage Point in Cross-Border Feminism." *Signs* 34. 3 (2009): 583-609.

Killam, G. D., and Alicia L. Kerfoot. *Student Encyclopedia of African Literature*. Westport: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2008.

King, Bruce. *The Oxford English Literary History 1948-2000: The Internationalization of English Literature*. vol. 13. Oxford: OUP Oxford, 2005.

Knox, Robert. *The Races of Men: A Fragment*. London: Renshaw, 1850.

Korotayev, Andrey. "Parallel-Cousin Marriage, Islamization, and Arabization." *Ethnology* 39. 4 (2000): 395-407.

Kowalski, Charles. "Three Dimensions of Cultural Identity." 2002. Accessed Mar. 3, 2012. <<http://jalt-publications.org/archive/proceedings/2002/256.pdf>>.

Kramarae, Cheris, and Dale Spender, eds. *Routledge International Encyclopedia of Women: Global Women's Issues and Knowledge*. New York: Routledge, 2000.

Krishnananda, Swami. *The Development of Religious Consciousness*. Accessed Mar. 2, 2013. <[http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/conscious/Development\\_of\\_Religious\\_Consciousness.pdf](http://www.swami-krishnananda.org/conscious/Development_of_Religious_Consciousness.pdf)>.

Kushwaha, M.S., and K. Naseem. *Indian Doctoral Dissertations in English Studies*. New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers & Distributors, 2000.

LaFromboise, Teresa, Hardin Coleman, and Jennifer Gerton, eds. "Psychological Impact of Biculturalism: Evidence and Theory." *Psychological Bulletin* 114. 3 (1993): 395-412.

Lanser, Susan. "Toward a Feminist Narratology." Accessed Feb. 10, 2011. <<http://www.rlwclarke.net/courses/LITS3304/2004-2005/06BLanserTowardAFeministNarratology.pdf>>.

Le Bihan, Yann. "Construction Sociale et Stigmatisation de la 'Femme Noire' Imaginaires Coloniaux et Sélection Matrimoniale." Doctoral dissertation. L'Harmattan : Paris, 2008.

- Leighton, Dorothea Cross. *The Character of Danger*. New York: Basic Books, 1963.
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*: Boston: Eyre & Spottiswoode Publishers, 1969.
- Lodge, D. "The Novel Now: Theories and Practices." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 21. 2-3 (1988): n. pag.
- Malval, Valentine. *Troisième Vague et Culture Populaire: Repenser le Feminisme*. Master thesis. University of Tours: Tours, 2009.
- Marx, Karl. *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Trans. by Martin Mulligan. Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959.
- Marx, Karl. "The German Ideology." In Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan, eds. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004.
- Mbembe, Achille. "What is Postcolonial Thinking?" Accessed Jan. 5, 2012. <<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2008-01-09-mbembe-en.html>>.
- McGarvey, Kathleen. *Muslim and Christian Women in Dialogue: The Case of Northern Nigeria*. Peter Lang, 2009.
- McLeod, Naomi. "The Construction of Identity in two Novels by Joaquin Mbomio Bacheng." New York: Hofstra University, 2009. Accessed Mar. 5, 2012. <[http://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/Community/culctr/culctr\\_guinea040209\\_VIAMcleod.pdf](http://www.hofstra.edu/pdf/Community/culctr/culctr_guinea040209_VIAMcleod.pdf)>.
- Mezei, Kathy. *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers*. University of North Carolina Press, 1996.
- Mohr, Dunja M. *Embracing the Other: Addressing Xenophobia in the New Literatures in English*. ASNEL Papers 11. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008.
- Moraru, Christian. *Cosmodernism: American Narrative, Late Globalization, and the New Cultural Imaginary*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2011.
- Moreno, Ana Bravo. "Approaches to International Migration, Immigrant Women, and Identity." 2002. Accessed April 25, 2011. <<http://www2.colef.mx/migracionesinternacionales/revistas/MI02/n02-063-092.pdf>>.
- Mucchielli, Alex. *L'Identité*. 1 vol. Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1986.
- Nagar, Richa, and Susan Geiger. "Reflexivity and Positionality in Feminist Fieldwork Revisited." In Adam Tickell, Eric Sheppard, Jamie A. Peck, Trevor J. Barnes, eds. *Politics and Practice in Economic Geography*. London: Sage, 2007: 267-278.
- Nawawi, Imam. "40 Hadith." Accessed Dec. 15, 2012. <<http://my.opera.com/40%20HADITH/archive/monthly/?day=20110126>>.
- N'Guessan, Kouadio Germain, and Claudine Raynaud. *Féminisme Africain-Américain et Féminisme Africain Incidences et Limites d'un Dialogue par Romans Interposés*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Tours: Tours, 2004.

Nguyen, Nathalie Huynh Chau. *Memory is another Country: Women of the Vietnamese Diaspora*. California: ABC-CLIO, 2009.

Oakley, Ann. *Housewife*. London: A. Lane, 1974.

O'Connor, Paul James. "Learning to be Muslim: Youth and Everyday Multiculturalism beyond the West." *International Conference on Migration, Citizenship and Intercultural Relations*. Deakin University Australia, 2009.

Olaussen, Maria, and Christina Angelfors, eds. *Africa Writing Europe: Opposition, Juxtaposition, Entanglement*. 1 vol. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009.

Ornek, Yusuf. "Globalization and Cultural Identity." Accessed Mar. 5, 2012. <[http://www.studienkreis.org/common/news/referat\\_oerne.pdf](http://www.studienkreis.org/common/news/referat_oerne.pdf)>.

Oteng, Yaw. *Enquête sur la Pluralité Culturelle: Identité et Marginalisation dans le Roman Francophone Colonial et Postcolonial (Chraïbi, Kane, Kourouma, Boudjedra, Ben Jelloun)*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Cincinnati, 2001.

Papastergiadis, Nikos. *The Turbulence of Migration: Globalization, Deterritorialization, and Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2000.

Parry, Benita. "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse." *Oxford Literary Review* 9. 1 (1987): 27-58.

Parveen, Nusba. "The Contribution of Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya in Sufism." *Journal of the Iqbal Academy Pakistan* 40. 1 (2009): n. pag.

Paulston, Christina Bratt, Scott Kiesling, and Elizabeth S. Rangel, eds. *The Handbook of Intercultural Discourse and Communication*. West Sussex: Blackwell Publishing, 2012.

Phinney, Jean. "The Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure: A New Scale for Use with Adolescents and Young Adults from Diverse Groups." *Journal of Adolescent Research* 7 (1992): n. pag.

Pieterse, Jan Nederveen. *Globalization and Culture*. Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009.

Proeve, Michael, and Steven Tudor. *Remorse: Psychological and Jurisprudential Perspectives*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2010.

Qutb, Sayid. "40 Hadith." Accessed Dec. 15, 2012. <<http://my.opera.com/40%20HADITH/archive/monthly/?day=20110126>>.

Qutb, Sayid. *In the Shade of the Quran*. Trans. by Adil Salahi and Ashur Shamis. vol. 1-18. 2007.

Ricci, Ninno. "Questioning Ethnicity." Accessed Nov. 10, 2012. <<http://www.ninoricci.com/QuestioningEthnicity.htm>>.

Rilke, Rainer Maria. *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. Trans. by John Linton. London: The Hogarth Press, 1990.

Root P.P, Maria, ed. *The Multicultural Experience: Racial Borders as the New Frontier*. London: Sage, 1996.

Rutherford, Jonathan. "A Place Called Home: Identity and the Cultural Politics of Difference." In Jonathan Rutherford, ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Rutherford, Jonathan, ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Said, Edward. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Random House, 1994.

Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North*. Trans. by Denys Johnson-Davies. Oxford: Heinemann African Writer Series, 1969.

Samovar, Larry A., Richard E. Porter, and Edwin R. McDaniel. *Communication between Cultures*. Boston: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010.

Schacht, Richard. "Alienation Redux: From here to Post-Modernity." In Felix Geyer, ed. *Alienation, Ethnicity, and Post-modernism*. London: Greenwood Press, 1996.

Scheler, Max. "Repentance and Rebirth." In Max Scheler, *On the Eternal in Man*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2010.

Schipper, Mineke, ed. *Unheard Words : Women and Literature in Africa, the Arab World, Asia, the Caribbean, and Latin America*. Trans. by Barbara Potter Fasting. London: Allison & Busby, 1985.

Schopohl, Eva. "(De-) Constructing Translingual Identity: Interpreters as Literary Characters in Simultan by Ingeborg Bachmann and between by Christine Brooke-Rose." *Trans* 6 (2008): n. pag.

Schwartz, Seth J., Byron L. Zamboanga, and Robert S. Weisskirch. "Broadening the Study of the Self: Integrating the Study of Personal Identity and Cultural Identity." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 2. 2 (2008): 635-651.

Schwarz, Henry, and Sangeeta Ray, eds. *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000.

Scott, Claire. "'Tales of Ordinary Murder': Intersections of 'Whiteness', Violence and Belonging in Rian Malan's *My Traitor's Heart* and Kevin Bloom's *Ways of Staying*." *English Academy Review* 28. 2 (2011): 40-51.

Seeman, Melvin. "On the Meaning of Alienation." *American Sociological Review* 24. 6 (1959): 783-791.

Shahrur, Muhammad. "We Urgently Need Religious Reforms: Muhammad Shahrur." Accessed Apr. 8, 2011. <<http://newageislam.com/interview/%22we-urgently-need-religious-reforms!%E2%80%9D-muhammad-shahrur/d/4416>>.

"Sherbet." *American Heritage Dictionary*. Accessed Jan. 6, 2012. <<http://www.answers.com/topic/sherbet>>.



Showalter, Elaine. "The Female Frontier." *Guardian.co.uk*. May 9, 2009. Accessed April 25, 2011. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2009/may/09/female-novelists-usa>>.

Showalter, Elaine. *A Literature of their Own: British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton (N.J.): Princeton University Press, 1977.

Shulman, Sam. "How the Feminists Saved Marriage." *Commentary* 118. 1 (Jul./Aug. 2004): 25.

Simon, Bernd. *Identity in Modern Society: A Social Psychological Perspective*. John Wiley & Sons, 2008.

Singh, Priscilla. "Concept of Gender: A Just Analytical Tool?" Accessed Sep. 15, 2012. <[http://www.lutheranworld.org/What\\_We\\_Do/DMD/DMD-Documents/EN/DMD-Concept\\_of\\_Gender.pdf](http://www.lutheranworld.org/What_We_Do/DMD/DMD-Documents/EN/DMD-Concept_of_Gender.pdf)>.

Smith, Keri Iyall. "The Impact of Indigenous Hybridity on the Formation of World Society." Feb. 20, 2006. Accessed Dec. 3, 2012. <[www.uzh.ch/wsf/WSFocus\\_KISmith.pdf](http://www.uzh.ch/wsf/WSFocus_KISmith.pdf)>.

Smith, Nick. *I Was Wrong: The Meanings of Apologies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Snoeberger, Mark. "More Notes towards the Definition of Culture." Accessed Mar. 5, 2012. <<http://www.dbts.edu/pdf/macp/2008/Snoeberger,%20More%20Notes%20Towards%20the%20Definition%20of%20Culture.pdf>>.

Soanes, Catherine, and Stevenson, ed. "Black." *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*. 11<sup>th</sup> ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

Song, Mei. "Research Design Literature Review: The Potentials of Using Sense-Making Methodology." 2005. Accessed May 9, 2011. <[http://communication.sbs.ohio-state.edu/sense-making/meet/2005/meet05song\\_lit.pdf](http://communication.sbs.ohio-state.edu/sense-making/meet/2005/meet05song_lit.pdf)>.

Soueif, Ahdaf. "Becoming Edward Said." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29. 3 (2000): 90-96.

Tarbush, Susannah. "Arab Women Diaspora Writers under Study." *The Saudi Gazette*. Accessed April 25, 2011. <<http://www.saudigazette.com.sa/index.cfm?method=home.regcon&contentID=2010011159799>>.

"Time warp." *Macmillan Dictionary*. Accessed Jan. 7, 2013. <<http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/time-warp>>.

"Time warp." *Word Reference Dictionary*. Accessed Jan. 7, 2013. <<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/time+warp>>.

"Time warp." *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*. Accessed Jan. 7, 2013. <<http://www.ldoceonline.com/dictionary/time-warp>>.

Tomlinson, John. "Globalization and Cultural Identity." Mar. 19, 2003. <<http://www.polity.co.uk/global/pdf/gtreader2etomlinson.pdf>>.

Toplu, Sebnem. "The Trajectory of the Hybrid Self." 2011. Accessed Mar. 6, 2012. <<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-247971718.html>>.

Upton, Charles, and Rabi'a Al-Adawiyya. *Doorkeeper of the Heart—Versions of Rabi'a*,. n.p: Pir Press, 2004.

Vasquez, Manuel A., and Marie F. Marquardt. *Globalizing the Sacred: Religion across the Americas*. Piscataway, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003.

Vivero, Veronica, and Sharon Jenkins. "Existential Hazards of the Multicultural Individual: Defining and Understanding 'Cultural Homlessness.'" *Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Minority Psychology* (1999): n. pag.

Wacquant, Löic. "The New 'Peculiar Institution': On the Prison as Surrogate Ghetto." *Theoretical Criminology* 4. 3 (2000): n. pag.

Weeks, Jeffrey. "The Value of Difference." In Jonathan Rutherford, ed. *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Wing Yan Kwong, Agnes. *The Asian American Cultural Alienation Scale: Development, Factor Analysis, Validation, and Reliability*. Doctoral dissertation. New York University, 2007.

Woodward, Kath, ed. *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Ethnicity*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Yeats, W.B. "Easter 1916." In W. B. Yeats, *Michael Robartes and the Dancer*. Churchtown: The Cuala Press, 1920.

Yuval-Davis, Nira. "Theorizing Identity: Beyond the 'Us' and 'Them' Dichotomy." *Patterns of Prejudice* 44. 3 (2010): 261-280.

Zuckerman, Phil. *An Invitation to Sociology of Religion*. New York: Routledge, 2003.



## Annexes

## Annex 1: Fictional and Real-life works on Cross-cultural Marriage

Al-Amahani, Monika. *Cinderella in Arabia: A Cross-cultural Autobiography*. New York: Writers Club Press, 2001.

Alireza, Marianne. *At the Drop of a Veil*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1990.

Bâ, Mariam. *Scarlet Song*. Oxford: Heinman Educational Publishers, 1986.

Ben Laden, Carmen. *Inside the Kingdom: My Life in Saudi Arabia*. New York: Warner Books, 2004.

Desai, Anita. *Bye-bye Black Bird*. Delhi: Orient Paperbacks, 1985.

Dutchfield, Michael. *A Marriage of Inconvenience: The Pesecution of Seretse and Ruth Khama*. London: Unwin, 1992.

Gillespie, Jacqueline. *Once I was a Princess*. Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1995.

Green, Pamela. *Dear Children*. London: Pan Macmillan, 1994.

Gupta, Sunetra. *Memories of Rain*. London: Orion, 1992.

Hofmann, Corinne. *The White Masai: My Exotic Tale of Love and Adventure*. New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2007.

Jacobs, Rayda. *Sachs Street*. Cape Town: Kwela, 2001.

Khedairi, Betool. *A Sky so Close*. New York: Pantheon, 2001.

Mahmoody, Betty and William Hoffer. *Not without my Daughter*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987.

Tyler, Anne. *Your Place is Empty*. Concord: William B. Ewert, 1992.

## Annex 2: Author Index

---

### A

Abbot, Porter, 23  
Abdi, Safi, 5, 6, 14, 15, 24, 42, 44, 48, 66, 219, 220, 226,  
243, 252, 270, 281, 300, 321  
Aboulela, Leila, 5, 6, 14, 40, 42, 48, 65, 166, 167, 168,  
178, 179, 183, 186, 189, 199, 202, 203, 205, 207, 209,  
210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 252, 270, 277, 281, 298, 299,  
321  
Abu Nuwas, 209  
Adlam, Carol, 50, 292  
Ahmed, Leila, 243, 301  
Al-Adawiyya, Rabi'a, 243, 248, 309, 312  
Alcoff, Linda, 224, 225, 230, 237  
Alireza, Marriane, 271, 272, 314  
Al-Khalifa, Miriam, 12  
Anthias, Floya, 25, 27, 36, 37, 53, 63, 65, 167, 171, 175,  
176, 179, 184, 197, 216, 274, 277, 286, 301

---

### B

Bakhtin, Mikhail, 27, 45, 46, 47, 49, 50, 53, 63, 65, 68,  
103, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 147, 152, 153,  
207, 208, 210, 253, 277, 292, 293, 294  
Ball, Anna, 186, 298  
Barbara, Augustin, 20, 203, 282  
Barker, Chris, 60, 62, 302  
Beukering, Shoustra-van, 270, 271, 283  
Bhabha, Homi, 5, 6, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 31, 32, 33,  
34, 35, 36, 37, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 51, 52, 53, 62, 63,  
64, 65, 66, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81,  
83, 84, 87, 89, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 108,  
111, 112, 113, 115, 118, 120, 122, 123, 126, 128, 131,  
132, 136, 138, 157, 162, 164, 167, 171, 176, 179, 216,  
220, 221, 223, 225, 226, 227, 229, 231, 255, 256, 258,

261, 262, 263, 264, 270, 272, 273, 277, 278, 286, 288,  
290, 302, 321

Billings, Alan, 173, 302  
Blake, William, 160, 302  
Booker, Keith M., 103, 292  
Borges, Jorge Luis, 159, 302  
Breger, Rosemary Anne, 19, 285  
Brendan, Smyth, 202, 299  
Brontë, Charlotte, 66, 168, 207, 209, 211, 218, 278, 303  
Brun, Marilyne, 21, 29, 286  
Burke, Peter, 48, 50  
Butt, Nadia, 178, 183, 188, 189, 192, 205, 239, 298  
Bystydzienski, Jill, 19, 26, 35, 71, 216, 255, 256, 258, 282

---

### C

Casmir, Fred, 19, 287  
Chuang, Rueyling, 44, 59, 60, 61, 62, 110, 304  
Chuang, Sarita, 97, 106, 295  
Cohn, Dorrit, 147, 292  
Collier, Mary Jane, 60, 195, 303  
Condé, Marysé, 22  
Connolly, William, 58, 84, 303

---

### D

Dostoevsky, 46, 139, 140, 141, 160, 292, 303

---

### E

Ellettha, J.E., 270, 271, 283

---

### F

Ferré, Rosario, 22  
Fong, Mary, 44, 59, 60, 61, 62, 110, 304  
Freud, Sigmund, 98, 99, 304

Friedman, Jonathan, 36, 50, 51, 52, 73, 287, 304

---

## **G**

Genty, Stephanie, 103, 104, 295

Ghazoul, Ferial, 209, 298

Gianmaria, Benedetti, 181, 304

Gordimer, Nadine, 5, 6, 14, 30, 42, 48, 50, 61, 65, 67, 68,  
72, 76, 77, 80, 97, 98, 103, 104, 106, 130, 164, 179,  
187, 188, 218, 252, 270, 277, 281, 295, 296, 297, 321

Gordon, Milton, 17, 305

Gudykunst, William, 181, 182, 183, 305

Guibernau, Montserrat, 172, 173, 182, 183, 191, 197,  
305

---

## **H**

Hall, Stuart, 5, 6, 23, 27, 31, 33, 37, 38, 39, 40, 52, 53, 56,  
57, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 65, 76, 97, 107, 110, 168, 171,  
174, 175, 198, 200, 201, 203, 205, 217, 218, 231, 232,  
265, 270, 273, 274, 277, 286, 303, 305

Hannerz, Ulf, 39, 200, 201, 217, 218, 288, 305

Hassan, Wail, 189, 205, 210, 306

Hill, Rosanna, 19, 285

Holden, Andrew, 173, 302

Husain, Akbar, 232, 306

Hutnyk, John, 51, 52, 90, 228, 288

---

## **I**

Ibn Kathir, 245, 246, 247, 249, 250, 251, 306

Ibrahim, Jamal Mohamed, 209

---

## **J**

Jenkins, Sharon, 173, 185, 312

Johnson, Fern, 59, 306

Johnson, Jason, 12

Jones, Malcolm, 49

---

## **K**

Karis, Terri, 18, 283, 284

Khulpateea, Veda Laxmi, 21, 55, 283

Kilian, Kyle, 18

Knox, Robert, 29, 296, 307

Kossew, Sue, 130

Kraidy, Marwan, 5, 6, 16, 23, 27, 29, 31, 42, 43, 44, 50,  
51, 53, 63, 225, 230, 270, 277, 288

Kristeva, Julia, 142, 143, 207, 208, 293

---

## **L**

Lkas, Karin, 52, 53, 288

Losco, Daniele, 181, 304

---

## **M**

Mahmoody, Betty, 271, 272, 314

Marquardt, Marie, 41, 312

Mead, George Herbert, 235

Meier, Franz, 104, 296

Middleton, Kate, 54

Morrison, Toni, 22, 306

---

## **N**

Noels, Kimberly, 44, 304

---

## **O**

Ortega, Gema, 21, 22, 33

---

## **P**

Papastergiadis, Nikos, 31, 32, 34, 38, 40, 81, 107, 168,  
174, 198, 223, 229, 265, 274, 289, 309

Parry, Benita, 52, 309

Pieterse, Nederveen, 5, 6, 17, 23, 27, 31, 40, 41, 42, 50,  
53, 63, 66, 75, 79, 87, 88, 90, 92, 107, 110, 113, 115,

116, 118, 119, 120, 136, 164, 204, 220, 221, 223, 224,  
225, 229, 255, 259, 261, 270, 273, 277, 289, 309

Plomer, William, 156

Prince William, 54

---

## Q

Qutb, Sayid, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 309

---

## R

Richardson, Brian, 144, 145, 294

Richardson, Samuel, 55

Rilke, Maria Rainer, 160

Rilke, Rainer Maria, 160

Root, Maria, 58, 218, 240, 310

Russo, Silvana, 181, 304

---

## S

Said, Edward, 33, 34, 310, 311

Salih, Tayeb, 66, 168, 178, 207, 209, 210, 218, 278, 310

Schacht, Richard, 181, 310

Scheler, Max, 233, 234, 310

Schmid, Wolf, 27, 45, 49, 50, 53, 63, 65, 68, 139, 143,  
144, 147, 151, 277, 294

Schultheis, Alexandra, 178, 179

Shahrur, Muhammad, 91, 92, 157, 303, 310

Smith, Keri, 237, 290, 311

Smith, Nick, 225, 232, 311

SouEIF, Ahdaf, 161, 311

Stotesbury, John A., 187, 205, 212, 299, 300

Stross, Brian, 29, 30, 290

---

## T

Terry, Garth, 49, 293

---

## V

Vasquez, Manuel, 41, 312

Vivero, Veronica, 173, 185, 312

---

## W

Wagner, Gerhard, 52, 53, 288

Waquant, Loïc, 182

Werbner, Pnina, 31, 32, 34, 36, 38, 46, 47, 50, 51, 52, 73,  
81, 107, 168, 174, 198, 223, 229, 265, 274, 287, 288,  
289, 291

Woodward, Kath, 57, 235, 257, 312

---

## Y

Yamani, Mai, 19, 285

Young, Robert, 29, 47, 59

---

## Z

Zeidanin, Hussein Hasan, 22, 291

Zuckerman, Phil, 233, 241, 312

## Annex 3: Index of Notions

---

### A

*A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds*, 5, 6, 14, 21, 24, 66, 219, 226, 270, 277, 278, 281, 300, 321

Alienation, 53, 77, 81, 82, 83, 99, 104, 117, 120, 173, 180, 181, 182, 183, 211, 303, 304, 306, 310, 312

Anglophone, 5, 14, 18, 187, 189, 270, 295, 298, 299, 300

Anti-hybrid, 5, 6, 15, 24, 30, 40, 53, 176, 179, 184, 214, 243, 272, 274, 276, 277, 278, 279, 321

Apartheid, 14, 30, 65, 68, 74, 76, 79, 85, 86, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 110, 113, 129, 130, 159, 162, 274, 279, 283, 295, 296

Assimilationist hybridity, 27, 41, 42, 53, 66, 75, 87, 92, 106, 107, 110, 113, 115, 116, 118, 119, 120, 136, 164, 220, 223, 224, 225, 229, 259, 261, 268, 273, 274, 275, 277

Autobiographies, 14, 23, 270, 272, 279

---

### B

Borderland, 35, 71, 72, 296

---

### C

Conscious intentional hybridity, 46, 47

Cross-cultural marriage, 5, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 30, 37, 42, 53, 54, 63, 64, 65, 66, 68, 69, 74, 101, 104, 113, 115, 136, 164, 167, 188, 217, 220, 231, 232, 255, 270, 271, 272, 276, 282, 283, 284, 285, 314, 321

Cultural chameleons, 27, 43, 53, 63, 225, 230, 277

Cultural identity, 13, 25, 27, 30, 33, 34, 38, 39, 40, 43, 44, 51, 53, 54, 56, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 74, 75, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84, 95, 96, 97, 100, 110, 111, 114, 116, 121, 128, 130, 175, 183, 192, 195, 214, 218, 231, 232, 256, 286, 289, 303, 304, 305, 307, 309, 310, 311

Cultural translation, 33, 71, 83, 96, 97, 211, 262, 287, 299, 306

*Culture and Imperialism*, 33, 310

Culture-clash, 13, 171

---

### D

Destabilizing hybridity, 27, 41, 42, 53, 63, 66, 75, 79, 204, 220, 221, 255, 259, 263, 265, 273, 277

Dialogism, 46, 140, 141, 143, 155, 294

Dissonance narration, 147

---

### E

Enclavisation, 5, 24, 25, 26, 27, 53, 63, 65, 167, 171, 173, 174, 175, 176, 179, 197, 216, 218, 274, 277, 302

---

### F

Fluid identity, 225

Free indirect discourse, 49, 129, 139, 146, 148

---

### G

Ghettoisation, 5, 6, 24, 25, 26, 27, 53, 63, 65, 167, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 179, 182, 184, 191, 197, 211, 216, 218, 274, 277, 306

Globalization, 13, 16, 29, 30, 40, 41, 42, 51, 55, 58, 60, 61, 62, 84, 102, 232, 288, 289, 290, 298, 302, 304, 305, 307, 308, 309, 311

---

### H

Heteroglossia, 28, 45, 46, 48, 50, 53, 63, 65, 66, 68, 69, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 152, 153, 155, 162, 165, 168, 207, 208, 212, 213, 218, 277, 278, 294

Homesickness, 53, 175, 178, 179, 185, 211, 216, 274, 277

Hybrid identity, 5, 13, 15, 17, 18, 24, 26, 28, 30, 34, 40, 41, 43, 62, 64, 66, 68, 72, 74, 75, 101, 107, 110, 112, 114, 115, 131, 133, 135, 136, 138, 161, 162, 164, 167, 171, 176, 187, 198, 217, 222, 223, 227, 231, 236, 237, 255, 265, 268, 273, 274, 276, 277, 278, 279, 286, 288, 289, 290, 321

Hybridization, 41, 45, 47, 71, 138, 289, 291

---

## I

In-between space, 5, 6, 33, 35, 53, 71, 73, 83, 97, 164, 171, 176, 251, 255, 321

Inter-cultural marriage, 13, 16, 17, 19, 24, 26, 54, 61, 64, 104, 157, 161, 162, 242, 261, 268, 270, 279

Internal focalization technique, 80, 146

Interstitial, 32, 35, 73, 83, 84, 100, 120, 123, 132, 229, 258, 290

Intertextuality, 28, 48, 50, 53, 63, 65, 69, 138, 140, 142, 143, 156, 157, 160, 162, 168, 203, 207, 208, 209, 218, 243, 277, 292, 293, 298

Intra-diegetic narratee, 146, 148

---

## J

*Jane Eyre*, 48, 66, 168, 207, 209, 211, 218, 278, 298, 303

Judicial ghetto, 172

---

## L

Lawrence of Arabia, 160

Liminal, 33, 35, 71, 72, 84, 86, 258, 286

Linguistic hybridity, 5, 27, 44, 46, 47, 48, 49, 63, 65, 68, 69, 137, 138, 139, 156, 162, 164, 167, 168, 206, 207, 218, 277, 278, 321

Looking for the join, 87, 89, 108, 118, 120

---

## M

Migration, 13, 25, 28, 32, 35, 40, 42, 53, 57, 61, 167, 171, 176, 188, 209, 256, 264, 272, 277, 306, 308, 309

Mixed-marriage, 17

---

## N

New ethnicities, 37, 38, 168, 174, 198, 265, 274, 305

---

## O

Organic hybridity, 46, 47

*Orientalism*, 33, 270, 283, 306

---

## P

Periphery and center, 27, 63, 277

Polyphony, 27, 45, 46, 48, 50, 53, 63, 65, 68, 69, 129, 138, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 148, 149, 151, 162, 164, 277, 278, 292, 294

Positionality, 40, 224, 225, 230, 237, 304, 308

---

## R

Racial hybridity, 21, 63

Religious awakening, 24, 66, 221, 232, 236, 238, 247, 272, 278

Religious rebirth, 220, 221, 222, 223, 225, 231, 236, 242, 250, 261, 268

Repentance, 24, 66, 220, 221, 223, 225, 231, 232, 233, 234, 236, 242, 243, 244, 248, 249, 255, 268, 272, 274, 275, 277, 278, 310

---

## S

*Season of Migration to the North*, 66, 168, 178, 207, 209, 211, 218, 278, 310

Socio-cultural baggage, 57, 240, 241

Subaltern, 32, 33, 52, 82, 86, 126, 128, 224, 289, 304

---

## **T**

Text interference, 49, 53, 68, 138, 139, 143, 144, 145,  
147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 164, 278

*The Location of Culture*, 31, 32, 51, 286

*The Map of Love*, 161

*The Pickup*, 5, 6, 14, 24, 30, 42, 48, 50, 61, 65, 67, 68, 71,  
73, 77, 97, 104, 106, 130, 138, 143, 144, 152, 155,  
164, 167, 188, 191, 193, 207, 270, 277, 278, 279, 281,  
295, 296, 297, 321

*The Translator*, 5, 6, 14, 21, 24, 48, 65, 166, 167, 168,  
175, 178, 183, 186, 189, 199, 202, 203, 207, 209, 210,  
211, 214, 215, 270, 277, 278, 281, 298, 299, 321

Third-space, 5, 6, 25, 27, 33, 34, 35, 37, 52, 53, 62, 63,  
65, 68, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 84, 95, 96, 97, 111, 115,  
123, 126, 128, 136, 138, 157, 162, 164, 167, 171, 176,  
223, 227, 229, 258, 263, 272, 273, 277, 278, 286, 287,  
288, 303, 321

---

## **U**

Unheimlich, 98, 99

Unhomely, 27, 36, 37, 53, 63, 65, 66, 68, 71, 73, 74, 75,  
87, 97, 98, 99, 100, 113, 118, 132, 133, 164, 167, 179,  
221, 264, 265, 267, 268, 272, 273, 277



# CROSS-CULTURAL MARRIAGE AND HYBRID IDENTITIES OF CHARACTERS IN THREE ANGLOPHONE NOVELS

## Résumé

Cette thèse étudie le thème du mariage interculturel et des identités hybrides de personnages dans *The Pickup* (2001) de Nadine Gordimer, *The Translator* (1999) de Leila Aboulela et *A Mighty Collision of Two Worlds* (2002) de Safi Abdi.

L'étude cherche à explorer comment les identités culturelles des protagonistes changent lorsqu'ils se marient avec une personne d'une culture différente des leurs et qu'ils rencontrent de nouvelles traditions et de nouvelles croyances. La théorie de l'hybridité développée par Homi Bhabha et par d'autres théoriciens de l'hybridité peut être un outil pertinent pour analyser l'identité des personnages. Bhabha soutient que ceux qui traversent les cultures vivent dans un "in-between space" ou un "third space," fluctuant entre leur culture d'origine et leur culture d'accueil. Cependant, les conclusions de l'étude montrent que ces personnages de fiction présentent des cas qui n'ont pas été explorés par les théoriciens de l'hybridité.

On s'aperçoit d'autre part, que plusieurs facteurs de nature culturelle, religieuse, personnelle ou sociale influencent les protagonistes dans les romans : soit ils leur identité hybride s'affirme, soit ils conservent la façon de vivre de leur pays d'origine. On remarque aussi que les mariages interculturels et l'identité hybride sont liés entre eux. Le mariage interculturel peut être à la fois la manifestation de l'hybridité, et dans ce cas il est perçu comme une affirmation du vécu hybride servant du même coup de moyen d'aller vers l'hybridité. Contrairement à ce à quoi on pourrait s'attendre, on observe que parfois les relations interculturelles entraînent une réaction anti-hybride.

**Mots clés:** Mariage interculturel, Identités hybrides, Hybridité culturelle, Hybridité linguistique, Homi Bhabha, Nadine Gordimer, Leila Aboulela, Safi Abdi.

## Summary

This dissertation studies the subject of cross-cultural marriage and hybrid identities of characters in Nadine Gordimer's *The Pickup* (2001), Leila Aboulela's *The Translator* (1999), and Safi Abdi's *A Mighty Collision of two Worlds* (2002).

The study seeks to find out how the cultural identities of the protagonists in the novels change when they marry across cultures and face new traditions and beliefs. Hybridity theory, which is developed by Homi Bhabha and other hybridity theorists, can be a relevant tool for analysis of the characters' identities. Bhabha contends that those who cross cultures live in an "in-between space" or "third space" in which they oscillate between their native culture and the host culture. However, results show that fictional characters present cases which have not been explored by hybridity theorists.

In addition, it is stressed that various factors of a cultural, religious, personal, and social nature affect the protagonists in the novels to either develop a hybrid identity or maintain their native way of life. It is also found that cross-cultural marriage and hybridity are correlated. The former can be both a manifestation of hybridity, where the protagonists' cross-cultural marriage is seen as an assertion of their hybrid experience, and as a means to hybridity. Contrary to expectations, it is observed that cross-cultural relationships lead to an anti-hybrid reaction.

**Key words:** Cross-cultural marriage, Hybrid identities, Cultural hybridity, Linguistic hybridity, Homi Bhabha, Nadine Gordimer, Leila Aboulela, Safi Abdi.