

Arab American Women Writers Defending Their Identities

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Abstract

This paper addresses the issue of assimilation and identity as seen through some work that is written by Arab American women writers. The paper provides a brief history of Arab American immigration to USA. It primarily, examines three Arab American writers and highlights their impact on the American culture. The paper explores the three writers' impact on the literature on showing assimilation and identity conflict as Arab women born, raised or lived in America. This paper explores some of their work to examine how they tackle the issue of race, identity, and ethnicity in their work. The three Arab American writers this paper studies are Diana Abu Jaber, Leila Ahmad, and Naomi Shihab Nye. Finally, this paper argues whether Arab American women writers manage to achieve the assimilation and whether they utilize the issue of their identity in what they have written as fictional and nonfictional work.

Keywords: Arab American Women writers, Arab American Women, Arab American Women identity, Immigration, Ethnicity, Identity

Introduction

This paper studies and analyzes only one work by each of the three Arab American women writers mentioned in this paper. The literature is chosen for the sake of this paper, Arabian Jazz by Diana Abu Jaber, the memoir of Leila Ahmed *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America-A Woman's Journey*, and some of Naomi Shihab Nye's poetry. The previous three pieces are chosen as examples that prove the main idea of this paper. The reasons behind choosing these three writers in particular are that the three of them are women who shared three characteristics. They are born, either raised or lived in America. The three of them are University Professors in the U.S. which means that they are working in a prestigious field that insights their knowledge and richen their literary writings with credibility. Another reason is that the three of them are well known among American intellectuals and people, and finally the three of them write in English language. The paper is divided into three parts. Part one is an introduction to a brief history of Arab Americans immigration to the U.S. and provides some statistics that show figures and other related issues of Arab American immigrants. Part two of this paper examines some of Arab American women writers in the U.S and highlights their impact on the American culture and what they have written to show their assimilation in the American culture and with the American community. The paper explores the contribution of their work to the American literature in general and to the Arab American literature in particular.

In addition, works done by Arab American women writers who are chosen for this paper are diverse. The paper examines some work by

Arab Americans who were born in the U.S, who lived part of their lives in the Arab world like Leila Ahmed who lived in Egypt and then moved to the States in the year 1979 and finally those who born and raised in the U.S. like Nye and Abu Jaber. The reason for this diversity in choosing Arab American women writers is to examine the impact of being raised in the Arab world on women's writing from one hand and whether this differs from being Arab American woman who was born and lived in the U.S. The conclusion of this paper, explores whether Arab American women succeeded in showing assimilation in their work. In addition, to examine how they utilized their identity in their fictional and nonfictional work.

According to the 2000 census, total of 3 million people reported an Arab ancestry in the United States [1]. However, only after 9/11 they become not only visible but rather visible subjects. Before 9/11 just few Americans had much interest in Arab Americans, they used to have bad images, and stereotype views about them such as their descents live in deserts riding camels and veiled their women in Harim's tents. After 9/11 most Americans started to think of Arab Americans and began to wonder about their history. Despite all of this, some scholars argue that interests in Americans from Arab origins have increased over the last two decades and they refer that to the growing population of Arab Americans in U.S urban centers [2]. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census of 1990, over one – half of Arab Americans are born in USA and 82% of Arabs are American citizens. What is interesting in the previous census is that two thirds of Arabs in American are Christians and not Muslims and that contradicts the popular perception. The same source shows that comparing to American adults Arabs are younger, earn higher income, and of higher education. Census 2000 shows that, contrary to the stereotype belief that Arab women are veiled and submissive; they actually highly educated and have roles in the labor market

in America. There are many women in the Academia in particular.

History of Arab American Immigration to the United States of America

Arab American immigration to the U.S. goes back to the year 1892. Most of the history books that tackled Arab immigration to America divided these waves into two waves although there are few like Loretta Hall's *Arab American Voices* divided the Arab Waves of immigrants into three phases. She asserts that the first wave was between the year 1878 and the year 1924, the second wave was between the years 1948 and 1967, and the last wave is from the year 1967 until now. For the purpose of this paper the view that divided the Arab American Immigration into two waves will be considered.

The First Wave (1878 to 1924)

Arabs started heading to the United States of America in the late 1800s after the Ottomans conquered the Asian portion of the Arab world in the 1600s. The original (largely Christian) migrants came mostly as sojourners, not immigrants. Settling in colonies in cities such as New York and Boston, and fully intending to return home one day. They voiced a mainly diaspora consciousness: a fact evident in their newspapers, which were often sectarian, political and geared toward events in the Middle East. The first big wave of Arab immigrants who came to North America before the World War I was from the Syrian province which was under the Ottomans invasion that time. Hall asserts that since Ottomans controlled most of the Arab countries people from Syria started looking for another place to live in and escape the invasion and injustice. She claimed that even people emigrated from Lebanon might correctly be called either Lebanon or Syrian [3]. However, Hall never mentioned that Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine used to be called "Belad el Sham" Or "the Great Syria" and this explains why Lebanese or Palestinians even used to be called Syrians. Naff in the other hand assumes that half of the Arab Americans who immigrated to America between the period of 1880 and 1940 were from those who had difficult times to be classified accurately as Arabs. This was due to the Ottomans conquer of the Arab world that time which resulted in classifying Arabs in American as Turks or Armenians sometimes [4]. In the year 1899, the classification "Syrian" appeared for the first time on immigration rolls. The term "Palestinians" appeared years later on the immigration rolls. Naff claims that those rolls later used to depend on their last country of resident and that caused a lot of confusion because for example Palestinians after 1948 and after the creation of Israel put as Israelis in the immigration rolls and this meant the loss of their identity, official recognition, and most importantly the loss of their nationality.

Most of the immigrants of the first wave to America were Christians. Naff asserts that 90% of Arab immigrants before the WW1 were Christians [5]. Those Christians came from Mountain of Lebanon and the Syrian district. Most of those Arab immigrants were farmers intended to stay in the U.S. just temporarily and then go back to their country with a decent amount of money, but just few of them go back home.

The Second Wave (1924 Until Now)

Here came the greatest wave of Arab immigrants and that was after the World War II. After the WWII ended and after the Jewish country was formed, many Arab people especially from Palestine sought refuge in U.S. and many of them intended to stay just for a short while with a hope that their lands come back to them. Most of those

people ended up in U.S. as refugees escaping from the political and military situation in the Middle East. In addition, after WWII Many Arab Immigrants came to the States to study. Some of them were many professionals who had limited opportunities in their countries. Their intention was to make good money and after that go back to their home land, but most of them stayed in North America.

Comparing to the immigrants of the first wave, most second wave immigrants practice Islam. What is visible in those new immigrants as Naff assumes is that they retain strong feelings of solidarity with their countries which are troubled economically and politically [6]. This was very clear after the 1967 war between Israel and the Arab countries. As a result of the Israeli – Arab war most Arab Americans felt humiliating and many of them especially the early Syrian immigrants have adopted much more nationalistic pride than those Arab who came later. Arab American from the two waves really concern about the situation in the Middle East even nowadays and its impact on their wellbeing in America.

It is critical to mention that as we read in *Race and Arab Americans* before and after 9/11 from *Invisible Citizens to Visible Subjects*, a series of court cases known as the "prerequisite cases," petitions for naturalization were challenged and in some instances denied on the basis of whether or not individuals qualified as "white." These cases not only decided the fate of individual immigrants, but also set precedents for the inclusion or exclusion of entire ethnic groups. In the cases involving Arabs, courts argued that Arabs should be denied naturalization as U.S. citizens on the basis of dark skin color, origin on the continent of Asia, distance from European culture, and cultural and geographical proximity to Islam. Most of the cases before 1920 were eventually resolved in favor of the applicants, and the 1920 census classified Syrians and Palestinians under the category "Foreign-born white population" [7].

Arab American Literature Contribution to the American Culture

In an article published shortly after 9/11, Editor Elie Chalala expressed the shock and horror that many Arab American writers and intellectuals felt. He notes, the terrorists destroyed the very thing that he and many others had spent years trying to correct: anti-Arab stereotyping in American society [8]. Also, other reactions to the terrorist attacks have been articulated in literature by writers Elmaz Abinader, Suheir Hammad, Lawrence Joseph, and DH Melhem [9]. According to the 2000 census, Arab American reached over 3 million.

Arab American literature goes back to the late 1800s, which is approximately the age and history of Arab immigrants itself when they first began to arrive in North America from the Syrian province of the Ottoman Empire as mentioned previously. The issue of how early Arab Americans could react to pressures of assimilation while also maintaining Arab identity was a matter of great importance to the early immigrant community. In 1924 and although there were not a complete shortage of literary production, Arab-American writers wrote about their Arab background with hesitation and through self-distancing narrative strategies. William Blatty, most famous for his novel *The Exorcist*, engaged with Arab-American identity in his memoir *Which Way to Mecca, Jack?* through slap-stick humor and self-denigration. Overall, the literature of this period reflects a caution to engage with Arab-American identity as something of contemporary relevance.

After 1960, things began to change. Arab-Americans found it easier to write about their ethnic heritage after the Civil Rights movement and at the same time there was also an arrival of new immigrants from the Arab world. These immigrants were frequently Muslim, and often better educated and more politically engaged than earlier immigrants. However, political events, from the 1967 war to 9\11 and beyond, forced Arab-Americans to struggle with their identity and with the fight to define themselves rather than waiting others to define them.

Currently, contemporary Arab American writers are able to take for granted the existence of a community, both ethnic and literary. However, the forces which situated Arab-Americans as different and others in the U.S. context made it difficult for Arab-American writers to engage with their identity without worries. As in the early decades of the century, Arab-Americans today confront a cultural, political, and social context that is full of tension. Instead of courts excluding Arabs on the basis of race, popular racism now targets Arabs on the basis of skin color, dress, name, accent and other characteristics. This has become formal in the racial profiling in place at U.S. airports and border crossings. Arab American writers felt the impact of 9\11 in particular. Some of these writers have had work rejected just because of their identity or the themes they tackle in their works. Others Arab American writers targeted after they appeared in front of their audiences [10].

Arab American Women Writers Defending Their Identity

The position of Arab American women writers is complicated by the little support they receive from American feminists who tend to work on the gender experience. In their exclusive obsession with subverting the dominant patriarchal discourse, American feminists fail to regard differences of female experiences that spoke about race, ethnicity and support an alternative hegemonic discourse [11].

Diana Abu Jaber: Arabian Jazz

Diana Abu-Jaber was born in 1960 in Upstate New York and lived there until she was seven years old when her family moved to Amman for two years. Her father is a Jordanian and her mother is American, and she has lived between America and Jordan ever since. She received her doctorate in English literature from the State University of New York. She has taught literature and creative writing at the University of Michigan, the University of Oregon, and UCLA. Her first novel is *Arabian Jazz* which came out in 1993. It won the Oregon Book Award and was a finalist for the national PEN/Hemingway award [2].

Arabian Jazz appeared shortly after the Gulf War, which heightened negative portrayals of Arab Americans. Arab American identity is at the center of this novel. Abu-Jaber skillfully reveals the more serious undertones of the Ramouds' family story: "the flesh-and-blood people beneath the entertaining caricatures, and the tears that are sometimes concealed in laughter" [13]. Rather than confirming stereotypes, Abu-Jaber begins by revealing the emotional, cultural, and political complexity of the characters.

In the opening of the novel, Matussem was totally removed from the events surrounding his family. He is unable to offer help to either of his daughters (Jemorah and Melvina, "Jemorah" is a transliteration of the Arabic word meaning "live coal" and "Melvina" is a name of Irish origin. The sisters' names derive from their parents' cultural backgrounds: Arab and Irish American as they attempt to navigate

the cultural pressures forced on them. Their mother's death while they were in a visit to Jordan is so obvious that the novel begins with an expression of her loss: "When Matussem Ramoud opened his eyes each morning, his wife would still not be there" [14]. Playing the drums becomes a way for him to retreat into the past.

According to the novel, Matussem's struggle to live and raise his daughters and that is directly linked to losing the one woman who enabled him to enter American life. For Matussem, who emigrates from Jordan, Nora is not only the woman he falls in love with and marries; she is the key to his entrance into American life: "She taught him how to speak a new language, how to handle his new country" [15]. The resolution of the novel opened up with the arrival of Nassir, Jemorah and Melvina's cousin. After her confrontation with Portia (Jemorah's manager at work) Jemorah decides to marry Nassir and return to Jordan. The door that Portia opens into American life is so disgusting that Jemorah turns in the opposite direction, ready to embrace her Arab identity and give up her Americanism. In a previous scene in the novel, Melvina asks her sister Jemorah to remember Bedouin saying: "In the book of life, every page has two sides" [16]. The "two sides" are symbols of two sides (two cultures, two families, two identities, and two languages) that culminate in the term Arab American. Furthermore, Jemorah's and Melvina's names present two sides in translation. The names' linguistic and cultural differences, which parallel Jemorah's and Melvina's different perceptions, become indifferent within a familial context in which the two sisters protect each other [17].

In this novel, Abu – Jaber explores the theme of homelessness when she reveals the bitterness of experiencing dispossession and the hardships in the border encampments followed by the illusion of making a home in the U.S. The novel also reveals the hostility that the girls experienced as being half Americans. This was clear when Portia, Jemorah's manager at work and a woman who went to college with her mother, resists any acknowledgments of the Arab part of Jemorah's self and claims "Whatever of the mother's clean blood is left", while she refers to the father as "the dirty sand Nigger" and believes him, with "all his kind [not to be] any better than Negroes" [18-20]. Jemorah turns to her Arab identity instead. But the novel suggests that reverting to the other side of the line is not a solution either: rather, what is needed is the ability to move with flexibility between worlds.

Leila Ahmed: A Border Passage: From Cairo to America--A Woman's Journey

Leila Ahmed was born in 1940. She is an Egyptian American professor of Women's Studies and Religion at the Harvard Divinity School [21]. Prior to coming to Harvard, she was a professor of Women's Studies and Near Eastern studies at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She earned her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Cambridge before moving to the United States to teach and write. She was born in a town near Cairo for an upper class family. Her childhood was shaped by Muslim values and the liberal orientation of Egypt's aristocracy under the ancient régime. Her father, a civil engineer, was a strong opponent of Jamal Abdel Nasser's construction of the Aswan High Dam on ecological principles [22].

Leila Ahmed autobiography *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America--A Woman's Journey*, 1999 opens with a desire for flight from Egypt. Ahmed explains that her story begins "in the disruption

of that world and the desolation that for a time overtook our lives. For it was only then that I'd begin to follow the path that would bring me – exactly here [23]. She narrates her childhood, early adulthood and professional life in the context of the shifting political and ideological paths that shape this particular woman's route. The "exactly here" of the introduction may refer to two realities the first is her position as a Professor of Women's Studies at Harvard Divinity School, and the second is her realization of narrative agency evidenced in the production of her autobiography. Ahmed's cultural and historical contexts are heroes in her developing sense of identity, particularly because she grew up at a point in time where crucial terms were being redefined. She explains, for example, that "my childhood fell in that era when the words "imperialism" and "the West" had not yet acquired the connotations they have today – they had not yet become, that is, mere synonyms for "racism," "oppressions," and "exploitation" [24].

In *A Border Passage*, she reconstructs her life in Egypt, England and the USA by placing herself more fully into history, first as a passive receiver of the structures that characterized the last days of the British Empire, then as a victim of the nationalist politics that created the notion of an Arab identity; and later, as a scholar who promotes her own vision through her academic work. Ahmed unveils the contradictions of each of the periods: the struggle for independence from Europe existed hand in hand with a notion of the lead of European culture, which included a deep admiration for democracy and scientific advances. In her own family, she describes with obvious pain, how the children unconsciously looked down on their mother, an Arab speaking woman with no profession outside the home.

In significant ways, she explains, the writing of her memoir obliged her to rethink previously uncritical assumptions about identity, particularly the notion of an "Arab identity", which, she discovers, was constructed to serve political interests. She remembers how, as children, she and her friends learned to identify themselves a new in a climate of national and religious circumscription: Jean Said was "Palestinian Christian" and Joyce Alteras an "Egyptian Jew". The increasing relevancy of these categories introduces the young girls to patterns of identity whose fabricated incompatibilities would have deep political implications [25].

For Ahmed, the mission for self-realization is deeply rooted in particular experiences of reactions to confused sociopolitical events in the Middle East, especially as those events have unfolded after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the end of European colonial rule, and the foundation of the state of Israel [26]. Ahmed continues to examine and write about the social and religious institutions of her native culture. Ahmed seems to experience a sense of isolation both within and outside her home society. Ahmed suggests that her experience of political persecution in her native country, along with her following experiences of exile and racism toward Arabs and Muslims in the West, have contributed to a complicated sense of personal identity, one that is not always supported by the shifting names, boundaries, and definitions of national identity.

In her autobiography, Ahmed shows discomfort with written Arabic and her linkage of her poor command of formal Arabic with the imposition of what she has experienced as an oppressive form of Arab nationalism causes problematic relationship between linguistic, national, and personal identity. Ahmed's most vivid description

of sexual discrimination is of an event that occurred to her in the west and not in Egypt, when her British doctor refused to talk to her directly about her medical condition, insisting on talking to her brother and husband without her. For Ahmed, this experience reveals how "the task of addressing racism for feminists of color in the West is, and has to be, an ongoing and central part of the work. Moreover, the thinking that we ordinarily do, no less so than the work of addressing male dominance" [27]. In this autobiography, Ahmad offers resistant narratives that recognize the diverse ways in which it is possible to be Arab, Muslim, female, and a postcolonial writer in a transnational, historical context.

In *A Border Passage*, Leila Ahmed lucidly addresses all of these questions, telling the readers about all the mysterious, confusing process by which her identity was constructed among a political focus. Her search for answers takes readers from Alexandria to the classrooms of Cambridge, and from the strange cities located in Abu Dhabi to the ivory towers of academic America. Still, the most fascinating journey described within these pages is the journey taken to herself.

Finally, and according to her autobiography, Ahmed speaks of her experience in the United States as one that was often risky with tension and confusion as she attempts to reconcile her Muslim Egyptian identity with Western values. Faced with racism and anti-Muslim prejudice, and after deconstructing traditionalist male-centered beliefs in her own culture, she set out to refuse equally damaging myths and misconceptions by the West about Islam and Muslim women and this is why Ahmed today is known widely for her work on the Islamic view of women and their historical and social status in the Muslim world.

Naomi Shihab Nye's Poetry

Naomi Shihab Nye a poet who is born in March 12, 1952 in Missouri. She was born to a Palestinian father and American mother. Although she regards herself as a "wandering poet", she refers to San Antonio as her home. Nye graduated from Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas, and still resides in that city. She is married to the photographer Michael Nye and has a son. Her first collection of poems, *Different Ways to Pray*, explored the theme of similarities and differences between cultures. Some of her work collection is: *19 Varieties of Gazelle: Poems of the Middle East*, *A Maze Me*, *Red Suitcase*, *Field Trip and Fuel*. She also has a collection of essays entitled *Never in a Hurry*. She wrote a young-adult novel called *Habibi (my love)* (the semi-autobiographical story of an Arab-American teenager who moves to Jerusalem in the 1990s. Nye has edited many anthologies of poems, for audiences both young and old. One of the best-known is *This Same Sky: a Collection of Poems from around the World*, which contains translated work by 129 poets from 68 different countries. Her most recent anthology is called *Is This Forever, Or What?: Poems & Paintings from Texas*. She was elected a Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets in 2010 [28].

Nye talks about her experience as an Arab-American through her poems and she talks a lot about her heritage and peace that with a humanitarian spirit. She is a good example of a writer who affirms and gives voice to Arab culture and tradition while at the same time making space for change. Nye was able through her poetry to bring to bring Arab culture into U.S. In her poetry, "Nye has suggested that Arab-American identity is not something to be preserved or denied or escaped or romanticized: it is just another way of being

human” [29]. Nye creates spaces in which both Arabic and American experiences can be expressed, through respecting the diversity of experiences and taking into consideration the necessity of change.

Nye uses food in her poems to question limits of culture, class, and ethnicity. Food reveals the possibility for imagining combined identities and traditions [30]. In Nye's poetry there are a lot of mentioning to Arabic food ingredients like onions, Arabic coffee, and mint. For example, her description of mint-filled gardens on the West Bank shows the cultural traditions and her sticking to the Arab identity. Another example is in “The Traveling Onion,” she gathers the fragments of the onion’s story to reveal its heroic history [31]. In one of her poems under the title “Arabic Coffee,” Nye describes her father’s traditional ceremony of preparing coffee. His rituals connect family members and friends. The process of making the coffee, letting it “boil to the top, and down again,” two times, follows a traditional Arabic recipe. He breaks the Arabic tradition by serving the coffee to both males and females at the same room: “And the place where men and women / break off from one another / were not present in that room” [32]. Talking about her father’s rituals in making coffee unites the past and the present. Making and serving Arabic coffee unites two cultural traditions, American and Arabic, and reflects her and her father’s bi-cultural identity as Palestinians. In most of her poems, Nye kept suggesting that what it means to be Arab American identity is discovered if we make sense of diverse experience and when we understand cultural contexts.

Nye also addresses the Arab-American and Palestinian experience, stereotypes, and racism. She explores the meaning of having a cultural inheritance that is not always easy. In the poem “Blood,” she tells a childhood experience: a girl who knocked on her door and “wanted to see the Arab” [33]. Nye says they didn’t have one. After that, she says, her father told her who he was: “Shihab’—‘hooting star’—/ a good name, borrowed from the sky”. Then she starts questioning what it means to be a “true Arab” and to the problematic questioning of the implications and responsibilities of this identity. In her poems, Nye shows that even heritage can be a warning sign of true identity. She makes it clear again that ethnic identity does not matter that much what matters is that human extends to another.

In response to September 11, Nye wrote a letter entitled, “To Any Would-Be Terrorists,” which was published in “September 11, 2002, American Writers Respond” [34]. In this letter Nye writes, “I am humble in my country's pain and I am furious.” Addressing the “would be terrorist,” she said that, “not only did your colleagues kill thousands of innocent, international people in those buildings and scar their families forever, they wounded a huge community of people in the Middle East, in the United States and all over the world. If that's what they wanted to do, please know the mission was a terrible success and you can stop now.” Also, in one of her poems that called “Steps,” Nye offered striking imagery to describe the bond that an immigrant community has with its old country. “A man letters a sign for his grocery in Arabic and English. Paint dries more quickly in English. The thick swoops and curls of Arabic letters stay moist and glistening till tomorrow when the children show up jingling their dimes. They have learned the currency of the new world...one of these children will tell a story that keeps her people alive...” [35].

To Sum up, the argument in this paper is that Arab American women writers face their own particular sets of problems in

America by themselves despite the fact that they should be treated as Americans since some of them lived and raised in America. Also, citizenships should give all rights to express feelings and expressions as Americans without being stigmatize of being not pure American just because they have Arab roots. Struggle to prove both American and Arab identity is still hard for Arab American writers. Americans look at them as Arabs while Arabs still look at them as American Westernized women. For example, when they criticize their patriarchal society they are often accused of being westernized. In addition, they are accused by some Arabs of abandoning their own culture since Arab people believes that feminism is associated with Western imperialism and anti-Islam values.

Lastly, Arab American women writers prove their abilities of carrying the stick from the middle. They are working hard to show their loyalty to the American culture and community while at the same time they are sticking tightly to their Arabic culture, identity, and heritage. Importantly, Arab American women writers who are born, lived, and raised in America usually show their Arabic identity and try to raise points that show how they are Arabs and how much they are proud of that and at the same time they are seeking diversity between all cultures. Abu Jaber and Nye are examples of those kind of Arab American writers since they are both born and lived mostly all their lives in America. Both of these writers show through their writings that they are related to the Arabic culture and their identity is still Arabic although they are Americans. Some other Arab American writers like Leila Ahmed who was born and spent most of youth in the Arab world shows her efforts to assimilate in the American culture and society. In her autobiography, she shows how much she suffered from racism, discrimination, and hostility to Islam. This racism leads her to write about the real moderate Islam and to defend her culture as an academic and an intellectual. In her writings, Ahmed also tries to show her identity as an Arab Muslim woman in the west. She compares her location in the East to it in the West and tackles the problems of each culture. In defending her own Arab Muslim identity, Ahmed tries to show that many stereotyped views about Arabs and Muslims who are trying to gain assimilation in the American community through showing that Arab women are as loyal as American woman while the problem is just the misinterpretation of Islam and stereotypes of Muslim women.

Finally, through all the research that was taken for the sake of this paper, Arab American women writers always fear the treatment that run the risks of being targeted and manipulated by the interests of commercial western marketplace. Most of the time, publishers expect their writings to meet the expectation of the western reader who assumes to see a subordinated Arab women and the stereotypes about the patriarchal Arab culture.

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