Contemplating a Second-Generation Arab Canadian Diasporic Consciousness

by

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Abstract

Arab immigrants have received relatively less academic attention than other minority groups in Canada. Most research on Arab learners in Canada examines their language difficulties as ESL learners. This study contributes to a better understanding of the cross-cultural and educational experiences of Arab youth in diaspora. From a theoretical perspective, it draws substantially on Du Bois's notion of double consciousness, which addresses people who experience a sense of 'twoness' as they are trapped between two worlds. This study not only acknowledges the wealth of Du Bois's and Gilroy's models, but also attempts to expand those models to wider, more encompassing, and multi-ethnic articulations of Black Atlantic geopolitics.

This study examines ways in which Arab-Canadian second-generation high school students respond to Arab Anglophone immigrant literature. It introduces and discusses the works of some Arab Anglophone writers, and shows how the students' responses underpin their sense of identity, particularly of being Canadian. In doing so, this study explores how ethnicity and culture inform responses to literary texts, and demonstrates how ethnicity and religion define second-generation students' understandings of assimilation and social justice.

For My Loving and Lovely Wife Sue

And

For Nano and Zico:

May you too follow your dreams.

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And last but not least, thanks are due to my loving wife, Sue, and two lovely kids, Nano and Zico, for the love, joy, and encouragement you have brought into my life.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

I was still hungry
when I left home, mother,
to disappear from the one piece
of earth I knew
. . . . . .
Yumma, that hunger's never left me,
even though I'm big as an ox,
fifty-five now, married, and master of a house
with a good larder.
Hunger still lurches
inside me, like the sea voyage
My little girl knows how
to make your mincemeat pies,
folded in neat, small triangles.
. . . . . .
Wherever you are, O mae,
I bet it fills your belly to know
there's a twelve-year-old Brazilian girl
with your hair and eyes, who,
though she's never seen
you or your kitchen fire, makes
Syrian meat pies proper,
baked golden and sealed
with your same thumbpress
Mohja Kahf, *E-mails from Scheherazad* (2003, pp. 33-41)

Situating Myself in the Research

When I was growing up, I was fascinated by world literature, which I read in Arabic translation. I was a student at Baghdad College in Iraq, an elite school for boys from grade 7 to 12, which boasts countless alumni, professionals and intellectuals, all over the world. In his article "The American Age, Iraq," Shadid (2011) explained how Baghdad College, established in the 1930s by American Jesuits from the New England Jesuit Province, represents a time when the American presence in Iraq was marked by cultural education and not military action (p. 229). The English curriculum for grades 7 and 8 was tailored specifically for this school, and was not taught elsewhere in Iraq. I was introduced to literary texts such as H. G. Wells's *Kipps: The Story of a*

Simple Soul, Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* and Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*. It was a time of innocence, as I never questioned the American presence then; a time when knowing about another culture was intimate and not intrusive, inviting and never alienating. I was intrigued by Englishness, and did my Bachelor's and Master's in English Literature in Iraq. Arabic and world literature, however, continued to exercise a mesmerizing effect on me.

This area of interest has mattered more to me since I obtained my Master's of Arts in Humanities at California State University. The program was centered upon the dynamic interaction between text and context within interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives. It encouraged students to cross boundaries among humanistic disciplines and explore the correlation between the humanities and other areas of scholarship, such as education. Moreover, the theory courses that were part of my Master's in English at Lakehead University partially introduced me to pedagogy in relation to English literature. I realized then that I was more interested in questions of critical pedagogy and methods of teaching than in any teachable subject.

As an Arab immigrant to Canada, I taught at an Islamic school in Toronto, where I observed how Arab/Muslim students tended to live a life of conformity at home that was extended to their lives at school. As most of these Islamic schools instill a code of Islamic conformity, some of the students lived different lives outside school and home as they sought social acceptance; therefore, they would "develop a double personality; with one side tailored to the social / cultural demands of home and family, the other to the demands of the outside world" (Zine, 2008, p. 4). In the school in which I was teaching, some students raised questions about the relevance of their culture or traditions to literature. They questioned if any of the literary material they were studying could be interpreted based on their ethical values and the implications of those values in the world of literature. The link between the students' cultural

background and their literacy and interpretive skills was immense. Now that I live in Alberta, with a large Arab community in Edmonton, I decided to look at how Arab Canadian students in Edmonton respond to literary texts that are culturally and ethnically relevant to their personal experiences. I wanted to explore how these particular responses inform their identity within the Duboisian theoretical notion of double consciousness.

The Purpose of the Study

Drawing on Du Bois's notion of double consciousness, as well as postcolonial studies and reader response theory, this study explores how Arab-Canadian high school students address issues of identity when they encounter Anglophone Arab literature that speaks to their experience of living between two worlds. My study will also contribute to the scholarly studies that question the dominant use of the European literary canon in contemporary secondary school curricula (Dimitriadis & McCarthy, 2001; Johnston, 2003). Essentially, this study is meant to inquire into how Arab-Canadian students' particular set of values, religious beliefs and cultural background inform their conceptualization of being Arab-Canadian.

I use the term *double consciousness* to examine the encounter between one ethnic identity with another culture as it "signifies the encounter, conflict, and / or blending of two ethnic or cultural categories which, while by no means pure and distinct in nature, tend to be understood and experienced as meaningful identity labels by members of these categories" (Lo, 2002, p. 199). In other words, double consciousness is a designation that signifies the ability to survive a life within non-complementary paradigms:

> A way to achieve this could be to focus on praxis – the ways in which we engage in cultural ways of being that represent a new and hybrid way of acting. A praxis that both breaks with the old and at the same time is a merger of the old; a contextual space that is

> filled with creative ways of being and acting that at the same time points forward and yet retains some of its old parts. (Sandset, 2011)

Ultimately, the study looks at how that reading experience informs the diasporic aspects of Arab-Canadian identity. In effect, the second-generation youth interviewed for this project provide evidence of how immigrant literature can provoke a negotiation of identity.

Equally central to this study is Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (1993), which used the same notion of double consciousness to discuss the encounter of one ethnic subject with another culture. This study explores how the Arab diasporic condition resonates with the diasporic notion of African double consciousness. The culture of the Arab diaspora, like that of the black Atlantic, is similarly the product of continuous historical and cultural processes, such as the colonizing powers moving eastward and the volatile postcolonial era. This research suggests an extension of the notion of double consciousness, rather than a departure from Du Bois's notion. Viewed as such, this study offers insights into an Arab-Canadian consciousness that is based on his idea of double consciousness.

Three primary questions informed the trajectory of this study:

1. In what ways does the Arab diasporic experience hinder or help second-generation Arab Canadian high school students' understanding of immigration literature?
2. How does the Arab heritage and culture impact second-generation Arab Canadian high school students' understanding of Canadian identity?
3. Within the context of second-generation Arab Canadian high school students, in what ways does the Arab diasporic consciousness resonate with the Duboisian notion of double consciousness?

The Significance of the Study

Arab immigrants have received relatively less academic attention than other minority groups in Canada. According to Statistics Canada (2007), "The number of people in Canada of Arab origin is growing considerably faster than the overall population. Between 1996 and 2001, for example, the number of people who reported Arab origin rose by 27%, while the overall population grew by only 4%." In terms of education, again according to Statistics Canada, "Canadians of Arab origin are twice as likely as other Canadians to have a university degree [and] are also more than twice as likely as their counterparts in the overall population to have a post-graduate degree" (Statistics Canada, n.d.). Moreover, Canada's 2011 Census "shows that the Canadian Arab community has increased in number from 563,315 in 2006 to 750, 925 in 2011 . . . an increase of . . . 33.25% - and more than doubled the 368,530 Canadian Arab population of 2001" (Dajani, 2014). My investigation into how Arab-Canadian high school students respond to Anglophone Arab writers' short stories aims to help them define and question who they are, what their position in Canadian society is, and how they capitalize on that cultural background to discover meaning(s) in texts.

Most of the research literature about Arab learners in Canada discusses either their language difficulties as ESL learners or their adjustment problems as they struggle to become part of the mainstream school community. Very few studies have been directed towards second-generation Arab students[1] responding to literature and the problems they encounter in meaning-making. For instance, in his dissertation, *Educational and Cultural Adjustment of Ten Arab Muslims Students in Canadian University Classrooms*, Abukhattala (2004) agreed that "Arab Canadians are a heterogeneous and frequently misunderstood group whose educational

[1] Students who either were born in Canada or arrived before their early teens when their parents immigrated to Canada.

background and cultural heritage have received little attention in the scholarly literature" (p. ii). He therefore examined "the cross cultural and educational experiences of ten Arab undergraduate students in two English-language universities in Montreal" (p. ii). Moreover, in *Canadian Islamic Schools: Unravelling the Politics of Faith, Knowledge, and Identity*, Zine (2008) identified tensions inherent in religiously-based schools in Canada. Zine's study contributed to explorations of the sociological and ideological alternatives to public schooling, by pointing out that Islamic schools protect students from unfavourable social influences by providing them with an appropriate Islamic path that represents a "reproduction of Islamic identity and lifestyle" (2008, p. 95).

This study attempts to describe the insights, predicaments, or misconceptions that Arab high school students have encountered based on the ways in which reading culturally-centered literature resonates with their personal experience. I hope my findings will contribute to a better understanding of these students' cross-cultural identity and educational experiences. This project will also help introduce a set of emerging Anglophone Arab writers, whose literary works are relevant to the Canadian English Language Arts curriculum in an increasingly growing multicultural society, to both students and teachers in Canada. The students I interviewed were selected with regard to diversity of gender and age. They were Arab Muslims who were at different high school grades, from 9 to 12. Of the eight students, five were female and three were male. I met them by talking to acquaintances and active Arab community members, and by asking mosque-goers to spread the word for me. I would like to note that I did not question the participants about the notion of double consciousness: we talked about issues of duality and being caught between two worlds in general terms, without any specific recourse to the Duboisian theoretical notion of double consciousness.

The notion of double consciousness as a conceptual way to negotiate identity is crucial to the nature of this study, especially in its capacity to converse with culture and language: "This multi-dimensional nature of identity, and its mutations across disciplinary boundaries and theoretical paradigms, makes it difficult to account for its meaning" (Suleiman, 2003, p. 5). I, therefore, share Suleiman's concern of excessively engaging in the wide sea of identity rhetoric and politics: "It is therefore not my intention to contrive a concept of identity which can be applied uniformly throughout the present study. This is not possible; and, at any rate, such a task is beyond my competence" (p. 5). As indicated, I share this concern, and have been consciously aware of how to use the data I have collected within the scope of the notion of double consciousness.

Who Are the Arabs?

According to Rodinson (1981), there are certain geographical, ethnic, and linguistic conditions that determine what an Arab or what an Arab country is:

> The countries that fulfill all these conditions constitute a coherent group extending across the whole of North Africa, the Arabian peninsula, and the western part of Asia, frequently referred to as the Fertile Crescent. They incorporate some 150 million citizens and cover an area of about 13 million square kilometers. (pp. 4-5)

Defining who Arabs are in terms of negation might also be useful:

> Iranians, Afghans, Turks, and Pakistanis are not Arabs. Although these groups are predominantly Muslim, a commonality they share with Arabs, each of them is culturally and linguistically distinct, with its own artistic traditions. Even within the geographical Arab world, there are non-Arab ethnic communities: Berbers, Kurds, Armenians, Chaldeans, Assyrians, Circassians. (Salaita, 2011, p. 9)

The Arabic language, on the other hand, "is an independent language within the Semitic language group" (Rodinson, 1981, p. 5). In *The Arabs: Journeys Beyond the Mirage*, Lamb (1987) has spoken of how hard it can be to pinpoint the definition of *Arab*:

> Indeed, the most accepted definition of Arab today is one who speaks Arabic. None other seems to work. The real Arab comes from one of the thirteen tribes of the Arabian Peninsula, but what about the millions who don't? Most Arabs are Muslim, but what of the six million Egyptian Coptic Christians? A European lives in Europe, an Asian in Asia, but does an Arab live in Arabia? (p. 12)

From this perspective, language itself becomes a deciding factor in what makes a person an Arab:

> The Arabic language itself, by contrast, has a single word, *'arabi*, an attributive adjective derived from what must be one of the earliest words in the history of language, *'arab*, a collective noun that was originally used to describe the nomadic peoples of the central regions of what is now the Arabian Peninsula. Quite how far back the existence of the *'arab* can be traced is difficult to say, but a group called the 'ar-ba-a' are cited as components of an army in cuneiform inscriptions dating from as early as 853 BC. (Allen, 1998, p. 11)

In this context, language, or "Arabi," becomes a defining force that describes the geographical and ethnic origin of Arabs in general.

The Arabs in Canada

The first waves of Arab immigrants arrived in Canada in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, and Arab immigration has continued almost uninterrupted ever since. The early newcomers were officially called Syrians: "The label Syrian was practical and useful because most Arabic-speaking people in Canada then came from the Greater Syria region, today the countries of Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Palestine" (Abu-Laban, 1999, p. 202). Interestingly,

this classification changed in the 1960s to include both Syrians and Lebanese, and only in 1981 were the categories of "single and multiple origins introduced and in 1991 separate entries were provided for a number Arab-origin groups" (p. 203). The 1960s witnessed a significant increase in the number of Arab immigrants. Differences between the first and the second waves of Arab immigration are quantitative, and geographically as well as economically oriented:

> There are two distinctive periods of Arab Immigration to Canada which are labelled as the 'pioneer wave' and the 'new wave' respectively. For example, the new wave of Arab immigration to Canada is different from the pioneer wave not only in terms of volume but also in terms of countries of origin of the immigrants and the immigrants' social, economic, political, and educational characteristics. Additionally, over the last ten to fifteen years new-wave Arab immigrants have included two types that did not figure prominently in the pioneer wave: refugees and investors/entrepreneurs" (Abu-Laban, 1999, p. 203).

According to immigration statistics, a large wave of Arab immigrants arrived between 1981 and 1992, "which accounts for over 51 percent of the total" of immigrants in Quebec "followed by Ontario at 37 percent, Alberta at 5 percent and British Columbia and Nova Scotia at 2 percent each" (Abu-Laban, 1999, p. 206). Alberta ranks third in terms of the Arab population in Canada. The Arab immigrants came from various countries and had numerous reasons for immigration to Canada. They brought along with them a rich cultural and intellectual heritage in terms of values, oral traditions, and practices that added to the rich colors of the Canadian canvas.

The Arabic Intellectual and Literary Heritage

This section explores the Arabic intellectual tradition. First of all, this brief review includes works that are written in Arabic, though not necessarily by Arab writers per se. Scholars have fairly made the assumption that Arabic heritage subsumes within its repertoire any work

that is written in Arabic (Adamson & Taylor, 2005, p. 3). In *The Arabic Literary Heritage: The Development of its Genres and Criticism*, Allen (1998) has argued in favor of a trans-cultural focus for literary interpretation. Allen pointed out an irony that emerges from the exploration of that cross-cultural connection between the Arab medieval intellectual heritage and contemporary Western schools of thought:

> The variety of texts and topics which today are potentially subject to critical analysis within the realm of schools to such an extent that the resulting scenario tends to reflect, albeit by way of different criteria, the very same generic and topical breadth that interested the *adib* during the classical period of Arabic literature. (1998, p. 3)

Placing literary theory within the context of the history of literary criticism in general is central in Western thought.

In *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, T. S. Eliot (1933) addressed the significance of studying the history of literary criticism, not only to sharpen critical insight and skill, but also to investigate sociological and cultural implications of different eras and people in history:

> I suggest that we may learn a good deal about criticism and about poetry by examining the history of criticism, not merely as a catalogue of successive notions of about poetry, but as a process of readjustment between poetry and the world in and for which it is produced . . . Second, the study of criticism, . . . as readaptation, may also help us to draw some conclusions as to what is permanent or eternal . . . And by investigating the problems of what has seemed to one age and another to matter, by examining differences and identities, we may somehow hope to extend our own limitations and liberate ourselves from some of our prejudices. (p. 18)

Exploring heritage and tradition is part of the cross-boundary dialogue that Eliot endorsed in order to understand "differences and identities." Considering the multi-faceted nature of Arabic literature (*adab*) itself, knowledge of cultural values fosters a better understanding of literature:

> While the Arabic word *adab* is essentially coterminous with the concept of belles-lettres in contemporary critical writings, it has arrived at that meaning via an interesting route, one that begins with something very akin to education and manners before being adopted as the means of defining the varied activities of those important contributors to the cultural values of Arab society. (Allen, 1998, p. 2)

The Arabic word for literature, 'Adab,' is the same word used for manners and etiquette. In this context, the study of Arabic literature is part of a greater exploration of education, ethics, morals, and manners that, in the Arab world, are products of the rise of Islam and the introduction of philosophy.

The evolution of Arabic literary criticism has its roots in the pre-Islamic tradition: "The process of criticism . . . the evaluation of literary words, is evident in abundance in every period of Arabic literary history and can be traced back to the very beginnings" (Allen, 1998, p. 363). In pre-Islamic times, poets would traditionally present their works orally and would evaluate one another in "annual poetry fairs such as the famous one in the Arabian city of 'Ukaz'" (Allen, 1998, p. 362). This tradition continued in post-Islamic times, and can be seen in the forms of public performance of poetry competitions in the Arab world today. However, the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad, believed to have taken place over a period of 23 years, marked a change in the Arab intellectual trajectory and spurred an entire scholarly movement toward textual analysis and poetic evaluation:

> The first works in Arabic that attempt to define and analyse poetry and its features date from the latter half of the ninth century . . . the process that led up to the appearance of

> these works of systematization can be traced back to the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad and the increasingly wide-scaled movement of intellectual exploration and cultural transformation that it instigated . . . The process of examining the meanings of words and the structuring of phrases and sentences in the newly recorded sacred text led philologists to collect and examine the largest extant archive of the language. (Allen, 1998, p. 363)

The rapid ascendancy of the importance of the hermeneutics of the Qur'an shaped the critical responses of coming generations. Scholarship about "the (miraculous) 'uniqueness'" of the Qur'an, "its *i'jaz*, acquired an interest exceeding the theological field when the question was raised whether the inimitability of the Holy Book applied to its form as well as its contents" (Grunebaum, 1950, pp. xiii-xiv). The Qur'an's eloquence functions as the yardstick with which to measure the quality of literary texts.

Similarly, the history of philosophy in Arabic coincides with the rise of Islam: "Philosophically interesting theological disputes were underway within two centuries of the founding of Islam in 266 CE" (Adamson & Taylor, 2005, p. 1). During the same period, translations of Greek philosophical works were being introduced and studied extensively, especially in the ninth century. These philosophical ideas appealed to and interacted with many other areas, such as "works on the principles of jurisprudence (*usul al-fiqh*), Qur'anic commentary, the natural sciences, certain literary (*adab*) works that are relevant to ethics, contemporary political philosophy and so on" (Adamson & Taylor, 2005, p. 2).

However, this scholarly zeal would not have prospered without the patronage that led to the emergence of Kalam discourse:

> Caliph al-Ma'mun (one of the sons of Harun al-Rashid) interposed an element of human reason into the discussion by adopting the concerns of the Mu'tazilah as official doctrine:

> if the Qur'an was uncreated, it was asked, then was every copy of it likewise uncreated; if God was all-powerful and everything was predestined, how could a deity that preordained evil be a good God? Into this environment of debate between old and new, faith and reason, Arab and non-Arab Muslims, al-Ma'mun also introduced an intensified focus on Hellenistic learning through the foundation of the House of Wisdom (*bayt a-hikmah*) as a research library (Allen, 1998, p. 369).

It is within this intellectual environment that Kalam originated and flourished: "The term *kalam*, which literally means 'speech' or [spoken 'word,' as opposed to '*maktub* and *kitab* and *kitaba* or 'written'], is used in Arabic translations of the Greek philosophers as a rendering of the term logos in its various senses of 'words,' 'reason,' and 'argument' . . . and the plural principle *mutakallimun* (singular: *mutakalim*), is used as a designation of the masters or exponents of any special branch of learning" (Wolfson, 1976, p. 1). The Mutakallimun are "the great disputants within the Islamic tradition" who affirmed "the right of reason to engage in independent research . . . Reason was declared to be the judge in ontological and epistemological questions" (Smirnov, 2004, p. 493), which stripped theologians of their monopoly over knowledge and offered free play to the critical and analytical responses of individual thinkers. Kalam, however, continued to have a theological mark to a certain extent, until the advent of al-Kindi and Avicenna.

Al-Kindi (c. 801-66) was interested in human perceptions of the world and critical responses. He is often "regarded as the father of Muslim philosophy . . . who occupied a middle ground between *kalam* and *falsafa*" (Kenny, 2005, p. 35). In one of "his writings on human understanding . . . he suggests that our intellect is brought into operation by a single cosmic intelligence" (Kenny, p. 35). Equally important in the history of Arabic-Islamic philosophy is Avicenna. Although he is known to the West by his Latinized name, his original Arabic name was Abdallah Ibn Sina. He was born before the year 980 and extensively studied the Qur'an and

Arabic literature (*adab*). Wisnovsky (2005) described Ibn Sina's contribution to Arabic-Islamic philosophy as a merger: "Before Avicenna, *falsafa* (Arabic Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophy) and *kalam* . . . were distinct strands of thought . . . After Avicenna, by contrast, the two strands fused together and post-Avicennian *kalam* emerged as a truly Islamic philosophy" (p. 92). Kalam intellectuals have been trailblazers for subsequent generations of Arab scholars in theology and literary criticism. Arab literary criticism, however, has not been able to departmentalize itself. In this regard, it shares a similar disappointing feature with its Western counterpart concerning the legitimacy of contemporary literary criticism:

> Literary criticism never became known as an independent area of knowledge, and critics were not recognized as specialists in medieval Arabic writings, whether or not these deal directly with criticism. In works on the classification of the sciences, there were no terms designating literary criticism and literary critics. (Ouyang, 1997, p. 8)

This failure can be attributed to certain political, historical, and sociological factors. In *Contemporary Arab Thought: Cultural Critique in Comparative Perspective*, Kassab (2010) argued, "for about two centuries, thinkers in the Arab world have perceived or advocated with more or less urgency the centrality of political freedom for the multifaceted empowerment of their societies" (p. 65). According to Kassab, the politicization of literature and daily issues have been overriding concerns for Arab thinkers: "the desire to live and the radical rethinking of the political are the main themes of present Arab critical thought. It is a thought that emerges from the pains of wars, dictatorships and political prisons" (p. 97). In this context, contemporary Arabic literary theory has generally struggled to overcome its socio-political landscape.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

I created a whole new identity for myself as the founder and president of a non-profit women's organization . . . I have gone around the world, meeting with victims of war . . . So, I was permitted to remain silent, telling other people's stories and never my own, hiding in plain sight, ever fearful someone would recognize me someday and say hey, there she is, the pilot's daughter, the friend of Saddam.
Zainab Salbi, *Between Two Worlds* (2005, p. 4)

Second-Generation Students and Ethnic Identity

This study attempts to contribute to the scholarship on the identity of second-generation students with respect to in-school environment, personal experience and literacy. Previous studies have focused on Asian and Indian second-generation students (Bacon, 1999; Rudrappa, 2002), or attempted to include a broader South Asian segment (Shariff, 2008). In this study, the term "second-generation" refers to the children of immigrants to Canada, or to immigrants who came to Canada as children. Literature on second-generation youth often focuses on the debate over the "search for an 'ethnic essence' and an 'authentic self' that contrasts with a more contemporary view of identity as necessarily ambivalent and hybrid" (Johnston, 2003, p. 5). Additionally, Hebert et al. (2008) argued that research on second-generation youth has gained more scholarly attention over the last few years "with respect to their integration, a process of considerable relevance to the ideals and lived realities of Canadian multiculturalism" (p. 61). The authors pointed out that studies on the second generation are characterized "by several debates pertaining to the nature of the group, research method, representation, and interpretation, all of which are central to youth studies generally" (p. 61). Research literature on second-generation youth generally reveals the emergence of "new cultural flows and new modes of belonging in local and global spaces [and] new modes of identity production" (p. 61). The designation 'second-generation' youth refers to "the stage in life when major transitions usually take place, such as

graduating from school, entering post-secondary institutions, entering the labour market, forming new households, but also coming to terms with ethno-cultural identities" (Tastsoglou, 2008, p. 1).

Shariff (2008) suggested that two main factors have brought second-generation research to the forefront of academic attention. First is the growing population of visible minorities: "Based on the 2006 Statistics Canada census data, one-in-five people in Canada is foreign-born, an increase of 13.9% from the previous census, an immigration surge unprecedented in a quarter century. The population of visible minorities is now more than five million (16.2% of the population, a growth rate five times more than the rest of the population)" (p. 69). In 2011, the foreign-born population in Canada

> represented 20.6% of the total population, the highest proportion among the G8 countries. Between 2006 and 2011, around 1,162,900 foreign-born people immigrated to Canada. These recent immigrants made up 17.2% of the foreign-born population . . . Asia (including the Middle East) was Canada's largest source of immigrants during the past five years (Statistics Canada)

The second factor is the foreign labour market that is attracting more immigrants "who come to Canada to begin a new life. In addition, their children will constitute a large group of second generation youth who will have to negotiate issues pertaining to race, culture, school, and identity" (Shariff, 2008, p. 69). Similarly, Somerville and Reitz (2004) pointed out that the emotional and socio-economic ties of the family shape the psychological well-being of the second generation:

> Educational attainment and labour-market experiences of immigrants shape the socioeconomic context in which they raise their children and the resources available to them . . . family variables also play a role in children's well-being . . . [they] affect the

> second generation's psychological adjustment and how acculturation patterns" are formulated (p. 396).

Somerville and Reitz (2004) stressed that the extent of social integration among second-generation youth is a reflection on the parents' economic and educational trajectory:

> Even where the immigrants themselves experience difficulty having their educational qualifications recognized by Canadian employers, it may be expected that they will impress on their children the value of getting an education and will ensure that any available family resources are channeled toward this end. Thus the high aspirations characteristic of immigrants might be fulfilled through their children. (p. 399)

In other words, it is the demographic and socio-economic aspects of the contemporary Canadian scene that invite more research peculiar to second-generation youth. How second-generation youth are "conceptualised and studied . . . as a generation or cohort, as a free-choice agent or subject to structural change" (Hebert et al., 2008, p. 62) is key to growth in society.

Studies of second-generation youth within the Canadian experience centered on "the nature of ethno-cultural identification . . . its difference from that of the immigrant parents, as well as its relationship to being Canadian, and how this relationship plays out in particular localities, cities, and regions of Canada or within particular ethno-cultural groups" (Tastsoglou, 2008, p. 1). Hassan et al. (2008) examined a different second-generation youth experience: the clash of generations in one family as a consequence of migrating to Canada. Their article explored the areas of parental authority, physical punishment, and conflicting cultural values in relation to migratory situations that are peculiar to Filipino and Caribbean parents and adolescents. Hassan et al. explained that immigrant parents often confront "a double challenge" in raising their children:

> They must ensure the continuity and transmission of their own cultural values and heritage, while simultaneously promoting their children's integration into the host society . . . this complex task becomes, at times, particularly difficult and sometimes results in significant family and parent-child conflict. (2008, pp. 171-72)

Shariff (2008), however, provided a literary perspective on the matter, examining cultural identity as a response to postcolonial texts. More particularly, she investigated the experiences of second-generation South Asian Canadian students as they responded to the postcolonial text and film *The Namesake* (Lahiri, 2003; Nair, 2007). She examined "the possibilities for the potential of our own personal stories and the stories of our students to be used as a starting point for an investigation into a critical examination of second (and subsequent) generation(s) of South Asian Canadian identities" (p. 7). Generally speaking, second-generation youth studies have questioned the extent to which second-generation youth have blended into Canadian society.

Recent research on non-European children of immigrants in Canada has demonstrated that a good number of second-generation youth do not feel they are completely integrated into mainstream society (Ali, 2008; Johnston, 2003; Lund, 2006; Reitz & Banerjee, 2007; Reitz & Somerville, 2004). In the Canadian multicultural landscape, a sense of denial seems to loom large:

> The contemporary collective amnesia that pretends an absence of racism in Canada is refuted by a long history of discriminatory government and corporate policies and practices. As several research participants have attested, this denial of racism and reluctance to name specific instances of racism often creates barriers to addressing problems as they arise in schools and communities. (Lund, 2006, p. 37).

In their description of negative and positive perspectives, Hebert et al. (2008) pointed out that "the negative portrayal of a large-scale study discussed earlier" can be contrasted with other

studies that show how "young people successfully negotiate and perform their 'Canadianness,' as well as their ethno-cultural identifications" (p. 63). In "Second-Generation Youth's Belief in the Myth of Canadian Multiculturalism," Ali (2008) argued that second-generation youth in Toronto do not experience racial discrimination within low-income, ethnicized communities:

> My claim is that second-generation youth who go to ethnically diverse schools and live in low income neighbourhoods (which offer affordable housing to immigrants) strongly believe in the ideology of Canadian multiculturalism. They do so because their friends and neighbours, with their varied skin colours, languages and accents, religions, and countries of origin represent a multicultural Canada to them. (p. 90)

Ali argued that they "are likely to get deeply disappointed as they uncover the myths of Canada's multiculturalism in the world beyond their ethnically concentrated schools and neighbourhoods" (p. 89). For Ali, it is the "immigrant dominated schools and neighbourhoods" that give an ostentatious semblance of social justice that second-generation youth would displace once they are out of their sheltered worlds.

The concept of multiculturalism has been employed to promote certain agendas: to justify the existence of ethnic communities in certain geographic spaces, to endorse diversity as a governing principle, to validate programs for ethnic minorities that are instituted by the government, and to inscribe the rights and duties of minority groups within the confines of a nation-state. Opposition to multiculturalism is predicated on the assumption that it inflicts a sense of divided citizenship, draws attention to differences, and disrupts social cohesion (Ali, 2008; Bannerji, 2000; Fleras & Eliot, 2002). Most of those critics have also argued that multiculturalism is a method of romanticizing the nation and keeping ethnic minority youth sheltered, even if temporarily, from reality:

> They hear their parents' narratives of gratitude to Canada for providing them greater security, equity, or access to free health care and school education, and consider themselves fortunate to have been born here. Within the confines of their micro-environment they do not experience racism because most people with whom they interact on a regular basis are also racialized immigrants or their children. The youth see their racially and ethnically diverse schools and neighbourhoods as examples of Canada's inclusive multiculturalism. (Ali, 2008, p. 91)

Moreover, Jedwab (2008) pointed out "that the assimilation effort has gone too far in suppressing the ethnic identities of immigrants and their children" (p. 33). He noted that in January 2007, "two University of Toronto sociologists contended that Canada was experiencing a serious problem in 'social integrations' arising from a purported 'racial' gap in the strength of Canadian identification amongst second generation visible minorities. The findings were based on a study using data from Statistics Canada's 2002 Ethics Diversity Survey" (p. 30). Jedwab also drew attention to a national headline in *The Globe and Mail* (2007), "How Canadian are you?" which "maintained that visible minority immigrants are slower to integrate into Canadian society than their White, European counterparts, and feel less Canadian" (p. 31). Jedwab argued that any ethnic identification as initially non-Canadian does not necessarily negatively affect one's level of attachment to Canada. He drew attention to a "segment of Canadians who instinctively believe that the strength of attachment to Canada amongst immigrants is inadequate and that the preservation of minority ethnic ties is in part responsible for this presumed condition" (p. 32). Defining one's identity as chiefly ethnic and partially national has been seen as problematic, due to the myth that the act of primarily belonging to a cultural assemblage and only secondarily to a nation-state would ultimately impede one's social integration and reflect negatively on one's

commitment to citizenship. This misconception is one of the most challenging hurdles in the path of Canadian multiculturalism.

Some second-generation studies have examined the contested relationship between ethnic identity and national allegiance: "Canadian-born children of immigrants are consistently asked where they are from, and if they identify Canadian roots their claims are contested by further questions about where they *really* come from" (Ali, 2008, p. 92). Ethnic identity "involves a subjective sense of belonging to or identification with an ethnic group across time" (Ting-Toomey, 2005, p. 215). Jedwab stated that "critics of Canadian multiculturalism insist that the preservation of minority ethnic identities undermine the sense of belonging to Canada" (2008, p. 33). He explored "whether ethnic persistence is at all responsible for a diminished sense of belonging to Canada on the part of the second generation" (2008, p. 33), and concluded that some critics "of the melting pot and the Canadian multicultural model share the view that maintaining minority ethnic attachments undercuts national identification. In other words the ethnic heritage inevitably competes with either American or Canadian identities" (2008, p. 33).

Hebert et al. (2008) examined "second generation youth's patterns in glocal spaces where transcultural modes of belonging are created and lived" in three cities – Calgary, Winnipeg, and Toronto – based on collected graphic and narrative data (p. 61). They described the ways in which their second-generation participants existed in a congenial space between ethnic and national identity:

> They share a sense of pride in their origins and emphasise their need to maintain a close-knit community and traditions, especially when experiencing racism. They take up the discourse of multiculturalism for its potentialities, and their ethnicity is not necessarily their most defining characteristic. Moreover, they have a strong sense of national

> allegiance, belonging, and civic identity as Canadians and a strong understanding of civic and political issues. (p. 63)

Similarly, Lafromboise argued that "living between two cultures is psychologically undesirable because managing the complexity of dual reference points generates ambiguity, identity confusion, and normlessness" (1993, p. 395). He remarked that the "multicultural model . . . addresses the feasibility of cultures maintaining distinct identities while individuals from one culture work with those of other cultures to serve common national or economic needs" (1993, p. 401). Lafromboise asserted that the multicultural model can build bridges between ethnic membership and national affiliation:

> The multicultural model generates the hypothesis that an individual can maintain a positive identity as a member of his or her culture of origin while simultaneously developing a positive identity by engaging in complex institutional sharing with the larger political entity comprised of other cultural groups (1993, p. 401)

In this sense, the second generation "serves as cultural brokers between their parents and a new way of living that is seen as being Canadian" (Hebert et al., 2008, p. 63).

Other studies have explored certain key components in the identification of second-generation youth with ethnic culture, such as language, ethnic community involvement, visiting country of origin, and family ties. Pigott and Kalbach (2005) argued that speaking an ethnic language underpins ethnic identity (p. 3). As they explained:

> Research reveals that ethnic connectedness declines as the use of the ethnic language decreases. For example, a person who speaks an ethnic language is thought to be more ethnically connected than one who is more assimilated . . . Thus, as use of their ethnic language declines, individuals may tend to be less ethnically connected. (p. 5)

Phinney et al. (2001) noted that maintaining ethnic language positively reinforces ethnic identity, as "it provides a link to the culture in which their parents were raised" (p. 149). Phinney inferred that engaging in ethnic community activities is key to "enhanc[ing] feelings of ethnic belonging and positive ethnic attitudes" (2002, p. 76).

Somerville and Reitz (2004) explored how second-generation youth in Canada manage to integrate into the Canadian socio-economic fabric: "What have been their experiences as they have grown up, moved through the educational system, and entered the labour market? And what do these experiences tell us about the overall integration of racial-minority groups in Canadian society?" (p. 386). They pointed to the rise of second-generation ethnic-minority youth in the second half of the twentieth century:

> Persons of non-European origin have been prominent among immigrants to Canada since the policy reforms of the 1960s, creating a new diversity in what had been – apart from Aboriginal peoples – an almost entirely European-based population. Now the children of these immigrants are growing in number. By 2001 those born in Canada constituted a substantial part 30%-of the country's so-called visible-minority 2 population of 4 million (which in turn comprises about 13.5% of the total population of about 30 million). (Somerville & Reitz, 2004, p. 386)

Substantially, I have chosen to study the experiences of second-generation ethnic-minority youth because they "may provide a clearer indication of the long-term prospects for integration of racial minorities into society than have the experiences of the immigrants themselves" (Somerville & Reitz, 2004, p. 386). Non-European immigrants may encounter other problems "such as lack of proficiency in an official language or lack of transferability of foreign-acquired educational qualifications" (2004, p. 386). Second-generation youth, having been born in Canada or arrived in Canada when they were children, will not be affected by problems such as these; therefore,

"difficulties experienced by the children of racial minority immigrants may be a truer reflection of longer-term problems in the integration of racial minorities, and in particular the existence of racial discrimination, than any disadvantages experienced by their parents" (2004, p. 386). Second-generation youth "may have a greater sense of personal investment in the country;" because, unlike the immigrant experience, theirs is "shaped from the beginning by Canadian experience" (2004, p. 387). Moreover, Somerville and Reitz (2004) have drawn attention to racial prejudice and favouritism in Canadian education:

> Educators and researchers have pointed to racial biases among teachers and in the curriculum in the primary and secondary school system, the streaming of minorities into non-academic programs, the devaluation of the role of minority parents in their children's schooling, and the lack of minority representation on school boards. Some research suggests that racist sentiment in schools causes visible minority youth to perceive that they are discriminated against. (p. 399)

One of the concerns in the literature on second-generation youth has been "the implications for the longer-term integration of racial minorities into society. How positive are the implications of psychological adjustment and educational success of the second generation?" (Somerville & Reitz, 2004, p. 409).

Portes (1997) argued that the prospects of second-generation youth can depend on the ease of transition among first-generation newcomers:

> The long-term effects of immigration for the host society depend less on the fate of first generation immigrants than on their descendants. Patterns of adaptation of the first generation set the stage for what is to come, but issues such as the continuing dominance of English, the growth of a welfare dependent population, the resilience of culturally

> distinct enclaves, and the decline or growth of ethnic intermarriages will be decided among its children or grandchildren. (p. 814)

Handa (2003) suggested that there is a general uneasiness about second-generation youth in Canada, as if their presence unsettles an imagined smooth transition from the "traditional" to the "modern" (p. 5). Likewise, Somerville and Reitz have emphatically asserted that the progress of second-generation ethnic-minority youth is determined by the experiences of their immigrant parents:

> The first immigrant cohorts and the current second generation may affect the experiences of future cohorts. Established ethnic communities with significant resources, and potentially useful relations with other groups in society, including both home and host societies, may prove useful to subsequent generations both immigrant and native-born . . . Canadian society is undergoing rapid processes of change that alter the opportunity structure, the resources of the immigrant parents, and the experiences of the second generation itself. (2004, p. 410)

In essence, examining the extent of the integration and cultural identity issues of second-generation youth entails a clear look at the cultural values and socio-political contexts that are peculiar to ethnic minority communities: "We need to avoid assuming that the second generation is context-free. Future research must critically examine how the contexts in both the sending and receiving societies can directly and indirectly shape the experiences of the new second generation in Canada" (Somerville & Reitz, 2004, p. 410).

Some studies focused on the religio-social implications of second-generation youth experiences. Byers and Tastsoglou (2008), for example, explored the lived experiences of Greek-Canadian and Jewish-Canadian young people who grew up in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Byers and Tastsoglou argued that "the experiences of minority young people living outside major diasporic

communities has a lot to teach us about what it means to be Canadian" (p. 27). Similarly, Amarasingam (2008) argued that "studies of ethnicity in Canada often neglect to incorporate religious identity" (p. 150). Additionally, Bramadat (2005) explored the importance of negotiating identity among both ethnic and religious groups; that it is "extremely valuable to ask members of ethnic and religious groups about the ways they define these identities and how they affect their lives and communities" (p. 18). As a case in point, Jama (2007) noted that "Canadian-born children of Somali immigrants, who were less than ten years old, believed they were Somali and Muslim, but did not consider themselves Black" (cited in Ali, 2008, p. 92). In effect, self-perception can be a conflation of ethnic and religious identity, and not necessarily prominently racial, as perceived by beholders: "Processes of identity ascription by mainstream society mark the body of the Canadians of colour as 'other,' and this not only serves to exclude the second generation, but also reminds them of their perpetual difference" (Brooks, 2008, p. 77). My study, therefore, contributes to the scholarly conversation on these challenges that may or may not be common to all racial minorities, and their different registers when discussing issues of literacy and cultural identity.

Teaching Postcolonial and Multicultural Literature: Significance, Literacy, and Identity

In *Multicultural Education in a Pluralistic Society* (2002), Gollnick and Chinn explained the increasing importance of culturally-oriented pedagogies:

> As more and more students from diverse backgrounds populate 21st century classrooms, and efforts mount to identify effective methods to teach these students, the need for pedagogical approaches that are culturally responsive intensifies. Today's classrooms require teachers to educate students varying in culture, language, abilities, and many other characteristics. (p. 21)

Similarly, in *Teaching Language Arts to English Language Learners*, Vásquez, Hansen, and Smith (2010) noted "that culturally responsive pedagogy is validating, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering, transformative, and emancipatory in other words, culturally responsive pedagogy necessitates that teachers tread outside their comfort circles" (p. 31). In a world that has become progressively more globalized and integrated, schools have been enriched by students who

> come from a variety of social classes and educational backgrounds, and where teachers come to the teaching of English from backgrounds in Linguistics, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, as well as Literature, it is no wonder that the notion of English as a school subject is richly problematic. (Haworth, Turner, & Whiteley, 2004, pp. 80-81)

In effect, students' identities and their studies have become intricately linked.

Promoting notions and pedagogies that are relevant to and rooted in multiculturalism and postcolonial studies would help "develop our students' knowledge of and respect for the extraordinary religious, racial, and ethnic diversity of" students, and "to enhance their familiarity with and appreciation of the literary traditions of other peoples in countries around the world. To accomplish these purposes, our literature programs need to reflect two major principles inclusiveness and the avoidance of stereotype-formation" (Stotsky, 2000, p. 98). In "Postcolonialism and Multiculturalism: Between Race and Ethnicity" (1997), Gunew explored points of difference between multiculturalism and postcolonialism: "Multiculturalism deals with theories of difference" whereas postcolonialism "to a great extent is perceived to be defined by its specific historic legacies" (p. 22). Arguably, she pointed out that multiculturalism "deals with the management . . . of contemporary geo-political diversity in former imperial centres . . . It is also increasingly a global discourse since it takes into account the flow of migrants, refugees, diasporas and their relations with nation-states" (Gunew, 1997, p. 22). A curriculum that

addresses postcolonial and multicultural notions and dynamics could provide eye-opening experiences to students who live in a world that is increasingly inclusive.

There is a general perception that postcolonial studies tend to focus more often on politics and historical contexts, and therefore could be seen as "formulaic and reductive" (Loomba, 2005, p. 4). For instance, a more contemporary and deeper understanding of what it means to be colonial is imperative. In "Perspectives on Home Ground, Foreign Territory," Collett (1997) argued:

> it is imperative to situate that foreign body of text within home ground by beginning with the personal and the particular, thereby often bringing about the realization that what was thought to be home ground is found to be a foreign territory in which delineating boundaries of self and community are explored and renegotiated. (p. 14)

Collett explained that the personal and the colonial often intersect, creating an inescapable duality: "To be a colonial means to lead a kind of double life, a kind of schizophrenic existence, and like a schizophrenic, to be largely unaware of this divided self" (1997, p. 15). She noted that the colonial is often mistakenly believed to have happened in other times and places:

> This is what it is to be colonial – not merely to be displaced, disconnected, but to believe that things of importance happen not only somewhere else in the so-called Mother Country, but also tend to have happened in the past . . . by a history that has happened somewhere else. (Collett, 1997, p. 15)

These misconceptions need to be negotiated and clarified.

A survey of secondary-route teachers in 1997 and 1998 indicated that these teachers "reported feeling unprepared to teach in classrooms with students from a wide range of ethnocultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic backgrounds" (Johnston et al., 2009). In effect, "there is a sense of crippling anxiety on the part of the teachers about teaching postcolonial

literature or towards methods of implementing postcolonial theories in the classroom" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015b, p. 2). In a Canadian context, Shariff (2008) has argued that "contemporary postcolonial texts could influence and redefine how one might conceive and teach literacies" (p. 69). Looking at the ways in which "Canada's identity as a multicultural nation was changing very rapidly," Shariff wondered "if these changes were affecting the way Canadian educators approached the Canadian curriculum" (p. 68). Johnston (2014) suggested that we should always remember "that the notion of invisibleness is often experienced much more graphically by those who are first or second-generation Canadians originating from countries outside of Europe" (2014, p. 71). Johnston (1999) asserted that students like literary works that "'have something to do with us' and that offer a social comment on the contemporary world" (p. 11). She explained that there are "few opportunities for students to connect with texts which may resonate with their own cross-cultural histories and traditions and even fewer opportunities for them to engage critically in deconstructing texts that misrepresent or exoticize the experiences of non-Western people" (1999, p. 12). This study contributes to the attempt to provide texts with which students can identify, which may also help students negotiate their own understanding of culture and identity.

Identity is a person's conception of who he or she is. It involves affiliations: the things that a person shares with a certain community, culture, religion, or ethnic background. It entails identification, distinctive attributes, and self-image: "Identity consists of preferences, styles of learning, and things we like and dislike. Identity includes ways of talking, believing, valuing, and even learning" (Conley, 2008, p. 33). Identity encompasses the kind of personality that is being developed, and choices of what to read and how to formulate opinion, which ultimately colour a person's worldview and influence the school curriculum:

> There are numerous examples in which personal identity and related literate practices conflict with school-base literacy. Gender-based practices and stereotypes can be sources of alienation and may lead to opting out of the kinds of literacy that are valued at school. (Conley, 2008, p. 34)

Allan and Miller (2005) explained that students belong to "microcultures;" that is, they tend to identify with different groups based on language, ethnicity, religion, interests, age and gender: "Our various cultures define the ways we perceive and behave in the world, as well as our beliefs and values" (p. 27). Allan and Miller argued that this sense of cultural existence may not be felt by mainstream students as much as by students who belong to minority groups:

> If you are a White American of European descent, you may not think much about your race or ethnic culture's characteristics because it has been the dominant culture in the United States. If you are an African American, Asian American, Hispanic American, Middle Eastern or Muslim American, or Native American, you probably do realize that you participate in two cultures: your ethnic culture as well as aspects of the dominant culture. (p. 27)

With the increase of diversity in classrooms, schools need to be more accommodating.

Identity is closely linked with literacy because "the individual is simply the meeting point of many, sometimes conflicting, socially and historically defined discourse" (Gee, 1998, p. 53). In this sense, classrooms can be seen as "contact zones," examples of "social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other" (Pratt, 1991, p. 34). Moreover, Freire (1970) argued that if we teach students only how to implement, adapt, and adjust, but not to invent, create, or reconstruct, students will never be able to deal with unexpected situations, whether in their personal lives or in the workplace: "An active educational method helps a person to becomes consciously aware of his context and his condition as a human being as Subject" (p. 48).

In order to "achieve critical consciousness," students and teachers must abandon the "rote, mechanical process" (p. 48) in favor of a more interactive, dynamic, and dialogical process in which students' cultural values are entertained and incorporated into the school curriculum.

This process of connecting literacy learning to students' concrete experiences can be achieved by constantly engaging with the ways students formulate knowledge based on their actual lives and their sets of values and beliefs that inform their understanding of the world around them. For instance, in her unpublished dissertation, *Conversations with Arab Graduate Students of English about Literacy: The Construction of Identity*, Jan (2006) explored the construction of identity in conversations about literacy with a group of ten Arab graduate students from a postmodern and linguistic perspective: "our observation of students lets us know how necessary it is for them to discover their own voices in an expression, assertion, and grounding of their own identity in their own experience" (p. 360). Jan further explained that "students' lives will 'intrude' into their classroom performance, their attendance, their attention, and their writing. They need to ground their writing in their lives rather than to surmount their lives before they write" (p. 361). Moreover, in her dissertation, *Voices from Within the Invisible Minority: A Phenomenological Study of School and Social Experiences of Arab American Students*, Ahmed (1998) drew attention to the importance of incorporating material that is culturally relevant to the students into the curriculum:

> Culturally relevant teaching also allows students to see their culture being present in the curriculum which in turn assists in the development of personalities that allow students from these cultures to become academically successful and still identify with this culture. Therefore, it empowers students emotionally, socially and intellectually to transcend the negative portrayals of their home culture by the dominant culture. (p. 19)

It is undeniable that creating a favourable learning environment in schools reflects a growing interest in students' interests and worldviews. Linking literacy with students' sense of identity and personal lives is a process in which the act of learning is "controlled as much by experiences students bring to the learning situation as it is by the way the information is presented" (Marshall, 1996, p. 81). The literature presented to the students should definitely reflect, and be associated with, students' lives in and out of school.

The Rise of Anglophone Arab Writers in the United States and Britain

Critics generally conceptualize Anglophone Arab literature as the historic product of three waves of immigration (Ludescher, 2006), or as the diasporic literary stream of three thematic trends (Al Maleh, 2009). Reading Anglophone-Arab writings post-9/11, a new perception appears in the offing, which is often related to Islamophobia, social justice, and anti-Arab racism. In effect, the literary corpus that emerged after 9/11 is a heterogeneous response to the new Arab/Muslim reality. Al Maleh (2009) has drawn attention to the growing number of readers and to universities that have shown interest by adding Anglophone Arab writers to their courses (p. 2). She inferred that the Arab literary output "was filtered through terror" (p. 2). In this context, can post-9/11 Anglophone Arab writers be considered as writing back to the Empire, with America and not Britain as their imagined center? Can we assume that after 9/11, it is no longer the sense of estrangement, as a by-product of exile, that drives Arabs in diaspora to write, as much as the desire to live in a hospitable country that does not identify them as unwanted outsiders? Have Anglophone Arab writers outgrown the problem of exile simply because they now encounter the more foreboding task of constructing their Arab identity against an already framed discourse? Do they need to define or defend their identity? These are overriding concerns that characterize contemporary Anglophone Arab writers, and that make their writing culturally and politically fascinating.

In "Postcolonial Theory and Modern Arabic Literature," Hassan (2002) observed a different ironic twist in terms of contextualizing Anglophone Arab literature as he explained Arab literature in English in the context of postcolonial studies:

> One of the ironies of postcolonial studies is that colonial discourse analysis began with several theorists who studied colonialism in the Arab world: Alberta Memmi (in Tunisia), Frantz Fanon (in Algeria), Edward Said (in the Levant). However, the work of those critics led to the development, in the 1980s and 1990s, of a sophisticated theoretical apparatus that rarely takes Arabic literary and cultural production into account. (p. 45)

Hassan drew attention to a scarcity of scholarly interest in Arabic literary production, although the latter has strong ties to postcolonial theory and literature of diaspora. He wondered why Anglophone Arab writers are underrepresented in academia and barely recognized as part of the American cultural and social fabric. One possible response is that Anglophone Arab literature is still categorized as a project in progress.

Salaita (2011) engaged in contextualizing Arab American literature as an autonomous academic category. Although he was quite sceptical of the legitimacy or meaningfulness of this classification, he argued that the phrase is useful "to organize college classes, professional organizations, and bookshelves" (p. 3). Another issue that arises in the discussion is how to answer the question, "what is Arab American literature?" (p. 4). This is a concern that Orfalea (2006) shared when he asked, "But how do we define an Arab American novel?" (p. 117). Similarly, Hassan and Knopf-Newman (2006) recognized risks in the categorization project, especially in terms of challenging mistaken representations of Arabs: "what are the implications of labeling a body of literature Arab American? Can cultural criticism of Arab American literature challenge the political determination of Arab American subjectivity?" (pp. 5-6). In the same way, Salaita expressed similar uneasiness, as he did not want to slip into the reductive

endeavour of categorising literature based on "cultural authenticity" (2011, p. 4). The measures that Salaita used to determine what can be regarded as Arab American literature can be extended to identify Anglophone Arab literature in general. Salaita explained that Anglophone Arab writers are those authors of Arab origin who participate in writing about Arab culture or themes related to Arabs at home or in exile: "I tend to emphasize the writer's ethnic origin in addition to the thematic content" (2011, p. 4). Likewise, Orfalea observed that, for instance, even though Samuel Hazo is an Arab-American, his novel *The Wanton Summer Air* does not qualify as Arab-American literature because "there is nothing Arab about it" (2006, p. 117). In effect, given the diverse nature and the highly thematically varied works of Anglophone Arab writers, the question of categorization can be, as Salaita explained (2011, p. 7), descriptive and not necessarily prescriptive in terms of origin and cultural or political representation.

The themes that Anglophone Arab literature explores should be pertinent to recurrent Arab issues and conflicts. Both Salaita and Orfalea seem to have agreed that an Anglophone Arab literary work is one that is written in English by an author of Arab descent with an Anglophone Arab protagonist. This strategy provides a successful working definition of Anglophone Arab literature by limiting its cultural and linguistic scope and rendering it largely exclusive.

Although Salaita's statement that Arab American literature is "an emerging subject (even now, we cannot properly call it a field)" (2011, p. 1) seemed quite disparaging, it is true to a large extent. He explained his proposition by emphasizing the time factor: "Writing produced by Americans of Arab origin is a product mainly of the twentieth century and started to develop exponentially only in the past thirty years" (2011, p. 3). However, with the addition of British, Australian, and Canadian Arab writers, Anglophone Arab literature seems to challenge reductive statements. Salaita himself acknowledged "noticing an upsurge" that rendered the book he was writing in 2005 completely outdated by the time it was published in 2007. He "counted around

seven or eight Arab American novels published" (2011, p. 2) by the time his book was published. Likewise, Nash, in *The Anglo Arab Encounter: Fiction and Autobiography by Arab Writers in English* (2007), observed a sudden surge "from the trickle of Anglophone novels by Arabs mentioned by Said in 1992, to the stream of authors and texts" (p. 14). He responded to this inquiry by providing three reasons for the rise of Anglophone Arab writings. Nash referred to the "frame of cultural translation pioneered a decade or so ago by Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett," which "instituted a systems theory of its own centred on the manner in which a literary canon in diverse cultures and periods is produced" (2007, p. 14). This strategy, introduced in *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (1992), in which the "profit motive" is supreme, has prevailed "over the ideological component that was more operative in the past" (2007, p. 14), which in turn has offered opportunities for non-canon literature to rise to the surface. The second reason that Nash provided is "the awarding of the Nobel Prize for Literature to the Egyptian writer Naguib Mahfouz in 1988" (2007, p. 15). This event, according to Allen, points "to some interesting questions regarding cultural hegemony and future directions for the Arabic novel" (Nash, 2007, p. 207). The third reason for the ascendancy of Anglophone Arab writings "is embedded in the traumatic politico-cultural history of the Arab world in the twentieth century" (Nash, 2007, p. 16). In fact, historical factors largely define Anglophone Arab literature, especially in the United States.

Since the United States is the land of the first Anglophone Arab writers, Ludescher (2006) remarked that the history of Arab American Literature could be seen as an extension of, and a reflection on, the history of Arab immigrants: "Arab American literature mirrors the patterns of Arab American history, which scholars have traditionally divided into three phases, based on the three distinct waves of Arab immigrants who came to the US" (2006, p. 93). A similar approach can be extended to include Anglophone Arab writing from other English-speaking countries. I

will, therefore, take a historical perspective to chronicle the growth of Anglophone Arab literature in Britain and the United States.

Immigration Waves and Their Literary Output

The First Phase

The first wave of Arab immigration to the United States (1880-1924) consisted of Christian immigrants who were largely from Lebanon and Syria: "Generally hardworking and law abiding, the immigrants enthusiastically embraced American values" (Ludescher, 2006, p. 93). In this context, the USA became the terrain of the first Arab-American poetry collection, *Myrtle and Myrrh* (1905); the first Anglophone Arab play, *Wajdah* (1909); and the first Anglophone Arab novel, *The Book of Khalid* (1911). These works were all written by Ameen Rihani (1876-1949), who is usually grouped with Mikhail Naimy (1889-1988) under the category of "Gibran and his Contemporaries" (Hassan, 2009, p. 66). The kind of writing that this early twentieth-century group followed, which later led to the emergence of other writers of Arab origin, is largely mystical and orientalized:

> The writing of Gibran and his contemporaries of Arab descent was a blend of messianic discourse and Sufi thought. The authors saw themselves as visionaries and assumed cosmic missions for their lives, a practice not wholly out of line with the traditional role assigned to poets in Arab culture . . . In their quest for fame and a place in mainstream American literary circles, the question asked is whether they 'orientalized' themselves to increase sales and acceptance by casting themselves in the image of charismatic genius. (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 3)

The early twentieth century Anglophone Arab writers, also called the Mahjar writers, "Arabic for 'place of immigration'" (Ludescher, 2006, p. 95), are often seen as precursors and pioneers who have successfully set the foundations for later examples. The best-known literary piece of this

period is Kahlil Gibran's *The Prophet* (1923), which has been translated into over 40 languages. Although the early writers are largely innovative, they are mostly considered historically important as road-makers, and not necessarily recognized for their creative literary production.

The Second Phase

In America. The second wave of Arab immigrants began arriving after the Second World War:

> Unlike the first wave, which was predominantly Christian, the new wave contained a significant number of Muslims. This second wave of immigrants consisted of educated, skilled professionals, who were more likely to be familiar with the nationalist ideologies that permeated the Arab world. Unlike the Syrian Christians, they staunchly identified themselves as Arabs. (Ludescher, 2006, p. 94).

Moreover, the distinctive mark between the first and the second wave of Arab immigrants is not merely religious or ideological in nature. Anglophone Arab writing experienced a shift in the second half of the twentieth century: "Whereas Arab immigrants to the USA in the 1930s and 1940s were busy settling down and assimilating, even vanishing, into mainstream American society, Anglophone Arab writing was beginning to shift its locus elsewhere" (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 6). Among the most notable authors of the second era of Anglophone Arab writings are Rima Alamuddin, author of *Spring to Summer* (1963); and Isaak Diqs, author of *A Bedouin Boyhood* (1967).

Not only did the writers of Arab descent of the 1950s through the 1970s show a remarkable difference from their predecessors in terms of the themes discussed, but their writings also reflected a geographical shift: "The writing of these authors differed greatly from that of their predecessors (Rihani, Gibran, Naimy), in that they seemed to grow more out of the European tradition than the American literary scene of the time" (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 7). Their

writings were largely influenced by the notion that "they were the subjects of cultural colonialism; imbued with love of the language of their education, fascinated by the English life-style reflected in their textbooks" (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 6). On the thematic level, their literary output was mostly concerned "with the issue of psychological and social alienation (at home and abroad) and the 'return of the exile' theme, the experience of hybridity and double consciousness" (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 8). Arab immigrants' writings have, so far, provided a kind of lover's complaint about living away from home, a notion that was philosophically indoctrinated by the Mahjar group and largely romanticized by the second generation of Arab immigrants. However, for the third wave of Arab immigrants, writing about the experience of living in diaspora becomes more sharply political.

In Britain. Unlike most Arab-American writers, who are to a large extent part of a wave of immigration, the literary corpus of Arab writers in Britain was the product of Arabs who were there on scholarships to do graduate studies (Al Maleh, 2009, p. 14). In his book *Immigrant Narratives: Orientalism and Cultural Translation in Arab American and Arab British Literature* (2011), Hassan observed differences between the history of Arabs in the United States and of those in Britain in terms of the colonial British heritage, in contrast to the American immigration laws that regulated and facilitated the arrival of waves of Arab immigrants:

> In Britain, immigration is a post-imperial phenomenon and the total immigrant population is relatively small compared to indigenes . . . Immigrants in Britain are mostly people from former British colonies in South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, with Arabs forming a tiny minority within the immigrant population. What I call here Arab British identity is . . . often overshadowed by the pan-ethnic British Muslim identity. (p. 14)

In his essay "The Anglo-Arab Encounter," Said (2000) noted the scarcity of English novels written by Arabs. He mentioned the Palestinian Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, author of *Hunters in a*

Narrow Street (1960), and the Egyptian Waguih Ghali, author of *Beer in the Snooker Club* (1964), as predecessors to Ahdaf Soueif. Hassan agreed with Said that the Anglo-Arab encounter "can be traced back to works by travellers, rather than immigrants or descendants of immigrants in Britain" (157), such as Assaad Y. Kayat's *A Voice from Lebanon* (1847) and Edward Atiyah's *An Arab Tells His Story* (1947). However, Hassan described Atiya as "the first Arab British writer" (158) with two novels that have Arabic themes: *Black Vanguard* (1952), and *Lebanon Paradise: A Novel* (1953).

The Third Phase

In America. According to Ludescher, a cluster of political upheavals sparked the third wave of immigration. The first was a change in American immigration laws, which encouraged Arab immigrants after the 1967 war: "In 1965, new liberalized immigration laws abolished the long-standing quota system. As a result, large numbers of West Bank Palestinians and Lebanese Muslims from Southern Lebanon fled to America after the 1967 war with Israel" (p. 94). The Lebanese civil war of the 1970s and 1980s increased the number of immigrants heading west. The third wave was much more politically oriented: it was charged with the spirit of defending Arab identity against malicious representations, upheld the Palestinian cause, and fought for recognition as an integral part of American society (Ludescher, 2006, pp. 94-95).

The 1980s witnessed the publication of two anthologies of Arab American literature, and the following decade saw the emergence of individual talented writers. One of these writers is Elmaz Abinader, the daughter of immigrants from Lebanon, who is a creative writer, poetess, playwright, actress, and political activist. Her collection of poems, *In the Country of My Dreams* (1999), examined her birthplace in relation to the American landscape. Others include Mohja Kahf, a Syrian-American professor of comparative literature at the University of Arkansas, whose book of poetry, *E-mails from Scheherazad*, was a finalist for the Paterson poetry prize;

Khaled Mattawa, a Libyan-American professor of English and creative writing at California State University of Northridge, author of more than three poetry volumes; and Suheir Hammad, a Palestinian-American poetess, play producer, film narrator, and political activist, who is the author of the poetry collection *Born Palestinian, Born Black* (1996). The 1990s also produced a group of controversial novelists who contributed enormously to the rise of Arab-American literature. Elmaz Abinader was one of these, with her autobiographical novel *Children of the Roojme: A Family's Journey* (1991).

Two of the most important Arab-American women writers are Leila Ahmed and Diana Abu-Jaber. The Jordanian-American Abu-Jaber's "semi-autobiographical 1993 novel *Arabian Jazz* produced a flurry of controversy because it broke an unwritten rule in the Arab American community that members should not criticize Arabs and Arab Americans in public" (Ludescher, p. 104). Ahmed is an Egyptian-American writer, whose *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America – A Woman's Journey* (1999) is a memoir based on her life between Egypt, England, and America.

In sharp contrast to the first wave's emphasis on westernizing the Arab experience and culture in exile, the third wave takes more of an assertive stance. Whereas the experience of the second generation of Arab immigrants can be considered as a departure from their predecessors in terms of thematic choices, the third wave introduced a different political agenda, exploring the questions of what it means to be an Arab and the barriers that must be overcome in order to integrate into the American social fabric.

In Britain. Ever since Edward Said remarked on the rarity of Anglo-Arab writings, there has been a surge in Anglophone Arab British literature: "The new crop of Arab writers in English engages with the west – primarily England – and in the process discrete identities, both Arab and English, are blurred, even hybridised" (Nash, 2007, p. 12). Among these writers are Jamal

Mahjoub, author of *Navigation of a Rainmaker* (1989), *Wings of Dust* (1994), and *In the Hour of Signs* (1996); and British-Palestinian Tony Hanania, author of *Homesick* (1997), *Unreal City* (1999) and *Eros Island* (2000). Whereas Mahjoub's novels create "a trilogy of writings interweaving strands of Sudanese history from age of Gordon and Mahdi, through the period of decolonisation, ending in the late eighties," Hanania's novels "are broadly concerned with Levantine settings juxtaposed alongside seeming incongruent British ones" (Nash, 2007, p. 13). On the other hand, contemporary Arab-British women writers have attracted worldwide audiences and achieved commercial success; some examples include Ahdaf Soueif and Fadia Faqir, who were both trained in English literature and creative writing.

Ahdaf Soueif is considered the "best-known contemporary Arab British writer" (Hassan, 2011, p. 159). Born in Cairo in 1950, she moved with her parents to England when she was four years old. She studied at Cairo University, did a master's degree in English literature at the American University of Cairo, and did her postgraduate studies in England, earning a PhD in linguistics at Lancaster University: "She is the author of the bestselling *The Map of Love* which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize for Fiction in 1999. Ms Soueif is also a political and cultural commentator; she writes regularly for the Guardian in London and has a weekly column for al-Shorouk in Cairo" (Ahdafsoueif.com, Info). She has published two collections of short stories, *Aisha* (1983) and *Sandpiper* (1996); and two novels, *In the Eye of the Sun* (1992) and *The Map of Love* (1999). Her *I Think of You* (2007) contains short stories from the two earlier collections. Like its counterparts in the third wave of Arab-American immigration, Soueif's work is largely autobiographical and deals with problems of assimilation without losing sight of Arab identity. Her academic background, political and journalistic engagements largely affected her works. Likewise, Fadia Faqir, a Jordanian-British author, has a similar academic background, with a master's and a PhD in creative writing; her novels also deal with living between two worlds.

Although her first novel, *Nisanit* (1988) is set in two Arab countries, the second novel, *The Pillars of Salt* (1996), "stands between East and West, and combines Arabic traditional storytelling with postmodern narrative tricks" (Suyoufie, 2008, p. 230).

The Fourth Phase

The fourth phase is not strongly linked to a wave of immigrants and asylum seekers. It is a religio-political surge rather than an immigration wave, intensely rooted in social justice, human rights and nationalism, and characterized by a negotiation of Islamic identity with a feminist twist. In this sense, the fourth wave of Arab immigrants has been more disposed to declare independence from their Arab motherlands without severing ties, by seeking to confirm their rights as Arab-American citizens. I do not consider the fourth wave a departure from the three previous historic waves, but a continuation with a distinctive marked reality of the Islamic faith and an emphasis on gender. The Christian element, a welcoming attribute that Arab immigrants shared with the culture of the host country, has receded into an historic part that is no longer prevalent: "By World War II, the Arab American community was virtually indistinguishable from the larger American community, a process that was facilitated by their shared Christian faith" (Ludescher, 2006, p. 100). Accordingly, as Majaj (2000) explained in her article "Arab Americans and the Meaning of Race," Arab immigrants of the 20th century mostly asserted their identity by resorting to the Christian factor: "In particular, they stressed their Christian identity [and] their geographical origin in the 'Holy Land'" (p. 328). Although certain novels of the last decade of the 20th century accentuated the struggles of Muslims to be accepted in western society, it is no exaggeration to say that this theme has been overshadowed by the need to assert recognition of the Arab community in diaspora with the politico-historical emphasis on Arab nationalism and unity. In the wake of the 21st century, being a Muslim has become, to say the least, a challenging attribute in the post-9/11 United States in particular and in

the rest of the western hemisphere in general. Muslim identity, especially how it determines and constructs representations of Arab women, has become an overriding concern relegating other diasporic issues into a subordinate position.

In America. The surging renaissance of interest in Arab-American literature, as Abinader noted, is the result of the rise of political consciousness and the need for solidarity: "In order to combat the proliferation of anti-Arab stereotypes, writers dedicated themselves to putting a human face on the Arab American immigrant population. Paradoxically, the events of 9/11 increased the public's interest in this heretofore ignored community" (Ludescher, 2006, p. 106). The crisis of 9/11, therefore, positioned Arab Americans "under an interrogative and suspicious light," which further concealed "the complex makeup of this diverse group from the public eye by reducing it to a handful of negative stereotypes" (Fadda-Conrey, 2006, p. 190). In other words, Arab-American literature, in particular, has experienced an awakening that characterizes its post-9/11 literary production. Majaj observed that this renaissance can be explained as an attempt to "resurrect a forgotten or suppressed cultural essence, identify precursors, and celebrate traditions. . . . Such 'awakenings,' however, suggest that the category of 'Arab American' refers to an identity still constructing itself" (1996, p. 268). This construction of identity is mirrored by a number of Anglophone Arab writers.

In 2006, Mohja Kahf returned to creative writing with her first novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. Although the novel does not tackle the event of 9/11, it deals extensively with the "numerous conflicts that exist around the process of Muslim acculturation into the United States" (Salaita, 2011, p. 33). However, Laila Halaby's two novels, *West of the Jordan* (2003) and *Once in a Promised Land* (2008), touch directly on the theme of Arabs living in post-9/11 America: "Both novels focus on a range of socio-political issues involving Arab American identity, civil liberties, racism and xenophobia and the effects of September 11, 2001, on

American society" (Salaita, 2011, p. 79). In Halaby's *Once in a Promised Land*, the picture is very bleak, and Jassim's and Salwa's lives become an uphill climb. Their final verdict is that, in the aftermath of 9/11, "wishes don't come true for Arabs in America" (p. 185). Similarly, Diana Abu-Jaber's short story "American Sweater," which she contributed to the anthology *Blue Christmas: Holiday Stories for the Rest of Us*, follows two children of an Arab immigrant family who go on a trip to the Middle East in a post-9/11 world. Evelyn Shakir's short-story collection *Remember Me to Lebanon* discusses "cultural conflict among eastern immigrants and white Americans; the foundational role of women in Arab American society; anti-Arab racism and Islamophobia; and the anxieties of maintaining an identity in the United States" (Salaita, 2011, p. 68). Shakir's short story "I've Got My Eye on You" is about an elderly white woman and thirteen-year-old Sisse, an Arab Muslim girl whose family seems very suspicious in a world following September 11, 2001. Zainab Salbi, a US citizen born in Baghdad in 1969 who moved to the US at the age of 19 following an arranged marriage, told her story in her autobiography *Between Two Worlds: Escape From Tyranny: Growing Up in the Shadow of Saddam,* which expressed her feelings of being trapped between the two worlds of Iraq and the US. Salbi is a writer, social activist, and founder and president of Women for Women International, which is dedicated to helping women survivors of war.

Other Anglophone Arab writers appeared after 9/11; however, although their writings do not necessarily deal with a world haunted by that appalling event, they still represent a struggle with an identity in the making. Among these writers are Etel Adnan, author of the poetry collection *In the Heart of the Heart of Another Country* (2008) and the short-story collection *Master of the Eclipse and Other Stories* (2009); Rabih Alameddine, author of *I the Divine: a Novel in First Chapters* (2001) and *The Hakawati* (2006); Susan Muaddi Darraj, author of *The*

Inheritance of Exile: Stories from South Philly (2007); and Randa Jarrar, author of *A Map of Home* (2008).

In Britain. Born in Cairo and raised in Sudan, Leila Aboulela moved to Scotland in 1990. She attended an American school in Khartoum, studied at Khartoum University, and earned her MPhil degree in Statistics from the London School of Economics. Aboulela has written three novels: *The Translator* (1999), *Minaret* (2005), and *Lyrics Alley* (2010), which have been translated into twelve languages. *Minaret* "is attuned to emerging female Muslim voices within the migrant communities of the West" (Nash, 2007, p. 35). In *Minaret*, Aboulela "explores the relationship between Islam, migration, and Western society. Representing the experience of a young Sudanese migrant disconnected from her traditional Muslim culture, *Minaret* is a novel framed by a dialogue between Isalm and Western secularisation" (Nash, 2007, p. 143). In a similar vein, Fadia Faqir's *The Cry of the Dove: A Novel* is about adjusting to a new country, as the protagonist Salma changes her name to Sally Ascher and struggles to redefine identity in rural Devon in England. Another British Arab writer who has appeared in the 21st century is Hisham Matar, author of *In the Country of Men* (2008) and *Anatomy of a Disappearance: A Novel* (2011).

Significantly, contemporary Anglophone Arab writing has articulated the theme of crossing borders. Writers have asserted that "ethnicity cannot be understood as a singular cultural essence invoked through nostalgia but must be explored at sites of multiple border crossings" (Majaj, 1996, p. 286). Dwelling on the importance of engendering cultural memory, Anglophone Arab writing continues to seek identity and culture validation despite the difficulty of confrontation and living between two worlds.

Anglophone Arab Writers in Canada

Although the experience of Arab immigration in Canada has been just as dramatic and historically rich as in the United States or even in Britain, the literature produced by Anglophone

Arab-Canadians is still embryonic by comparison. In her *Voices in the Desert: An Anthology of Arabic-Canadian Women Writers*, Elizabeth Dahab (2002) pointed out the origins of Arabic-Canadian literature: "There exists in Canada a literature that was born in the 1970s at the hands of first generation Canadians of Arabic descent. . . . it was produced in all genres and covers styles ranging from the realist to the post-modernist. It is written in French, English and Arabic" (pp. 7-8). However, she noted that most Arab-Canadian writing between 1963 and 1974 was Francophone, produced by Arab-Québécois:

> They write plays or documentaries for Radio-Canada or Radio-Quebec; they are radio-announcers, film script writers (Nadia Ghalem), stage-directors (Mona Latif Ghattas) or write for Les Grands Ballets Canadiens (Anne Marie Alonzo). They contribute to newspapers, literary magazines and reviews [...] At least five of them teach in some capacity at L'universite du Quebec a Montreal (UQAM). (Dahab, 2002, p. 8)

The scarcity of Anglophone Arab-Canadian writers stems from the magnitude of Arab-Canadian Francophone literature: "Roughly 15% of Arabic-Canadian literature is produced in Arabic, while 60% of it is written in French, and 25% in English" (Dahab, 2002, p. 11). However, Dahab argued that Arab-Canadian literature has further suffered from a lack of academic interest and scholarly representations:

> For instance, the 1988 'Literatures of Lesser Diffusion' conference, held at the University of Alberta, and the resultant proceedings of that conference which featured more than two dozen articles on the writings of various cultural minority groups, did not include anything on the topic except for a paper on Naim Kattan. To my knowledge, the paper I presented at the XIVth Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association (Edmonton, 1994) may have constituted the first time it was dealt with at a professional meeting. It is equally absent from the important collection entitled *Other Solitudes* (1990)

> published with the support of government agencies, notably the Department of The Secretary of State, and grouping literary extracts and interviews from eighteen representatives of Cultural Communities. (1999, p. 100)

Dahab insisted that even Baha Abu-Laban's excellent book, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: The Arabs in Canada* (1980), has failed to provide any information on Arab-Canadian literature. However, one can argue that this deficiency in scholarship was partly due to the rarity of literary texts by Arab-Canadian authors worth mentioning at the time. The first wave of Arab-Canadian Anglophone writers can be identified historically as the group that immigrated to Canada between the 1950s and the 1970s. This group includes several authors, some of whom are still active, such as Niam Kattan, an Iraqi-Jewish writer who migrated to Canada in 1954; Abla Farhoud, a Lebanese-Canadian writer who moved to Canada in the 1950s and writes in French; Saad Elkhadem, an Egyptian-Canadian writer and university professor who migrated to Canada in 1968 and writes in Arabic; Nadia Ghalem, an Algerian-Canadian writer who moved to Canada in 1965 and writes in French; and Mona Latif-Ghattas, an Egyptian-Canadian writer who moved to Canada in 1966 and writers in French. However, the majority of these writers, except for Kamal Rostom and John Asfour, wrote either in French or Arabic.

Kamal Rostom is an Egyptian-Canadian writer who immigrated to Canada in 1974. He edited the short-story collection *Arab Canadian Writing: Stories, Memoirs, and Reminiscences* (1989) and wrote the short stories collected as *The Mustache and Other Stories* (2005). John Asfour is a Lebanese-Canadian poet, novelist and professor who moved to Canada in 1968. Among his prominent works are three collections of poetry, *Land of Flowers and Guns* (1981), *Fields of My Blood* (1997), and *Blindfold* (2011). Another Arab-Canadian Anglophone writer is Marwan Hassan, a novelist of Lebanese descent who was born in London, Ontario. His *The Confusion of Stones: Two Novellas* (1989) is an example of Canadian literature of migration and

diaspora. The two stories "chronicle the Manichaean world of Canadians of Lebanese origin: the heroes are torn between their emotional and spiritual attachment to the soil of Southern Lebanon and the compulsions of survival and adjustment in the new Canadian terrain" (Malak, 1991, p. 156).

On the more contemporary scene, the two leading Arab-Canadian Anglophone novelists are Rawi Hage and Dimitri Nasrallah. Born in Lebanon in 1964, Rawi Hage is an Arab-Canadian Anglophone writer who moved to Canada in 1991. His three award-winning novels are *De Niro's Game* (2006), *Cockroach* (2008) and *Carnival* (2012). He now lives in Montreal. One of his short stories, "The Salad Lady," is anthologized in *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction* (2009). Dimitri Nasrallah is also a Lebanese-Canadian writer who was born in Lebanon in 1977 but lived in Kuwait, Greece, and Dubai before moving to Canada in 1988. He is known for his two novels, *Blackbodying* (2005) and *Niko* (2011). His short story, "The Forested Knolls of Elbasan," won the Quebec Writing Competition in 2007.

Arab Anglophone literature marks the emergence of a genre that is gaining recognition and visibility. Layla Al Maleh (2009) has argued that Anglophone Arab literature woke up one day to find itself famous or probably infamous: "The irony of Anglophone Arab Literature is that it did not gain attention or attain recognition until the world woke up one day to the horror of the infamous 9/11 and asked itself who those 'Arabs' really are" (p. 1). Yasir Suleiman (2006) pointed out that we now live in a world in which "while all Arabic literature is Arab, not all Arab literature is Arabic" (p. 16). Arab Anglophone writers choose to write in English, and not Arabic, either because they are more comfortable writing in English or they want to address a wider diasporic audience in a language they understand.

Chapter 3: Arab Diaspora

But I am the exile.
Seal me with your eyes.
Take me wherever you are—
Take me whatever you are.
Restore to me the colour of face
And the warmth of body
The light of heart and eye,
The salt of bread and rhythm,
The taste of earth…the Motherland.
Shield me with your eyes.
Take me as a relic from the mansion of sorrow.
Take me as a verse from my tragedy;
Take me as a toy, a brick from the house
So that our children will remember to return.
Mahmoud Darwish (1982)

What is Diaspora?

The interest in diaspora is evident across interdisciplinary practices (Bhabha, 1990; Gilroy, 1993; Hall, 1990; Said, 2000). The Greek word *diaspora* "derives from the verb *diaspeirein*, a compound of 'dia' (over or through) and 'speirein' (to scatter or sow)" (Kenny, 2013, p. 2). Likewise, in *Diaspora and Hybridity*, Kalra, Kaur, and Hutnyk (2005) refer to the Greek origin of the term *diaspora*: "In a conventional mode . . . diaspora is related to the Greek gardening tradition (as is hybridity), referring simply to the scattering of seeds and implying some description of dispersal" (p. 9). The etymological origin, therefore, betrays a sense of shifting locations and instability. In *Global Diaspora: An Introduction*, Cohen (1997) also comments on the collective meaning of diaspora:

> The word 'diaspora' is derived from the Greek verb *speiro* (to sow) and the preposition *dia* (over) . . . Diaspora signified a collective trauma, a banishment, where one dreamed of home but lived in exile. Other peoples abroad who have also maintained strong collective

> identities have, in recent years, defined themselves as diasporic, though they were neither active agents of colonization nor passive victims of persecution. (p. ix)

As Kenny (2013) pointed out, "In all its various uses, diaspora has something to do with scattering and dispersal" (p. 2). The term *diaspora* has been used to suggest a very specific meaning, "referring principally to the dispersal and exile of the Jews. In the twentieth century, the meaning of the term gradually expanded to cover the involuntary dispersal of other populations, especially Armenians and people of African descent" (Kenny, 2013, p. 1). However, over the past thirty years or so, the term has extensively subsumed within its theoretical framework many forms of immigration and home/homeland imaginaries: "Diaspora is best approached not as a social entity that can be measured but as an idea that helps explain the world migration creates" (Kenny, 2013, p. 1).

Shain (1994) has usefully elaborated on the concept of diaspora, remarking that US diasporas encompass "all hyphenated or ethnic Americans who attempt to influence American policy toward their homeland" (1994, p. 83). These diasporas are "transnational collectivities whose members maintain some real or symbolic affinity (ethnocultural, religious, racial, or national) with their countries of origin" (Shain, 1994, p. 83). In effect, this study endorses an encompassing and inclusive understanding of diaspora, such as that similarly suggested by Brubaker (2005). Brubaker argued that diaspora consists of three core elements: "dispersion," "homeland," and "boundary maintenance" (p. 5). Diaspora, in this sense, operates within a particular paradigm in which the issue of displacement is the general lexicon:

> Using diaspora to understand migration, then, does not mean that one must remain trapped within the theological confines of the original Jewish model . . . Throughout history, migrants of many different kinds have experienced their migration as coercive, made connections with their kinsmen abroad, and dreamed of returning to a homeland.

> Scholars seeking to explain the experience of these migrants can find in diaspora an analytical framework of broad historical and cultural range. (Kenny, 2013, p. 6)

In its inaugural issue, the journal *Diaspora* "equated diaspora with population dispersal in general and urged that a concept previously defined to the Jewish, Greek, Armenian, and African cases extended to cover a much wider 'semantic domain' that included such terms as immigrant, refugee, guest-worker, exile community, and ethnic community" (Kenny, 2013, p. 10). Diaspora, therefore, continues to lend itself as a wide-ranging narrative that is always in flux.

The impact of diaspora has been considered crucial to the process of identity formation and the shaping of the personalities of ethnic individuals. Hall (1990), for instance, stressed the ancestral aspect of diasporic identities. In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Hall (1990) argued in favor of recognizing a cultural and ethnic structure of common articulations and connections. Hall stressed that in identity formation, there is always an underlying sense of shared culture, "a sort of collective 'one true self,'" which serves as a frame of reference that brings a semblance of order to "the shifting divisions and vicissitudes" (p. 223) which define diasporic realities. Likewise, Fulani (2004) elaborated on "the crucial function of articulation in establishing the linkages that bind the scattered parts of the diaspora" (p. 6). Fulani pointed out that diaspora is a process of creolized articulations: "Thus, as process, diaspora, and therefore diasporic identities, are continuously being reshaped by the movement of people through migration and travel and constantly re-imagined though political struggle, exchange of ideas and through cultural production" (p. 6). Diasporic identities may exemplify the condition of being racked between two incompatible cultures. They may either objectify an urgency to assert a hybrid personality or feel pressed to blend into mainstream singularity. The dilemma of the foreigner, the immigrant, the exiled and the member of an ethnic minor community is that of the battle between authenticity and foreignness in diaspora.

Negotiating Arab Identity in Diaspora

This study explores how Arab-Canadian students negotiate a sense of double consciousness as they interpret short stories written by Anglophone Arab writers. Academic studies often make the link between diaspora and identity, especially in the sense of how the former determines the formation of the latter (Hall, 1990; Gilroy, 1993). It is also referred to as a theoretical framework that explores "linkages" between the cultures of the receiving and the sending countries. Scott (1999) argued that diaspora is a fragmentary sequence of "embodied disputes," which is marked by "difference and contingent linkages" (p. 123). The linkage of diaspora to identity reveals two narratives that impact the condition of personality formation: "In this emphasis, two kinds of movements have come to occupy normative status - the return to roots narrative, based on a quest for identity, and the journey of the native from the periphery to the centers" (Goyal, 2003, p. 3). Moreover, Cohen (1997) alluded to a semantic shift in what constitutes the notion of diaspora. The romantic meaning gives way to the more sordid reality and the complexities of what the defining aspects of diaspora can be, "as this term, once a rather romantic, mystical notion . . . is increasingly used by academics and sometimes even by the media to refer simply to the mass migration of individuals from their homelands" (Moghissi, Rahnema, & Goodman, 2009, p. 3). The result is that "the voluntary or involuntary character of the departure seems to have lost its significance. In the process, the question of who is and who is not a 'member of diaspora' or is 'in diaspora' has become contested terrain" (p. 3). The notion of diaspora can, therefore, be widely used as long as the designated members share "common features or contextual applicability" (Moghissi, Rahnema, & Goodman, 2009, p. 3) such as displacement, being caught between two worlds, and construction of new homelands.

Apropos, I will constantly refer to the condition of Arabs who live in Canada or in any other non-Arab country as diaspora: "Diaspora may commonly evoke displacement, but

particular communities and individuals resist being subsumed into a single narrative; instead, they demand that we address their cultural, historical, and ideological specificities" (Kamboureli, 2009, p. vii). The Arab community, to a great extent, reflects this sense of diasporic condition. In "Lebanese Identities: Between Cities, Nations and Trans-nations," Humphrey (2004) argued that diaspora "implies a very conventional anthropological perspective on social life, the persistence of tradition (identity) despite its displacement from place of origin . . . It is even used as a metaphor for the existential condition of post modernity to refer to uncertainty, displacement and fragmented identity" (p. 1-2). Humphrey associated diaspora with "cultural survival across generations" in the sense that diaspora signifies "resilience of tradition" and does not necessarily exercise a homogenizing impact, especially since the term invokes notions of exile, hybridity, and identity loss across and among generations (p. 2). Humphrey argued that diasporic feelings are not peculiar to first-generation immigrants, due to the introduction of modern, global technologies that "have created capacity to produce and disseminate local culture globally through video, radio, television broadcasts and the internet. These communications technologies create the possibility of projecting local diaspora realities – exile politics, cultural hybridity or national nostalgia – as an integral part of a transnational cultural identity" (p. 3). The result of this linguistic, cultural, and familial exposure to the homeland is a diasporic feeling that is often captured by first-generation immigrants. This study, therefore, explores how second-generation Arab youth negotiate similar feelings of displacement as they try to reconcile their ethnic background with mainstream society.

Studying how "second-generation participants take up new belongings in transcultural modes, either by creating identifications beyond and across boundaries . . . [or by] disregarding boundaries," Hebert et al. (2008) examined the story of one of the participants in their study on second-generation youth in Calgary, Lue Rue, a Christian Arab and second-generation female of

Lebanese/Syrian origin, declared herself a proud Canadian because "it accepts me in its country, especially because I am not from here. It accepted me for being Lebanese" (Hebert, p. 75). The authors pointed out Lue Rue's favourable memories of the city of Beirut:

> Beirut is her preferred place outside Calgary, without further explanation. In her photoscape, she stresses the importance of her computer in her room as internet makes everything accessible. Her cultural collage combines many elements of "Leb Pride:" flags from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan; a symbol of a Christian cross; the crescent moon and star symbol associated with Islam, connected with a + symbol, as well as pictures of Arab celebrities, the term "romance," a picture of some roses, and a picture of two hearts and rings. (Hebert et al., 2008, p. 75)

When asked how her Lebanese/Syrian/Middle East origins influenced the collage she designed, an activity that was part of the study in which she participated, she responded by positively affirming her cultural ties:

> I think that whole area is one and it will always be one, no matter whatever is going on. . . but we will always be one language, same culture, same people, like for me when people say that I am Lebanese, like, yeah, I am Lebanese, but I am Syrian, too, and I can say I am Syrian, I am Jordan, I am Lebanese, I can say whatever because I think they are all my people, they are all one. (Hebert et al., 2008, p. 76)

However, not all Arab youth have expressed similar congenial responses. In fact, others have assertively shown serious concerns about how their Arab identity is perceived and how they respond accordingly.

In *Diaspora by Design: Muslim Immigrants in Canada and Beyond*, Moghissi, Rahnema, and Goodman (2009) spoke of the challenges that youth face as they live between two cultures: "Muslim youths . . . are facing many of the structural barriers that were not expected to impede

their progress, as they had that of their parents, towards a productive and dignified life as equal citizens" (p. 111). This argument can be fairly extended to include Arab youth who face similar challenges because of either being Arab or mistaken to be Muslim. In "Being Arab: Growing Up Canadian," Sharkawi (2006) explained how being a second generation Arab-Canadian forced her to question her identity and look at the way in which society questioned her identity: "It was this fact: that I was an Arab living in Canada, which led me to have to explain over and over again my identity and what it was to be an Arab" (Zabel, p. 211). She said that she "dreaded the horrid question, 'Where are you from?'" and she hated the response she often received: "'Oh . . . you don't look Arab'" (Zabel, p. 211). When a high-school student told her, "you don't look Arab," she asked him what he meant; shockingly, he said, "it was because I seemed 'normal' and was pretty, didn't have an accent, and didn't wear a scarf" (p. 211). In response, Rula had to explain that she grew up in Canada and she was a Christian Arab. The resulting "misunderstanding of culture and prevalent stereotypes have led to a confused Arab identity. Fear has led to people suppressing their Arab identity" (cited in Satzewich & Wong, p. 223). In reaction to similar experiences, Arabs who find themselves trapped in this already-framed racial discourse tend to distance themselves from being identified as either Arab or Muslim. The tendency to measure one's self-worth through someone else's gaze is a manifestation of the Duboisian double consciousness.

This perception of identity, Du Bois explained, is the result of the unreceptive conditions that the black community has suffered: this kind of "two-ness," which "is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the type of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (1903, p. 12). Following the traces of Du Bois and Fanon, Gilroy's conception of the black Atlantic is an attempt to "transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and

national peculiarity" (p. 19). He examined tensions and affiliations between race and western discourse "to oppose ideas such as ethnic or 'racial' particularism and nationalism on the grounds that they are falsifications" (McLeod, 2000, p. 229). In fact, Blake emphasized "the centrality of racism to modern politics" in Gilroy's conception of colonial history and racism. Blake illustrated how Gilroy's argument on African American history in diaspora can be extended to include the diasporic experiences of other races or ethnic communities:

> The demonization of Arabs as 'towel-heads' is clear enough as an example of the way in which this legacy is taken up once again in popular culture; on the other hand, the acts of those prepared to serve as 'human shields' in places like Gaza is a sign that a different emphasis, a humanist cosmopolitanism worlds away from the dogmas of 'identity politics' and state power, is possible. (p. 124)

Moreover, Gilroy's conception of double consciousness accentuates the diasporic overtones because it is "differentiated from (chosen) exile or migration" (Blake, 2007, p. 122). For Gilroy, not only does that concept explore the "various struggles towards emancipation, autonomy, and citizenship," but it also "provides a means to re-examine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory" (p. 16). The result is a condition of dual consciousness, a state that describes a person who is "neither being fully assimilated to the new culture nor able to fully preserve the culture of origin. Because of this, diasporic people so often transform the cultures they have been made to enter" (Blake, p. 122). In this context, double consciousness can be extended to describe the different experiences of races, generations, and minor ethnic communities in diaspora.

Drawing on Du Bois's notion of 'double consciousness,' Bazian (2004; 2013) explored the Duboisian notion as a way to examine Islam today. Bazian argued that 'double consciousness' becomes an enforced mindset that "creates a Muslim identity that is constantly at

odds with the 'true' self that has to be suppressed because the world it belonged to no longer exists, and only traces of negations are allowed to persist" (2013). In this context, Arab identities in diaspora, subject to racial profiling (Abraham, Howell, & Shryock, 2011; Jamal & Naber, 2008), are constructed to replicate the colonized subjects. In effect, Arabs in diaspora are subjected to a process of internalization in which their ethnic diasporic identity becomes informed by animosity, resentment and insurmountable difference.

In an op-ed for al-Jazeera English, Bazian (2013) argued that colonialism constructs Muslim identity the way slavery and racial denigration once informed the consciousness of the black folk:

> Muslim's double consciousness was formed in the colonial period and continues in the post-colonial state . . . What colonisation has done was to construct an external objectified Islam and Muslim, an ideal inferior and a static pre-modern Other through which the Eurocentric colonial 'modernisation' project can be rationalised in the Muslim world. (para. 6)

The colonial discourse is a Eurocentric enterprise that portrays the Other as frozen in time and, therefore, as prehistoric and primitive: "The Muslim subject in colonial discourse is ahistorical, static and rationally incapacitated so as to legitimise intervention and disruption of the supposed 'normal' and persistent 'backwardness'" (Bazian, 2013, para. 7). As a result of that rhetoric of subjugation, "Muslims began to see themselves through the constructed colonial lens . . . an objectified external construct" (Bazian, 2013, para. 9) that Muslims have internalized, which in particular mirrors how Du Bois perceives 'double consciousness' as "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 12). Arabs in diaspora, therefore, often find themselves in a position in which they have to subvert the colonial gaze that

constantly views and confines them within an interrogative mode that deprives them of any attitude of positive cultural assertions.

Kaldas and Mattawa, editors of *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction* (2003), noted that Arab-American identity faces new challenges in the wake of 9/11 as the Arab community itself has become visible "for the larger American public's awareness . . . Arab Americans could not try to engage the world and remain anonymous" (p. xiii). In *Homeland Insecurity: The Arab American and Muslim American Experience After 9/11*, Cainkar (2009) referred to the "loss of personal privacy" as one manifestation of Arab double consciousness (p. 144). Cainkar stated, "Arab Muslims described conducting routine activities, such as loading their car trunks or checking their mail, with the sense that they might be watched" (p. 144). Naber (2006) referred to Du Bois's notion of double consciousness as "internment of the psyche," which is self-inflicted because "the disciplinary effects of the state penetrate everyday actions" (qtd. in Cainkar, 2009, p. 144). The constant awareness that one is being watched and monitored intensifies the Duboisian sense of exterior identity in which "looking at one's self through the eyes of others" (Du Bois, 1902, p. 12) is now enacted by state regulations. The personal now becomes politicized, and the private sphere is transformed into a site of public surveillance. In this context, Bazian (2004) introduced the notion of "Virtual Internment" to Arab collective consciousness. He defined this idea as "a quasi-visible but repressive, intimidating, and confining structure employed by the US administration and its allies on a global scale against individuals, communities, and organizations deemed unsupportive, and possibly hostile, in their worldview toward American and 'global' interests" (p. 5-6). Bazian argued that his notion of Virtual Internment "is based on guilt by association and is very much supported by existing xenophobic tendencies in our society directed presently at Arabs and Muslims but at times inclusive of everyone possessing a darker complexion" (p. 6). Enforcing

this panoptic apparatus produces "a mental condition, [which] begins to internalize the process and acts according to what is expected . . . collectively. They become prisoners of their own minds" (Bazian, 2004, p. 22). In this sense, double consciousness constructs what Cainkar called "a psychological jail" (2009, p. 145), as it locks up that ethnic community within an already framed discourse.

Du Bois's notion is a representation of those individuals who cannot subscribe to mainstream society because of an impeding cultural or ethnic difference, and therefore internalize a subordinating self-identification. As a result, the Duboisian 'twoness' "can be a hindrance" (Smith, 2008, p. 7). The situation that generates this kind of split is born out of the condition of xenophobia that some Arabs confront in diaspora. Consequently, double consciousness

> brings about its own particular type of damage, often articulated as a loss of self-confidence [as it refers] to connections and disconnections – being connected to terrorism and disconnected from the community around them, and being forced to take the role of the vigilant 'other' when looking at themselves. (Cainkar, 2009, p. 144)

One Arab-American woman, a participant in a study of the Arab-American and Muslim-American experience after 9/11, made a direct connection to a shared burden between the African-Americans and Arabs: "I feel like there's this big burden that I'm carrying around. You know that book *Black Man's Burden*? I don't know who wrote it, but it's kind of like this big burden that you carry around with you wherever you go – that you are an Arab" (Cainkar, 2009, p. 145). Likewise, in an interview with Judith Gabriel, Edward Said expressed a similar sense of estrangement: "I don't know a single Arab or Muslim American who does not now feel he or she belongs to the enemy camp and that being in the United States at this moment provides us with an especially unpleasant experience of alienation and widespread, quite specifically targeted hostility" (2002, p. 23). Said's sense of psychological alienation resonates with Du Bois's notion

of "double consciousness" (Abraham, Howell, & Shryock, p. 82). In fact, Abraham, Howell, and Shryock argued that "the transnational and multicultural pluralism that became available to minority populations in the United States in the final decade of the twentieth century . . . [has] never been fully extended to the Arabs and Muslims in America . . . for reasons deeply embedded in popular religious sentiment and the logic of US foreign policy in the Middle East" (p. 82). Du Bois's description of the condition of African-Americans as torn by "twoness," which inflicts "a peculiar wrenching of the soul, a peculiar sense of doubt and bewilderment" reverberates with the sense of displacement and anxiety expressed by Arab Muslims as an ethnic minor community in diaspora.

"It's not pleasant being Arab these days," wrote the Lebanese journalist Samir Kassir in 2004; he was assassinated just a year later. Kassir described "feelings of persecution for some, self-hatred for others; a deep disquiet pervades the Arab world;" he further remarked that no Arab seems to "be immune to the enveloping sense of malaise since a certain September 11" (p. xi). Kassir argued that the word 'Arab' itself "is so impoverished a word that it's reduced in places to a mere ethnic label with overtones of censure" (p. xi). Kassir's concerns about the presence of a "malaise" that menaces Arab identity were legitimate: it is a "malaise" that renders the ethnic identity of Arabs as "impoverished" and always destitute; an ethnic identity that is plagued with a "doubleness" that is "less a 'both/and' and more a 'neither just this/nor just that" (Dayal, 1996, p. 47). In a post- 9/11 world, double consciousness for Arabs in diaspora moves beyond the sense of duality experienced by other immigrants: "Like all immigrant groups, Arab-Americans have a sense of doubleness, feeling torn between their parents' traditions and their new culture" (Smith, 2003). Doubleness for Arabs in diaspora has political and ethnic implications that resonate beyond the sheer notion of nostalgia and displaced homes. As Dayal has argued, "diasporic double consciousness" has become a defining aspect as "it affords an interstitial perspective . . .

that allows for the emergence of excessive and differential meanings of belonging" (1996, p. 47). I reiterate that I have used 'double consciousness' here in the restricted sense in which Du Bois defined it as "this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity' (1902, pp. 16-17). It is a doubleness that negates the true self of the individual and dictates a certain exterior locus of identity that the individual is expected to emulate in order to escape the hegemonic gaze. Arabs in diaspora seem to dwell in that uncomfortable space of the antagonized ethnic minority, which objectifies doubleness as a regulated process that effaces any attempt to capture the authentic self, forcing the internalization of foreignness. I argue therefore that, the notion of double-consciousness peculiar to the African dispersion can be used to negotiate the condition of most Arabs in diaspora. Although connections with the Arab ties, whether emotional or cultural, vary largely, the politicized aspect of double-consciousness remains salient (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015d, p. 54). One of the aims of this study is to attempt to conceptualize the identity of Arabs in Canada and examine the intricacies of living between home and here, or then and now.

Chapter 4: The Conceptual Framework:

Postcolonial Theory and the Duboisian Double Consciousness

"There came a moment when I felt I had been transformed in her eyes into a naked, primitive creature, a spear in one hand and arrows in the other, hunting elephants and lions in the jungles." . . . "What race are you?" She asked me. "Are you African or Asian?"
"I'm like Othello – Arab-African," I said to her.
Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (1969, p. 33)

Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial theory examines the influences of colonial discourses on the culture, history, identity and the literature of the colonized; it further explores the ways in which the Western hegemonic monopoly over knowledge and ideas influences the people in diaspora who come from countries that used to be part of the Empire. Postcolonialism is closely related to the effects of imperialism, "usually understood as a strategy whereby a state aims to extend its control forcibly beyond its own borders over other states and peoples;" however, "it should be remembered that such control is usually not military but economic and cultural" (Habib, 2005, p. 737). Postcolonial theory is substantially relevant to this study in terms of its critique of universalism, its ties to politics of self-determination and its conceptualization of diasporic condition.

The Universalism of the Western Canon

Barry (2002) argued that postcolonial theory undermines "the universalist claim once made on behalf of literature by liberal humanist critics . . . that great literature has a timeless and universal significance" (p. 192). The result of this generalizing claim is a disregard for "cultural, social, regional, and national differences in experience and outlook, preferring instead to judge all literature by a single, supposedly 'universal', standard" (Barry, 2002, p. 192). Postcolonial literary criticism tends to reject this claim of the universal value of Western literature. It refuses

to elevate European and American literature and relegate the literatures of other languages and cultures to secondary, subordinate positions.

In his seminal book *Orientalism* (1978), Said, a Palestinian-American literary and cultural theorist, discussed how the Eurocentric mindset advanced the superiority of Western history and asserted the inferiority of what is not. Said argued that the Western discourse of the conceptual construction of the East was highly problematic: it "constructed the East as sensual, lazy, exotic, irrational, cruel, promiscuous, seductive, inscrutable, dishonest, mystical, superstitious, primitive, ruled by emotion, and as a sink of despotism at the margins of the world where all people are alike" (Parker, 2008, p. 248). According to Said, the West has defined itself in opposition to that already framed discourse of the Orient. Postcolonial thinkers agree that traces of this Orientalism continue to inform the Anglo-American mentality of Islam and the Arabs in general. In this context, the universality of Western cultural productions is ensured because of the assumed and unquestionable superiority of those productions. Not only does postcolonial literature seek to demonstrate the inability of the Western canon to "empathise across boundaries of cultural and ethnic difference," but it also shows "how such literature is often evasively and crucially silent on matters concerned with colonisation and imperialism" (Barry, 2002, p. 199). In effect, reading postcolonial and multicultural literature becomes pivotal in addressing issues of marginality, the human condition under contradictory circumstances, and cultural resistance.

Political Self-Determination

Notions generated by postcolonial theory began to be recognized in the aftermath of the introduction of concepts such as race and the rise of civil rights movements in the first half of the twentieth century: "African-American and French-speaking writers from Africa and the Caribbean began to define themselves and their culture in their own terms" (Bertens, 2001, p. 193). As a result, my study capitalizes on the idea that postcoloniality is historically situated and

inherently embedded within race and identity politics: “This project of cultural self-definition developed alongside the project of political self-determinations that we find in the American Civil Rights movement and in the African and Caribbean demand for political independence and nationhood” (Bertens, 2001, p. 193). In this sense, postcolonial theory provides a link between the history of the African-American fight for freedom and justice and its present-day resonance, considering the continuing struggle of many marginalized groups to retain their voices and be recognized in terms of equal rights and opportunities, or find themselves trapped against an already framed discourse.

According to Frantz Fanon, an influential 20th century psychiatrist and thinker from Martinique, the colonial world continues to exist in the ways individuals respond to historical narratives or react to similar situations: “The problem of colonialism includes not only the interrelations of objective historical conditions but also the human attitudes toward these conditions” (1986, p. 84). The colonial world continues to inform subjectivity and inculcate certain worldviews, and this dynamic generates a desire to investigate “the cultural and psychological effects of colonialism as they were experienced by those subjected to them” but also for those who experience a shade of that unpleasant condition in which one’s roots are severed and one’s familiar world is fractured. Du Bois wondered, “How does it feel to be a problem?” (1903, p. 1); Young (2001) further restated Du Bois’s question within a postcolonial frame:

> How does it feel to have your culture devalued and appropriated, your language debased into a vernacular, detached from all forms of power which are accessible and enacted only in a foreign tongue? What was it like to be a colonial subject? How does it feel today to be a ‘postcolonial subject’, whether in the three continents or as part of an immigrant minority in a dominant western culture? (p. 274)

The dissipation of cultural ties, the debasement of the native language into a foreign tongue, the creation of a phantom home, and the relinquishing of emotional bonds are contemporary issues that create dissonance: “This combination of external and internal, this dialectical juxtaposition of the objective with the subjective, of seeing yourself as a subject who is also an object, amounts to what Du Bois described as ‘double consciousness’” (Young, 2001, p. 274). From Du Bois to Fanon, to Gilroy, Said, and Bhabha, postcoloniality provides a locus of engagement with race, transnational cultures and self-determination.

The Diasporic Condition

The term *hybridity* evokes a certain vocabulary that may include notions of ambivalence, being caught between two worlds, positioning, displacement and double consciousness. In *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (1995), Young addressed the general but lasting perception that hybridity is antonymic to purity: “The word ‘hybrid’ has developed from biological and botanical origins: in Latin it meant the offspring of a tame sow and a wild boar, and hence, as the OED puts it, ‘of human parents of different races, half-breed’” (p. 6). Young also referred to the racial context in which the term was used in the Victorian era, in which different races imply different species: “Today, therefore, in reinvoking this concept, we are utilizing the vocabulary of the Victorian extreme right as much as the notion of an organic process of the grafting of diversity into singularity” (p. 10). Notably, critics and scholars have offered different ways of conceptualizing hybridity, especially in relation to colonialism and diaspora.

In *The Location of Culture* (1994), Bhabha spoke of hybridity as a product of colonization that dictates and implies resistance: “Hybridity is the sign of the productivity of colonial power, its shifting forces and fixities; it is the name for the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal” (p. 112). Bhabha strongly argued that hybridity and liminality are

marks of colonial desire and authority; and yet, paradoxically, hybridity is essentially an opportunity to transcend the conception of fixed identities. By analogy, Bhabha compared this space of change and transcendence to a "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, presents 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. (p. 4)

Arguably, identities that are bound to grow within the strict confines of a certain culture are trapped in the "thither" of "this interstitial passage." These types of identity can be called the "fallbacks;" they are the vital culture-preservers. Drawing on Berry's conceptualization of acculturation, those are the separatists who reject the culture of the host country (1997, p. 10). When their cultural assertions are challenged, they choose to fall back on what they know best, not necessarily because their creed is capriciously incompatible with the new culture, but rather due to the extremely stressful situation, which can be psychologically unbearable. In effect, to counter that feeling of identity disruption, which could be caused by feelings of cultural displacement or geopolitical dislocation, they recoil and hold on to what they know best. Some of these familiar things include the "thither of the stairwell," the shores of their homelands across the Atlantic, their first language, first home, first generation, and the sight of the familiar which dismisses any new sites as foreign and triggers resistance to change. The crossing of cultural boundaries happens only quantitatively while identity remains primordial, settling in a pre-passage locus.

On the other hand, there are the identity-shifters, the individuals who believe that the destination is more important than the journey. They are subscribers to strategies of assimilation, which is one of the modes of acculturation in which the host culture becomes the defining aspect of one's identity (Berry, 1997, p. 10). They tactfully utilize what Bhabha described as "the connective tissue" (1994, p. 4), not as an additional layer that underpins a multicultural society, but as new skin that provides an advantage in their pursuit to mingle seamlessly with the upper, or mainstream, culture. They are the pragmatists who seek Bhabha's "hither" (1994, p. 4) because the present is all that matters and the designated "imposed hierarchy" seems quite appealing and non-threatening, attainable and not intrusive. The shifter is a violator of traditions, a "boundary breaker, boundary crosser and shape shifter [who] defies essentialism and imposed norms" and in diaspora "subvert[s] fixed attachments to national narratives or essentialist notions of return to 'origins'" (Shackleton, 2008, p. 191). Identity-shifters generally tend to sever ties with their countries of origin, the reasons for which include being emotionally detached, seeing nothing relevant in that culture to their lifestyle, or believing that belonging to that culture by assuming a hybrid identity would hinder rather than help assimilation in their new country. For some identity-shifters, double identity, a consciousness of living between two worlds or of having ties to any other non-mainstream culture, could be menacing and should be eliminated or ignored. Hybridity could also be seen as a sign of an embedded foreign aspect that could hinder rather than help assimilation.

In an interview titled "Third Space," Bhabha elaborated on his understanding of hybridity as a condition that breeds a third space:

> We see that all forms of culture are continually in a process of hybridity. But 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. (1990, p. 211)

The "enabling" aspect of "third space" which is born out of hybridity is central to Bhabha: it is the performative and productive agency that determines the nature of identity. It is largely defined in terms of functionality; and therefore, from Bhabha's point of view, the meaning of hybridity hardly escapes its colonial or postcolonial implications and continues to be highly politicized and speculative. Hybridity becomes a strategic way in which to subvert colonial domination. It is a sign that proves that, over time, colonial authority loses its grip over what it introduces into the indigenous culture. Bhabha explored hybridity as "a problematic representation . . . that reverses the effects of the colonist disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority" (p. 156). Hybridity, in this context, is bound to be interpreted within the colonial discourse and, arguably, remains distantly relevant to the lexicon of diaspora.

Given my focus on the diasporic perspective, I prefer to use the term *double consciousness* as a distinctive cultural characteristic that could inform the formation of diasporic identity rather than the term *hybridity*, which often seems to be used within the context of colonial intervention and intrusion on an indigenous culture. From a diasporic perspective, the use of hybridity seems to be quite sporadic. In *Some Thoughts on Hybrid Identity: Dictionaries, Identities and "Are We All Hybrids?"*, Sandset (2011), a Norwegian scholar, addressed the issue of vagueness when loosely using the term *hybridity*:

> I'm not trying to debunk hybridity as a marker for identity, but rather would like to point to the aspects of hybridity that seem the most troublesome. If a hybrid position is formed between two or more cultures, then it would seem that hybridity is not just a term

> reserved for postcolonialism (as it has often been associated with), nor for that matter a multicultural paradigm . . . Where do you draw the line? At what point are you a 'cultural' hybrid? Is there a line between cultures? And if so, how do you locate that line? The difficulties of gaining hold of a 'true' hybrid becomes even more difficult if we throw racial and ethnic markers in there as well. Is a person who solely identifies with "black aesthetics and culture," but is of both Native American and African American descent a hybrid or "just" African American? Can a person be said to have a hybrid identity if they only identify with one culture? What exactly defines a hybrid in such a case?

Therefore, I speak here of identities that can be subsumed within the praxis of double consciousness; the presence of double cultural spaces that represent two opposing boundaries that map out Bhabha's "hither and thither" (1994, p. 4) of identity geopolitics. However, the existence of individuals who are able to live congenially between two not necessarily congruous worlds implies a merging consciousness and an ultimate sense of reconciliation. I am, therefore, interested in that performative "third space" that is born, not out of hybridity as introduced by Bhabha, but out of a sense of double consciousness as introduced by Du Bois, who also spoke of the "hither and thither" of identity formation:

> "The black man's turning hither and thither in hesitant and doubtful striving has often made his very strength to lose effectiveness, to seem like absence of power, like weakness. And yet it is not weakness, - it is the contradiction of double aims. (p. 9)

It is, therefore, the "double-aimed struggle" (p. 9) that generates a "third space" of a performative, cultural space that drives this study.

The Duboisian Double Consciousness

The Case of the Black Folk

In the fourteen essays that comprise *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Du Bois addressed the issue of identity in terms of double consciousness. The book was published when Du Bois was "thirty-five and working as an economics and history teacher at Atlanta University" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 3). The concept of double consciousness was first outlined "in the essay titled 'Of Our Spiritual Strivings' from Du Bois's 1897 *Atlantic* magazine essay, 'Strivings of the Negro People'" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 3). According to Du Bois, individuals who have this kind of awareness experience a kind of "two-ness" as two identities struggle to occupy one space:

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the type of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. (1903, p. 12)

This view of the duality that constitutes identity formation, Du Bois eloquently explained, is the result of the hostile environment to which the black community is subjected by mainstream white society.

Du Bois argued that because African Americans are forced to accept their mistakenly-assumed inferiority, they internalize a dual understanding of their identity as both American citizens and yet largely subordinated people. In this sense, double consciousness, for Du Bois, is the result of a position in which the locus of one's identity becomes external to the perceiver. In other words, Du Bois described the dilemma of the African American as trapped in an already framed discourse in which they value themselves the way others, specifically the white racial

hierarchy, value them. In effect, self-consciousness becomes predicated on approval from others. By stressing the presence of "this seeking to satisfy two unreconciled ideals" (1903, p. 13), Du Bois pointed out a shared delusion that dictates a dysfunctional perception of identity among African Americans, which they eventually need to transcend.

Why Duboisian Double Consciousness?

It is worth noticing that Du Bois attempted to present the black American identity in opposition to "19th century racial understanding of black life, which suggested that blacks were racially inferior to whites and had no culture or consciousness aside from that acquired through their contact with 'whites'" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 1). Similarly, in the early years of the 21st century and in the aftermath of 9/11, many scholars have attempted to present the Arab/Islamic identity as compatible with contemporary ways of life, and defend it from the hegemonic waves of racial profiling and "the demonization of Arab and Muslim societies and culture" (Lieven, 2012, p. 204). Contemporary Western theorists such as Fukuyama (1992), Armesto (1995), and Huntington (1997) have expressed concerns about whether Islam is or can be compatible with contemporary values, freedom, and a globalized world that is in constant flux. In response, many Muslim scholars have pointed out that some of the dynamics of globalisation are comparable to aspects that defined Islamic history:

> Islam's vision of the world is by definition global. Islamic history has had long periods in which we recognise elements of what we would today call globalisation: societies living within different ethnic, geographic, and political boundaries, but speaking a language understood throughout, enjoying a common cultural sensibility, and recognising the same over-arching ethos in the world-view. (Ahmed, 2005, p. 106)

The perception of incompatibility between Islam and modern life and the denigration of the Arab culture resonate with what Du Bois referred to as "19th century racial understanding of black life" in terms of the domination of hegemonic perceptions.

Furthermore, Bruce (1992) noted that what Du Bois meant by double consciousness extends beyond the "power of white stereotypes in black life" or "the practical racism that excluded every black American from the mainstream of society" (p. 301). For Du Bois, Bruce argued,

> the essence of a distinctive African consciousness was its spirituality, a spirituality based in Africa but revealed among African Americans in their folklore, their history of patient suffering, and their faith. In this sense, double consciousness related particularly to Du Bois's efforts to privilege the spiritual in relation to the materialistic, commercial world of white America. (p. 301)

Similarly, religious practices and spirituality form an essential part of Arab identity. Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Arabs, among other religious sects, generally hold their faiths dear to them and share many values at home and in diaspora that may trigger internal conflict, especially in a Western world that is growing increasingly pluralistic, and, at times, Islamophobic.

Additionally, Du Bois's position towards American society needs to be clarified. Mocombe (2009) explained that Du Bois's position was neither reductive nor dismissive of diversity within the community itself:

> Black American consciousness is instead multiple and diverse . . . In other words, Du Bois, as a member of this group, captures with the double consciousness construct their ambivalence toward American society; the desire of his class to obtain the liberal promises (equality of opportunity, distribution, and recognition) of American society

> against their derision for that same society because of its anti-liberal discriminatory practices against the black American (p. 2).

Similarly, my understanding of the Arab community is equally wide-ranging, and recognizes the desire of Arabs in diaspora to be seen as equal citizens and not as an antagonistic community whose values contradict with notions of democracy and freedom. Nevertheless, I want to make clear here that I do not believe that the Arab diasporic condition is similar in historical intensity and grim severity to the African American condition, or any other diasporic situation experienced by other races or communities, for that matter. The comparison made here is based on similar plights and partly analogous situations that would contribute to the conversation of racialized diasporic identity. I assume that the rhetoric of double consciousness among Arab diasporic individuals can be subsumed within the historical narrative of the Black Atlantic.

Paul Gilroy's Specificity of Cultural Formations

The Concept of the Black Atlantic

In *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (1993), Gilroy explored identity in relation to the colonial history of African Americans in diaspora. A defining aspect for Gilroy is what he called the "black Atlantic," which he described as a "transnational formation" (p. ix) that "provides a means to re-examine the problems of nationality, location, identity, and historical memory" (p. 16). He further explained:

> The specificity of the modern political and cultural formation I want to call the Black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through [a] desire to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity. These desires . . . have always sat uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black movements and individuals embedded in national and political cultures and nation-states in America, the Caribbean, and Europe. (Gilroy, 1993, p. 19)

In other words, the Black Atlantic is a conceptual framework that deals with the "specificity of the modern political and cultural formation," which is marked by the "desire to transcend" nationalistic constrains and ethnical representations or misconceptions embedded in socio-political practices forced on, and often internalized by, certain communities.

Gilroy wanted to use the "politics and poetics of the black Atlantic world . . . [in order to] counterpose against the narrow nationalism of so much English historiography" (p. 12). He also referred to the Atlantic as "a system of cultural exchanges" (p. 14), and defined the Black Atlantic as the "intercultural and transnational formations" (p. ix), a "historical conjunction" in which "the stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by . . . blacks" are "dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating and remembering" (p. 3).

My study attempts to expand Gilroy's conceptualization of the Black Atlantic by examining the conditions of Arabs in diaspora in terms of their "embeddedness in the modern world" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 9) and the "desire to transcend" their own "specificity" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 19). For instance, in what ways do Arab heritage and cultural values that comprise their own "intercultural and transnational formations" (Gilroy, 1993, p. ix) inform the diasporic condition and identity of second-generation Arab youth? In what ways do they try to transcend what Gilroy called "narrow nationalism" (1993, p. 12)? It is equally important to explore how these desires to transcend, which "have always sat uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black movements and individuals" (p. 19), resonate within challenges and forced choices confronted by the Arab community and individuals. As well, very much in the spirit of Gilroy's words and perspective, how do "bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by" Arabs in diaspora and "dispersed within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 3) negate and/or negotiate a postcolonial world in which cultural insensitivities

and xenophobia often loom large? It is in this sense that this study engages with Gilroy's notion of the black Atlantic.

Gilroy's Image of the Ship: Correlations in the Arab Aesthetic Landscape

Gilroy employed the trope of the ship to represent the Black Atlantic. The image of sailors and ships invokes a sense of mobility, "moving to and fro between nations, crossing borders in modern machines that were themselves micro-systems of linguistic and political hybridity" (1993, p. 12). He suggested that to understand the culture and subjectivity of African Americans in diaspora is to recall "the half-remembered micro-politics of the slave trade and its relationship to both industrialisation and modernisation" (p. 17). The image of the ship serves to exercise a link between modern times and its historical trajectory.

The imagery of ships recurs throughout the Arab intellectual and creative landscape. For example, Youssef Chahine's film *Adieu Bonaperte* (1985) starts with a rising tempo of anticipation on the shores of Alexandria, among a few locals who hold a spyglass and look at the open sea. The camera then zooms at the image of an approaching ship when the title of the movie appears on the screen. The significance of the approaching ship serves as a harbinger of the encroachment of colonial desire. In fact, Said (1978) pointed out that the Napoleonic enterprise represents an act of imperialistic inauguration: "to make out of every observable detail a generalization and out of every generalization an immutable law about the Oriental nature, temperament, mentality, custom or type; and, above all, to transmute living reality into the stuff of texts" (p. 86). Similarly, the last shot of Chahine's film *Alexandria Why?* (1979) shows the Statue of Liberty toothless and clownishly painted: "She opens her eyes and winks at Yahia [the protagonist] laughing at the boy's lovely dream" (Fawal, 2001, p. 124). Here, Chahine suggested that "the identity of any nation is never fixed at least in the eyes of the newcomers" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015a, p. 170) who realize that only after crossing the Atlantic. In other words, the

"preconceived and generalising notion that Yahia constructed about Hollywood America is now being" washed away by the realization that the America "of Gene Kelly and Busby Berkeley that Yahia entertained [when he was in 1940s Alexandria surrounded by colonial powers] is shattered as he sails into a world of diasporic minorities" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015a, pp. 170-171). Though the image of the ship has been pivotal in Arab consciousness in fiction, I must reiterate that it is not comparable to the extreme traumas experienced on slave ships, but is rather a literary trope of the enunciation stage of Arab diaspora.

In Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's *The Ship* (1973), the image of the ship becomes a literary and political trope that connotes "a meeting-point for various literary discourses, where texts come together, mix and are dispersed again ... an enchanted space ... filled with false identities . . . of tales . . . a place where lives meet and are driven off course only to collide with destiny" (Leeuwen, 2006, p. 31). Moreover, *Sharq al-Mutawassit* (East of the Mediterranean), a 1975 novel by the Saudi Arabian writer Abdulrahman Munif, opens with the protagonist urging the ship to move forward, although it staggers like a wounded dancing fish. The ship becomes an animate, breathing companion who shares his agonies and his memories of torture and prison. The ship, therefore, holds a meaningful locus in the Arab literary and intellectual landscape:

> Travelling on board a ship means interrogating morality, asking moral questions and evaluating moral standards. Life on ships is hedonistic, nihilistic, lascivious, subject to passions and emotions, but it is always overtaken and absorbed by the forces of morality, social responsibility, religion or intellectual and emotional sincerity. (Leeuwen, 2006, p. 29)

Similarly, in *De Niro's Game*, a 2006 novel by the Canadian author Rawi Hage, the Lebanese protagonist, living in war-torn Beirut, wants to "board a ship to nowhere" (p. 131), which then sails across the Mediterranean Sea "that is filled with pharaoh tears, pirate ship wreckage, slave

bones, flowing rivers of sewage, and French tampons" (p. 20). The ship, arriving at or leaving the Arabian shores, becomes a locus of dialogue that is laden with colonial and postcolonial implications.

In fact, Gilroy used the image of the ship "from the Middle Passage in the history of the African Diaspora, in order to present an alternative view of nationality and origin, a place where identity is born or reborn . . . A ship, in this case, transfers ideas as well as people, while simultaneously allowing these people and ideas to reinvent themselves" (Criss, 2005). According to Gilroy, "Ships immediately focus attention on the circulation of ideas and activists as well as the movement of key cultural and political artifacts: tracts, books, gramophone records, and choirs" (p. 4). The ship suggests "a living, micro-cultural, micro-political system in motion" (p. 4) across the Atlantic, carrying the socio-political, cultural and linguistic formations from which various diasporic cultures evolve.

Gilroy and Double Consciousness: To the Black Atlantic and Beyond

Gilroy introduced the concept of the black Atlantic in his study of African intellectual history and its cultural formation. For Gilroy, the Atlantic slave trade became an illustrative space that defines diaspora. What Gilroy proposed is to "make the people issuing from the painful experience of the Atlantic slave trade and subsequent slavery emblematic of a new way to think about diasporic peoples" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, p. 359). Gilroy's notion of the black Atlantic implied a departure from "the classic model" of diaspora, which is linked to "unified, solidary community and a thematic of territory and memory" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, p. 359). The classic model corresponds to what James Clifford called the "centered" (1994, p. 303) model, which is "based on the idea of a communal source or origin: in short, a model with the operative metaphor of roots" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, p. 359). Gilroy proposed that diaspora should no longer be "seen as unitary; instead, its sociality is seen as based on movement, interconnection,

and mixed references" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, p. 359). He instead proposed the notion of "a cleavage between two ways of conceptualizing identity, the one stemming from the symbolism of unity and the other from mobility and changing referents" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, pp. 362-363). Accordingly, Gilroy argued that double consciousness is one of the outcomes of the diasporic experience of African Americans, which resonates with certain political implications: "Striving to be both European and black requires some specific forms of double consciousness" (p. 1). This can be read in two ways. First, it does not negate the presence of a sound and congenial subjectivity: "I do not mean to suggest that taking on either or both of these unfinished identities necessarily exhausts the subjective resources of any particular individual" (p. 1). In other words, the presence of this double awareness, at least in Gilroy's mind, does not entail any disintegrated or fragmented identity formation; nor does it mean a disregard for other "subjective resources" that may constitute, and contribute to, the totality of someone's identity. Second, it registers an inevitable political aspect, since racist discourse projects these identities as "mutually exclusive" (p. 1) and denies assimilation. To suggest that these two identities can coexist subverts the oppressor's gaze. This subjective coexistence of "occupying the space between them or trying to demonstrate their continuity, has been viewed as a provocative and even oppositional act of political insubordination" (p. 1). Consequently, the politics of race was an overriding concern for Gilroy, as "the concept of 'race' was produced out of slavery and empire; it is still important within current political discourse" (Blake, 2007, p. 121). Double consciousness, in this context, carries a political statement that may suggest defiance of preconceived notions of identity and the oft-expected quick and unchallenged assimilation into mainstream society.

Clearly, Gilroy's notion of identity drew largely on Du Bois's notion of double consciousness. A divided self implies that individuals who cannot subscribe to mainstream society because of cultural or ethnic difference internalize an alternative strategy of "twoness,"

which synthetically acknowledges the subjective self and the cultural other. Gilroy found it fascinating to be positioned within the paradigm of double consciousness to "stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages" (1993, p. 1). He explained that double consciousness is characteristically a modern condition: "A preoccupation with the striking doubleness that results from this unique position – in an expanded West but not completely of it – is a definitive characteristic of the intellectual history of the black Atlantic" (1993, p. 58). He further re-examined national identity in relation to the modern understanding of the nation-state "as a political, economic, and cultural unit" (p. 7). In this way, each cultural identity can be explored with reference to its own historical, linguistic, and cultural contexts, rather than being subsumed under a nationalistic frame, "an illegitimate intrusion into a vision of authentic British national life that, prior to [its] arrival, was as stable and peaceful as it was ethnically undifferentiated" (p. 7). In other words, "Gilroy has challenged essentialist notions of race or ethnicity and has written extensively about . . . [diasporic] cultural identities understood in terms of routes more than roots" (Barker, 2004, p. 76). It is that rhizomorphic understanding of diaspora that is inviting and inclusive.

Notably, Gilroy invited scholars to adopt the concept of the Black Atlantic, "that cultural historians could take the Atlantic as one single, complex unit of analysis in their discussions of the modern world and use it to produce an explicitly transnational and intercultural perspective" (p. 15). He actually dismissed the essentialist misconception that any intellectual heritage can be exclusively the property of one specific ethnic community: "I want to suggest that much of the precious intellectual legacy claimed by African-American intellectuals as the substance of their particularity is in fact only partly their absolute ethnic property" (p. 15). He professed that his book addressed an area of "historical conjunction," which is "the stereophonic, bilingual, or bifocal cultural forms originated by, but no longer the exclusive property of, blacks dispersed

within the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering that I have heuristically called the black Atlantic world" (p. 3). In this non-provisional context, the black Atlantic resonates, for the Arab world, with "the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering" (p. 3) colonial expeditions.

In *Gilroy, Paul: The Black Atlantic: Intellectual History in a Transnational Frame*, Nowakoski (1998) discussed the commonality of the struggles against colonial enterprise in the East and in Africa, and demonstrated how both Said and Gilroy shared similar concerns:

> In much the same vein as Edward Said, who points out that the systematic aesthetic representations of the East were inextricably bound up with the material exploitations of the European colonial enterprise, Gilroy links abstract philosophical modernity to the very real, very brutal practice of African enslavement. (Nowakoski, 1998, para. 5)

Significantly, Gilroy himself, in his discussion of William Gardner Smith's novel *The Stone Face* (1962), spoke of Smith's protagonist Simeon Brown, "another smart young African American who has fled Philadelphia to work as a journalist in France" (2000, p. 316). Gilroy showed that, for the protagonist, "Racism is not, after all, absent from Paris; it just takes different forms . . . brutal mechanisms that he encountered before reappear in the anticolonial racism that the French practice against the Arabs" (2000, p. 317). Towards the end of the first part of the novel, the protagonist realizes that "anti-Arab sentiment is precisely equivalent to the antiblack racism he endured in the American context" (Gilroy, 2000, p. 319). In effect, a shared history between Africans and Arabs in diaspora was established here by Gilroy himself.

Reader-Response Theory and Its Pedagogical Implications

In *Literary Theory: An Introduction*, Eagleton (1996) spoke of a transition in literary focus, in which the role of the reader has become visible. Eagleton divided the history of modern literary theory into three stages: "a preoccupation with the author (Romanticism and the

nineteenth century); an exclusive concern with the text (New Criticism); and a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years" (p. 64). Castle (2007) further described reader-response theory as a focus "on the role of the reader in the creation of meaning. The importance of the reader in literary theory has long been acknowledged, but the reader's role has typically been subordinated to the qualities of textuality" (p. 174). In this sense, reader-response theory is largely a reaction against the American school of New Criticism that was fashionable in the 1920s, which emphasized the text as the overriding concern in any critical reading.

In New Criticism and other formalist theories, the reader's experience is guided by the text. The creation of meaning "involves the discovery of the text's internal dynamics and structural unities" (Castle, 2007, p. 174). However, certain scholars of the time experimented with reader-response theory:

> For example, I. A. Richards's experiments in reading in his *Practical Criticism* (1929) took an 'affective' approach that measures emotional responses and attitudes. As Stanley Fish has pointed out in *Is There a Text in This Class?* (1980), this method tends to separate referential or scientific language from 'poetic' language, analysis from emotion. (Castle, 2007, p. 174)

The most influential figure who argued against the constraints of New Criticism is Rosenblatt, who in *The Reader, the Text, the Poem: The Transactional Theory of the Literary Work* (1978), stressed the reader's interaction with the text as a valid method of eliciting meaning:

> A reader brings to the text his or her past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, the reader marshals his or her resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he/she sees as the poem. This becomes part of the ongoing stream of

> the reader's life experience, to be reflected on from any angle important to him or her as a human being. (p. 12)

According to Rosenblatt, readers bring their own "temperament and fund of past transactions to the text and live through a process of handling new situations, new attitudes, new personalities, new conflicts in value. They can reject, revise, or assimilate into the resource with which they engage their world" (p. 172). The result of that interaction between text and reader is what Rosenblatt called the poem: "'The poem' cannot be equated solely with either the text or the experience of a reader" (p. 105). The "poem" is, therefore, the outcome of a "transaction" between text and reader.

Generally speaking, reader-response theory grew out of other grand theories: "Contemporary Reader-Response theory developed out of the philosophical hermeneutics [theory and methodology of interpreting scriptural texts] and phenomenology [the philosophy that reality exists only as perceived in human consciousness through events and objects] of the 1950s" (Castle, 2007, p. 174). In Europe, two German scholars, Hans Robert Jauss and Wolfgang Iser, founders of the so-called Constance School, challenged the dominant literary principle of looking for "'the correct interpretation' or 'the actual meaning' of a text. In postwar Germany, this doctrine was particularly well implanted in schools and universities, where it had acquired an authoritarian bias" (Zima, 1999, p. 55). Both Iser and Jauss, major figures in the German movement known as "reception aesthetics," recognized that meaning is "an open-ended evolution," and therefore, Jauss argued in favour of studying interpretation as based on the reading public, historical era, and literary expectations at the time the text was produced, which means "studying the horizon of expectations that surrounds that work" (Parker, 2008, p. 284).

Drawing on phenomenological philosophy, Iser (1978) argued in favor of a more active role for the reader: "The formulation [of meaning] will take place through the guided activity

stimulated in the reader, for only in this way can it become part of the reader's own experience" (p. 46). From Iser's point of view, the text guides and directs the reader, as it provides a "structure that enables the reader to break out of his accustomed framework of conventions, so allowing him to formulate that which has been unleashed by the text" (p. 50). However, Iser argued that the text is a structure that is potentially incomplete, which invites the readers to "concretise" these textual "gaps" by using certain frames of reference such as their cultural values, norms and personal experience: "A sort of oscillation is set up between the power of the text to control the way it is read and a reader's 'concretisation' of it in terms of his or her own experience – an experience which will itself be modified in the act of reading" (Seldon, Widdowson and Brooker, 2004, p. 55). Both Jauss and Iser have contributed immensely to the theoretical frame of reader-response theory.

Moving further into the phenomenological perspective, the Polish theoretician Roman Ingarden (1964), deviating from Jauss's conception of the historical reader, made a clear-cut distinction between autonomous objects, which are considered to be independent and real, and heteronomous objects, which are intentional and dependent in constitutional nature. While real or autonomous objects can be seen and measured, intentional or heteronomous objects exist only as perceived by the observer:

> Furthermore, purely intentional objects are not the complete nothing they would have to be if existential monism were right. However, they do not possess an *essence of their own* as Husserl maintained in his *Ideas*. An inherent essence (Husserl's *Eigenwesen*) is a particular combination of qualifications immanently contained in the object which possesses. Consequently, only self-existent objects have it. Naturally, such immanent qualifications do not make an appearance in the contents of purely intentional objects. All their material determination, formal moments, and even their existential moments, which

> appear in their contents, are in some way ascribed to purely intentional objects, but they are not embodied in them, in the strict meaning of this word (Ingarden, 1964, p. 49).

In the fictional world according to Ingarden's ontology, an object imagined by the author is not real (autonomous), but an intentional or heteronomous object, which is abstracted and designed by the creator's consciousness. The fictional world is created in the reader's mind by the indeterminacy caused by the intentional existence of the text. According to Ingarden, since objects in literary texts are merely intentional objects, and because they are essentially fictional, they fail to concretize indeterminacies and succeed in creating "new uncertainties or imponderables, thus provoking the creative drive of the readers. They are called upon to bring about what Ingarden calls the concretization of a literary work" (Zima, 1999, p. 68). The reader's task is to pull the text from intentional reality into the real world. It is in this reality-shifting sense that Iser's conception of reader-response theory grew out of Ingarden's notion of indeterminacy and its phenomenological dimension. Iser (1978) pointed out that although he set out to challenge "Ingarden's position," he remained conscious that "it was Ingarden's elucidation of the concretization of literary works" (p. xi) that brought Iser to this level of discussion.

In *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (1978), Iser asserted that it is impossible to describe a response produced by a literary text "without analyzing the reading process" (p. ix). For Iser, to read is to respond and interpret: "Effects and responses are properties neither of the text nor of the reader; the text represents a potential effect that is realized in the reading process" (p. ix). The act of reading, therefore, brings forth an investigation into "the elementary operations which the text activates within the reader" (p. ix). The meaning of a text must be assembled, and the result is an aesthetic response that is brought about by considering the "dialectic relationship between text, reader, and their interaction" and that "brings into play the imaginative and perceptive faculties of the reader" (p. x). Iser explained and confirmed that

the text "represents a pattern, a structured indicator to guide the imagination of the reader; and so the meaning can only be grasped as an image. The image provides the filling for what the textual pattern structures but leave out" (p. 9). This act of "filling" constitutes the essence of the communication between text and reader. In this sense, "meaning is no longer an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced" (p. 10). Ultimately, for Iser, the critic fails because of an existing schism in the critic's approach, which "is characterized by the division between subject and object which always applies to the acquisition of knowledge: here the meaning is the object which the subject attempts to define in relation to a particular form of reference" (p. 9). In sharp contrast, the reader's quest is not to excavate a hidden meaning in the text, but rather to generate a type of meaning that exists in the virtual space produced by the interaction between reader and text. This virtual space comes into being because the text itself leaves unexplained portions, or "gaps," in the narrative that beg to be filled in: "The elements of indeterminacy enable the text to communicate with the reader, in the sense that they include him to participate both in the production and the comprehension of the work's intention" (p. 24). This indeterminacy urges the reader to become involved in what Iser calls the act of reading.

Though he drew largely on Ingarden's phenomenological assumption that readers can capitalize on the semantic make-up that emanates from literary texts, Iser departed from Ingarden's conception by urging a more active role for the reader. Not only is Iser's reader a commentator *on*, but a communicator *with* the text, as she or he is encouraged to rewrite it. Iser offered the reader the opportunity to move away from Ingarden's understanding of the passive reader, who is there to fulfill a prescribed role, into a more engaging and substantial endeavor of co-authoring the literary text by introducing his notion of the act of reading: "Central to the reading of every literary work is the interaction between its structure and its recipient" (p. 20). The act of reading corresponds with that of the production of meaning. Iser proposes that a given

literary text requires a hypothetical reader in order to exercise its effects. Literary works are largely written to address such hypothetical figures – the audience or "implied readers" – who are equipped with the moral, historical, or cultural frameworks that will enable them to better understand a particular text. Unlike other conceptions of readers, the implied reader exists *inside* the text; he or she is a textual component that might be, in so many different ways and at different moments, unravelled and impersonated by the reader. In fact, Iser's interest in the formulation of the reader's identity goes beyond the textual level: "In particular, Iser suggests that the process of formulating, then revising various interpretations of a literary text can potentially make the reader more open-minded and flexible in her reactions to the world at large" (Booker, 1996, p. 45). In his book *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, Iser (1978) pointed out how readers are most likely to experience a change of heart or a shift in their identity as they revise and reformulate texts and characters: "The novels show how it becomes increasingly impossible for their narrators to conceive themselves – i.e., to find their own identity; and yet at the same time it is precisely this impossibility that leads them to actually discover something of their own reality" (p. 174). In other words, when texts enter the reader's consciousness, something changes on both sides and neither is the same afterward. The formation of identity as readers interact with texts is, therefore, central to Iser's understanding of reader-response theory.

Reader-response theorists are conscious of the influence of identity on the interpretation of culturally-centered texts:

> Theorists interested in how readers' attitudes and values shape their response draw on a range of different disciplinary perspectives . . . These perspectives generally assume that readers respond accordingly to 'subject positions' acquired from socialization by cultural definitions. As part of that socialization, readers acquire various cultural practices –

> expressing cultural identity or resisting social and economic domination. (Beach, 1993, p. 125)

Readers from different cultures tend to identify with characters that reflect their cultural values and attitudes. In *Subjective Criticism,* Bleich (1978) asserted that response is, essentially, a conversation: "The practice of formulating response statements is a means for making a language experience . . . available for conversation into knowledge. A response can acquire meaning only in the context of a predecided community (two or more people) interest in knowledge" (p. 98). Bleich's perspective of meaning produced via communication is still pertinent to this study, at least so far as it relates to conducting interviews:

> Bleich suggests that although the 'subjective syntheses' are the heart of a discussion of a work, and that we are essentially discussing not the work but our perceptions of it, the institution is not so grim as it may seem . . . He calls the process 'negotiation,' and it is dependent on his notion of an 'interpretive community'. (Probst, 1988, p. 12)

According to Bleich's proposition, producing meaning requires establishing connections with a community: "Two or more readers come together, with a common interest in knowledge of something they have read, and talk in such a way that knowledge is the result" (Probst, 1988, p. 12). Bleich argued that meaning is communal in nature: "Like the infantile processes of language acquisition, subsequent contexts of knowledge formation are always communal, even if a particular individual forms knowledge in opposition to his community" (p. 133). He firmly believes that community is at the centre of interpretation. With this in mind, grounding my research within the Arab community in Edmonton seems pertinent to reader-response theory.

In much the same way that literary theory has shifted toward an emphasis on the reader, teaching literature in secondary schools has similarly experienced a shift to accommodate students' interests: "The teaching of literature in secondary schools has undergone a dramatic

change in the past 10 years. Emphasis has shifted from the text to interactions between text and reader; that is, what the reader brings to the reading is as important as the words in the text" (Maxwell & Meiser, 1997, p. 184). It is important to keep in mind that "for students to become lifelong readers . . . they must see reading as enjoyable activity" (Maxwell & Meiser, 1997, p. 184). In order to achieve that act or level of enjoyable reading, students' responses should take precedence over staunch, elitist literary theory:

> Third World and postcolonial literature – and in politically engaged texts . . . reminds us what literature has always been about: urgency, commitment, tension, and feeling. But at times have we not transferred those emotions to parochial critical and theoretical debate among ourselves rather than to our responses to literature? (Schwarz, 2008, p. 11)

In other words, to theorize in a vacuum of student/reader participation and understanding reduces the act of interpreting literature to an elitist exercise that is removed from social realities, which further alienates students from literature, and literature from students. This study contributes to the academic conversation that encourages creating opportunities for students to choose, read, and respond to the worlds they encounter in literary texts, and explores how their cultural identities inform their responses. By encouraging students to link their own personal experiences with the ways in which the characters behave or think, teachers make it possible for students to reconstruct and critique their own worldviews.

Chapter 5: Methodology

"In this country everything was labelled, everything had a name. She had got used to the explicitness, all the signs and polite rules."
Leila Aboulela, *The Translator* (1999, p. 2)

Study Design

My research orientation is based on qualitative inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world . . . qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (p. 3). Central to any qualitative research is the notion that "meaning is socially constructed by individuals in interaction with their world" (Merriam, 2002, p. 3). The way qualitative research views the world is significantly different from the way it is perceived in quantitative approaches: "The world, or reality, is not the fixed, single, agreed upon, or measurable phenomenon that it is assumed to be in positivist, quantitative research. Instead, there are multiple constructions and interpretations of reality that are in flux and that change over time" (Merriam, 2002, pp. 3-4). In effect, qualitative inquiry is different from quantitative research in terms of its worldview and the relationship of the researcher to the subject of the research: "From the perspective of a quantitative approach to research, 'objective' has its reference point in what is outside us or in the world of facts that stands independent of the knower" (Smith, 1983, p. 10).

A qualitative approach defines objective research as "seeing the world free from one's own personal place or particular situation in it" in the sense that it "focuses on the known" (Smith, 1983, p. 17). Qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, asserts that the investigator's "view of the world and our knowledge of it are inevitably based on our interests, value, dispositions," and so "we cannot 'get outside ourselves' and conduct investigations divorced from our own particular place in the world. Investigating the social and educational world is a process that is

socially and historically bounded; that is, our values and interests will shape how we study and discuss reality" (Smith, 1983, p. 10). Again, an approach such as this one, in which the researcher's values, disposition and worldviews cannot be precluded, is appropriate for this study, as it shares many of the attributes of qualitative inquiry, such as its interpretive bent as well as the notion that the researcher is socially bound to be an insider.

In sharp contrast to quantitative research, qualitative inquiry is "richly descriptive. Words and pictures rather than numbers are used to convey what the researcher has learned about a phenomenon" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). In a qualitative research study, the participants and the researcher's perspectives are instrumental in terms of meaning, understanding, collecting data and analysis, in a research project that is inductive and substantially descriptive in nature. My study explores the responses of participating students, and considers what these students bring to the research areas of reader response theories and identity politics; therefore, qualitative research is methodologically appropriate, given that it is defined as "an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world" (van Manen, 1979, p. 520), and that it allocates links between people and the production of meaning. One particular qualitative research approach, case study, is generally interpretive and descriptive, as it seeks to represent a certain condition or phenomenon.

Case Study

According to Stake (2005), "Qualitative case study is characterized by researchers spending extended time on site, personally in contact with activities and operations of the case, reflecting, and revising descriptions and meanings of what is going on" (p. 450). The interaction between researcher and site, as well as the interpretive process that follows, characteristic of qualitative research, are central to the proposed study. According to Stake (2005), case studies

"are . . . common way[s] to do qualitative inquiry . . . defined by interest in an individual case, not by the methods of inquiry used" (2005, p. 443). In response to the question of why one might choose a case study approach in the first place, Baxter and Jack (2008) explained that, according to Yin, "a case study design should be considered when: (a) the focus of the study is to answer "how" and "why" questions; (b) you cannot manipulate the behaviour of those involved in the study; (c) you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context" (p. 545). Most of these characteristics apply to my study. The focus of my study was to answer questions related to "how" and "why:" specifically, how students respond to literary texts and why they respond in a certain way. The behaviour of the participating students could not be manipulated, since they were asked to respond voluntarily and without any restrictions. Contextual conditions such as culture and location were explored in detail. A case-study approach in this context was significantly appropriate to the purposes of the project.

In "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers," Baxter and Jack (2008) pointed out two approaches that guide case study methodology: the first introduced by Yin (2003, 2006), and the second by Stake (2005). Baxter and Jack presented four categories based on Yin's theoretical frame: Explanatory, Exploratory, Descriptive, and Multiple Case Studies (pp. 548-549). Stake, on the other hand, suggested three approaches: Intrinsic, Instrumental and Collective (pp. 445-447). As for which case study method best fits my study, I decided that "the multiple case study or the collective case study" (Stake, 2005, p. 445) approach was the most appropriate. Stake argued that the collective case study is preferable "when there is even less interest in one particular case, a number of cases may be studied jointly in order to investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition" (2005, p. 445). He proposed that this particular approach serves to advance an inquiry that seeks to

"manifest some common characteristic" (2005, p. 446). Stake pointed out that these cases can "be similar or dissimilar with redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to a better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases" (2005, p. 446). This approach seemed suitable for my study, considering that I intended to explore how the Duboisian concept of double consciousness informs the Arab diasporic condition. The collective case study serves the interpretive and theory-testing nature of my study:

> The researcher examines various interests in the phenomenon, selecting a case of some typicality but leaning toward those cases that seem to offer *opportunity to learn*. My choice would be to choose that case from which we feel we can learn the most. That may mean taking the one most accessible or the one we can spend the most time with. Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. (Stake, 2005, p. 451)

Similarly, the participating students' interviews were analyzed in depth in terms of the study's external interest, which is a Duboisian conceptualization of Arab diasporic identity. For Stake, "the most important role of the case study researcher was that of interpreter. His vision of this role was not as the discoverer of an external reality, but as the builder of a clearer view of the phenomenon under study through explanation and descriptions" (Brown, 2008, p. 7).

This study aimed at "deeper understanding of experience from the perspectives of the participants selected for study" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 47). To gain an in-depth understanding of a certain phenomenon, that is, "to understand what people experience and perceive about the focus of inquiry, through a process that is open and emergent" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 98), a study needs to be conducted with a small group of selected individuals, to ensure it is intensive and insightful. Choosing the population was instrumental to

the design of this study. The need to narrow down the sample in order to allow for both statistical data and an in-depth study was a pivotal decision. I chose to seek a "deeper understanding" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 47) of the issues from the perspectives of a small (8) sample of students. I sought to ensure the validity of the study by addressing the issue of representation: "Case studies recognise the complexity and 'embeddedness' of social truths. By carefully attending to social situations, case studies can represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants." (Adelman et al., 1980, pp. 59-60). In effect, in order to gain credence, the participating students had to represent a diverse sample of the Arab community in diaspora. In effect, "a case study is a good approach when the inquirer has clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or comparison of several cases" (Creswell, 2007, p. 74).

The Interview Approach

Interviews are among the most common ways qualitative researchers collect data, especially in case studies: "Qualitative interviews are essentially guided conversations between researchers and the people they are studying. They can be unscheduled, off-the-cuff interactions that occur informally as part of everyday life in the setting" (Vierra, Pollock, & Golez, 1998, p. 212). Researchers can direct the interviews by asking specific questions about the areas they want to explore: "The use of interviewing to acquire information is so extensive today that it has been said that we live in an 'interview society'" (Fontana & Frey, 2005, p. 698). In effect, interviews provide focus, complexity and richness, and tend to "allow the interviewer to probe areas of interest in more depth" (Vierra, Pollock, & Golez, 1998, p. 215). Moreover, interviews can be structured to elicit maximum response, which also gives the interviewee a fair amount of space and time to reflect and respond. Structured interviews help the researchers to move "beyond surface talk to a rich discussion of thoughts and feelings" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 80).

They are ultimately "a conversation with a purpose" (Maykut & Morehouse, 1994, p. 79), and that purpose can be geared towards exploring a certain academic inquiry. Eventually, "both qualitative and quantitative researchers tend to rely on the interview as the basic method of data gathering whether the purpose is to obtain a rich, in-depth experiential account of an event or episode in the lite of the respondent" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008, p. 120).

Prior to the interviews I conducted for this project, I wondered whether the students might be uneasy about sharing their experiences, or whether they would be forthright in answering my questions. The seeking of parental approval for the interviews gave the students a sense of assurance and relief. The students also recognized that I am not a stranger to the Muslim/Arab community, which helped to dismiss feelings of suspicion or uneasiness. Additionally, in my first meeting with each participating student, I ardently tried to explain the authenticity of this research project and the rigorous academic effort that goes into it. All of the students and their parents further liked the idea of using fictitious names. The feeling of anonymity, it is fair to assume, gave students that extra leverage to comfortably talk about what they have in mind.

Another major concern was ensuring that I asked appropriate questions leading to purposeful conversations. My familiarity with the culture, its oral history, religious narratives, and heritage helped me understand the participating students' frustrations and moments of cultural pride. Lack of experience in the culture proposed for study, on the part of the researcher, may result in a break in narrative or miscommunication. Researchers who are considered to be outsiders to the culture under study may not comprehend parts of students' responses and/or cultural sensitivities. Having students share their cultural knowledge was not my only overriding concern; my own fallibility as an interviewer equally mattered.

I was aware that some of my questions might lead students to betray particular biases, and I was conscious that leading questions might guide and dictate the answers. Leading questions

such as “Have you seen students who were discriminated against or teased because of their accent or dress?” were meant to extract straightforward answers; however, I tried to incorporate other questions through the short stories that might reveal their understanding of the culture or expose their own understanding of identity. One such sample question is, “In what ways do you think that the protagonist is torn between two cultures, and how do people in this situation manage to reconcile themselves with both worlds?” I found out that shifting the discussion back to the protagonist put the participating students in a space in which they felt safe and at ease to express their opinions, and would naturally talk about themselves in relevance to the situation under discussion.

My experience in conducting interviews is not extensive. However, I have capitalized on what I have learned over the years. As a high-school student in Baghdad College in Iraq, I was assigned to be the sports reporter in our physical education class. My job was to observe an official soccer match (we had a soccer league organized by the school itself among different grades), report the final score, and meet with the goal scorers for a short interview. Doing interviews for this study reminded me of that experience, which I still carry in my subconscious. I believe that my teaching experience has also helped me develop crucial interview skills. As a university instructor in both Iraq and in Libya (with occasional high-school teaching and counselling), and in the absence of the internet and email service, my one-on-one meetings and conversations with students have been both intense and numerous. Being a full time high-school teacher in Ontario for a whole year has also significantly added to the way I talk to high-school students individually on matters of performance, class issues or inquiries; and in 2009, I was chosen by the students as the teacher with the most amiable personality. One of my graduate courses at Lakehead University in Ontario, titled “Introduction to Research Approaches in Education” (ED 5010 AA), included a thorough discussion of interviewing. We were assigned to

do three interviews about the significance of teaching Shakespeare in high schools, which gave me the opportunity to apply the things that I learned in that course. The courses that I have taken at the University of Alberta have helped me become conscious of the complexity of conducting interviews. In EDSE 610, Dr. Claudia Eppert offered us the opportunity to discuss the issue of the fallibility of researchers and observers by, for instance, reading Ruth Behar's *The Vulnerable Observer*. My pilot study for this project, which involved interviews with two participants, further enabled me to determine whether the assigned questions were appropriately articulated to generate rich and productive responses and elicit meanings.

The study is deductive, as it used the interviews with participating students to help conceptualize a certain theoretical position:

> Deduction is . . . reasoning from the general to the particular. With deduction, we begin with the general principle and deduce particular examples from it. . . . Using deductive reasoning to test theory involves an if-then kind of reasoning: If this general principle is true, then this particular case should be true. . . . With deduction, we predict in advance just which patterns we will and will not see. When a researcher makes a prediction in advance and then collects data that confirm the prediction, it is much less likely that the pattern is coincidental. (Vierra, Pollock, & Golez, 1998, p. 17)

The relevance of the researcher to the research is central to any qualitative research project, as "the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. Since understanding is the goal of this research, the human instrument, which is able to be immediately responsive and adaptive, would seem to be the ideal means of collecting and analyzing data" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). In effect, my own stance as a researcher requires elaboration.

My Position as a Researcher

I recognize that I am a member of the Arab community in Alberta, and cannot separate myself from this cultural and ethnic affiliation. Indeed, I am aware that "the human instrument has shortcomings and biases that might have an impact on the study" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). Needless to say, acknowledging these limitations is necessary for any researcher whose identity is implicated in the research: "Rather than trying to eliminate these biases or 'subjectivities,' it is important to identify them and monitor them as to how they may be shaping the collection and interpretations of data" (Merriam, 2002, p. 5). Moreover, in "In Search of Subjectivity – One's Own" (1988), Peshkin argued that both disclosing one's subjectivity and feigning an objective stance are equally ineffective: "It is no more useful for researchers to acknowledge simply that subjectivity is an invariable component of their research than it is for them to assert that their ideal is to achieve objectivity. Acknowledgement and assertions are not sufficient" (p. 17). Peshkin asserted, "researchers should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress" (1988, p. 17). In this sense, I believe it was important for me to remain acutely aware of my subjectivity as an insider to the Arab community. I identified my subjectivity during the course of the research and attempted to observe the outcomes that my personal attributes and cultural qualities released in relation to the conducted research.

Seven years of experience studying and teaching in Canadian universities and adapting to life in Canada placed me in a better position to conduct the interpretive process of this study. I was both an insider and an outsider to the participating students. As a member of the Arab community, I am ideally positioned to ask my participants to share their thoughts and feelings with me: "The potential for being intrusive and inhibiting ordinary behaviour is minimized when the researcher is perceived as an insider" (Vierra, Pollock, & Golez, 1998, p. 200). Furthermore,

my position in the community helped me to know which cultural questions to ask, and how to understand their responses by capitalizing on my experience adapting to Canadian society and western values as an Arab Muslim who understands the culture and tradition and can also see the diasporic perspective.

Research Questions

This study focuses on the process of forming ethno-cultural identity within the Arab diasporic community in relation to the Canadian context, through the narrative of double consciousness as disseminated by Du Bois and Gilroy. I applied my understanding of Duboisian "doubleness" to better understand the Arab consciousness and identity formation in diaspora. Equally important was understanding whether contemporary multicultural texts can help second generation Arab Canadian secondary students negotiate notions of cultural identity. The guiding questions behind this study are: Can these texts help these students explore some of the religious and cultural issues that they have experienced, which are not usually easy to articulate? To what extent does culture influence Arab high-school students' responses to literary texts? How does the notion of double consciousness resonate with the Arab diasporic experience? In what ways does the feeling of being caught between two worlds generate a sense of ambivalence that may problematize second-generation Arab Canadian students' understanding of their identity? This study, therefore, engages with questions of interpretation, culturally-oriented texts and identity.

Data Collection Design

I gathered data from in-depth audio-recorded interviews with 8 Arab students in grades 10, 11, or 12. I contacted those students through Arab friends, community, and the Canadian Arab Friendship Association of Edmonton. The students who participated in this study read from a list of three selected short stories: "Choices," "Fire and Sand," and "Knowing," all of which were written by Anglophone Arab writers and pertain to issues concerning Arabs living in

English-speaking countries, and which also originate in two different parts of the Arab world, Egypt and Palestine. These short stories were taken from three anthologies: *Arab Canadian Writing: Stories, Memoirs, and Reminiscences* (1989), edited by Kamal A. Rostom; *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction* (2009), edited by Pauline Kaldas and Khaled Mattawa; and *I Think of You: Stories* (2007), by Ahdaf Soueif. All participants had read the short stories they had voluntarily selected, prior to the interviews.

I showed the stories to the students at after-school meetings. Methodologically, the first phase constituted the collection of personal data from participating students during the summer of 2014, following the completion of my literature review and ethics approval. I collected data by administrating a survey to the participating students about their heritage, cultural background, lived experience in Canada, and willingness to share their personal narratives. I briefly explained the purposes of this study in my letter of invitation to them, invited the participating students to read any or all of three short stories, and provided them with copies. The students read the material in predetermined selections before meeting individually with me.

I engaged in audio-recorded conversations with my participating students after school in the library about their responses to the short stories. Students also engaged in written responses in the form of questionnaires, which were used to examine how students elicit data about the selected texts. The student survey/questionnaire (see Appendix III) requested students to provide personal information about their cultural heritage and literary experiences. My goal was to foster an interview that was more participant-oriented, so that I would not try to lead the conversation. I met with those students individually twice. The first time was to introduce the study, get to know them, give them the short stories and provide them with the forms that need to be read and signed.

The second meeting initiated the second phase with the actual interview. I allowed the participating students to comfortably talk about the short stories, to determine whether reading these short texts allowed for a broader and deeper understanding of not only the material being read, but also their cultural identities through reading and discussing the material itself. I was careful to observe whether the diasporic nature of the short stories would motivate the participants to engage in textual analysis based on personal experience and would, therefore, invite them to learn something new, help them recognize certain cultural aspects, or bring certain diasporic experiences to the forefront. In each interview, I introduced myself as a researcher, an immigrant, a parent, and a teacher. I explained that I was interested in how the students think and feel about being people whose parents have immigrated to Canada from the Arab world. I explained that I hoped to gain the students' trust and that they would share with me their personal and school experiences through our discussion. I spoke of my interest in the life experiences of second-generation Arab-Canadian students, and how their cultural identities affect their interpretation of texts written by Anglophone Arab writers. I explained that I selected Arab-Canadian students to define the scope and focus of my study. I also asked my participants to feel free to share anything they wanted to talk about, and tried to establish a bond of trust.

The third phase began in the summer of 2015 as I analyzed the students' responses to certain literary texts. Data were transcribed, coded, placed on files in my computer and then analyzed in relation to the notion of double consciousness (as explained in the previous chapter), and the pedagogical implications for literary practices. The participating students were given fictitious names for the sake of confidentiality. As I worked with the collected data, I frequently revisited the short stories and my theoretical framework, searching for more textual evidence on which I needed to base my analysis. As a result, my data analysis was triangulated with participant observations, references to the short stories, and direct answers to the interview

questions. The set of questions that I used (see Appendix II) was intended not to direct the discussion so much as to provide prompts and keep the conversation focused when needed. These questions that I asked during the interviews were, therefore, tailored to generate as much contextual and wide-ranging data as possible.

Ultimately, the work of the researcher is to identify "coherence and sequence" (Stake, 2005, p. 444) within the boundaries of the cases under study. The cases, whether they are social, economic, political, ethical, or aesthetic, are important to consider because they "go a long way toward making relationships understandable" (p. 449). The researcher must be "ever-reflective" as he/she "digs into meanings, working to relate them to contexts and experience. In each instance, the work is reflective" (p. 450). Stake believes in the significance of case studies to enhance the role of the researcher as interpreter. The analysis of the data will be discussed later in two chapters.

Chapter 6: The Selected Short Stories

"'This country has taken my dreams that used to float like those giant balloons, and filled them with sand' . . . I try to be understanding, but I wish my father wouldn't tell me these things. I feel empty and scary and I get that stomach feeling like something awful will happen."
Laila Halaby, "Fire and Sand" (2004, p. 74)

The Selection of Short Stories

For my study, I selected three short stories; the students were able to choose which two they would like to read, or they could choose to read all three. The stories were taken from three different anthologies, and reflect a variety in terms of gender, nationality, and background. They were written by three different Arab Anglophone authors, and describe various experiences of Arab protagonists in diaspora. The stories were chosen for three reasons. First, they had to be teachable, whether for use in a classroom or through personal reading, in terms of clarity of plot, sound construction, well-elaborated themes, conflicts that entail psychological detail and rendition of well-developed characters. Second, they needed to be relevant to the context of the study; that is, they should speak directly to the experience of Arabs in diaspora, particularly issues relating to identity. Third, I selected stories that would be enjoyable for the students to read, thanks to their use of suspense and mystery, and their characters who are caught in cultural struggles or confronted with unpredictable challenges.

The stories were written by three different authors: Salwa Mohareb Said, an Egyptian-Canadian; Laila Halaby, a Jordanian-American; and Ahdaf Soueif, an Egyptian-Briton. The stories and their authors were selected to address the experiences of Arab immigrants in diaspora coming from different parts of the Arab world: "Knowing" and "Choices" feature Egyptian immigrants, and "Fire and Sand" describes Palestinian immigrants. Generally speaking, the selected stories fall within the purpose they were intended to serve. These selected stories come from the following three short story collections.

The Three Anthologies

The first collection is *Arab-Canadian Writing: Stories, Memoirs, and Reminiscences* (1989), edited by Kamal A. Rostom with an introduction by Richard Blackburn. The note on the back cover of the collection explains that the stories were written by "Arab Canadian writers who came to Canada in search of a better world and a more equitable society. These texts depict the endless hope of the newcomers, the boundless ambition that drives them, and the overwhelming cultural differences that bewilder and disorient some of them" (from back cover). The collection is, therefore, very pertinent to this project, which seeks to address similar issues through interaction with the participating students. The Canadian context of the collection is also relevant to the students' personal experiences, as it touches the Canadian Arab immigrant society at large:

> The range of national, religious, and cultural backgrounds; the diversity of feelings, from deprecation to pride; the variety of geographic locations in Canada, and the coverage of different decades within this slim collection present a cross section of Arab Canadian experiences and cultures. Despite an occasional shortcoming, *Arab-Canadian Writing* truly contributes to the rich multicultural fabric of Canadian society. (Werner-King, 1990, p. 65)

In contrast, the other two anthologies were published in the United Kingdom and the United States. My rationale behind choosing these works was that addressing the experiences of Arabs in diaspora in different geographical locations would broaden and enrich the students' knowledge of similar situations in different locales. The collections also offered students a range of interesting stories from which to choose. Although the geographical settings are different, students thus had the opportunity to compare their diasporic experiences with others', which would potentially provide them with a fresh perspective to negotiate the uniqueness or universality of their own sense of identity.

The second collection is *Dinarzad's Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction* (2004). The editors, Pauline Kaldas and Khaled Mattawa, used the story of Shahrazad's sister to describe the historical situation of Arab Americans: "It is Dinarzad who asks for a story on the first night and on subsequent nights . . . With that invitation Shahrazad begins . . . But the tales end without a clear sense of what happened to Dinarzad. Central as she was to the structure of the tales, she disappears into silence" (p. ix). By analogy, "the lives of Arab Americans have been similar to that of Dinarzad. Though Arabic-speaking immigrants have been coming to the United States since the late nineteenth century, it is only recently that their fellow Americans have become aware of them" (p. ix). In their attempt to describe the situation of Arab Americans who were "in a sense like their ancestor Dinarzad, helpful to the dialogue about a new American culture but generally unheard," the editors explored some reasons why Arab Americans, in general, have shied away from literary endeavours:

> Arab American writers may have wished to exert greater control over the representation of their community. The narrative elements in their poetry were mediated through the exertion of the poet's subjectivity that lyric poetry has traditionally demanded. However, in the last few years, emboldened with a sense of urgency and confidence as well as a deeper ethnic and feminist consciousness. Arab American narrative has begun to emerge. (p. xi)

Another hurdle that Arab American writers have confronted is the American publishing establishment, which "has created a formula for success for ethnic writers, particularly women. . . they were aware of how any criticism of Arab culture could perpetuate negative stereotypes, thus shrinking Arab Americans' sense of freedom, not enlarging it" (p. xii). In this politicized context of the slow but steady emergence of Arab American writers, the editors have explained that this anthology is an "attempt to familiarize the average reader with Arab culture and its presence in

the United States, with its positive and negative aspects" (p. xiv). The anthology presented a new generation of Arab American writers who are more conscious of current issues of identity and culture: "More ethnically and politically conscious, the current generation of Arab American writers sheds a more critical light on issues of heritage, gender, nationalism, and assimilation within the Arab American community" (p. xiv).

The third collection, *I Think of You* (2007), was edited by Ahdaf Soueif, who is considered one of the leading Arab Anglophone novelists. The collection generally explored tensions of assimilation and displacement:

> Ahdaf Soueif details the lives of a series of Arab women as they traverse the cultural line that divides East from West. The heroines of Soueif's fiction range from young girls to mature women, each one linked by the difficulties of moving between two very different cultural environments. Additionally, each must deal with daily confrontations between the known and the unknown, modernity and tradition, and youthful freedom and parental rule. (Froebel, 2007, para. 1)

Soueif's characters, such as those in his novel *The Map of Love* (1999), move between the two different cultures of Egypt and England, creating a keen sense of entrapment between tradition and the new world.

The Chosen Stories and Double Consciousness

Salwa Mohareb Said's story "Choices" appears in both *Arab-Canadian Writing: Stories, Memoirs, and Reminiscences* (1989) and *Pens of Many Colors: A Canadian Reader* (2002). The story deals with the notions of being torn between here and there, between the present and a remote past, and with eroded memories. The author holds a BA and MA in English from the American University in Cairo, and her "short stories for children were published in England by Longman's, and broadcast by the Egyptian broadcasting service" (Rostom, 1999, p. 72). The

story “Choices” draws immediate awareness to the experiences of Arab immigrants, covering “Nadia’s recollection of her desire to immigrate from Egypt to Canada, her struggles against unemployment and racism, her accomplishments, and her nostalgia for the land she chose to leave in her youth” (Werner-King, 1990, p. 64). The story also demonstrates how her “memories are triggered by an upcoming move from Toronto to St. John’s and her daughters’ reactions to the news” (Werner-King, 1990, p. 64). Another appeal of the story is its treatment of the relationships between parents and children. For instance, Nadia watches her daughters argue once she tells them about their upcoming move: “Hala was full of enthusiasm and wanted to start planning right away . . . Leila was quick to interrupt her younger sister, “What do you mean Great, you twit? We’ll have to leave all our friends and . . .” (p. 5). Her daughters’ argument reminded her of her mother saying, “the same fire that melts the butter, hardens the egg” (p. 5). In “Choices,” the act of relocation can be viewed differently by parents, siblings and first and second generations in immigrant communities.

Laila Halaby’s story “Fire and Sand” appears in *Dinarazad’s Children: An Anthology of Contemporary Arab American Fiction* (2004). Author of the novel *West of the Jordan* (2003), Halaby has written poetry, short stories, novels, and children’s fiction. The protagonist of the story, Khadija, is a teenage girl who declares at the beginning that in America, her name “sounds like someone throwing up or falling off a bicycle” (p. 73). She is caught between her father’s shattered dreams after immigrating to America and her mother’s insistence that she is Palestinian and not American, an apt depiction of the issue of double consciousness. The story also conveys a deep sense of disillusionment, a possible outcome of the fractures in culture and understanding between parents and children. Khadija’s father tells her that he “has many dreams that have been filled with sand.” He further asserts, “This country has taken my dreams that used to float like those giant balloons, and filled them with sand” (p. 75). Khadija is very apprehensive: “I wish my

father wouldn't tell me these things. I feel empty and scary" (p. 74). Her anxiety builds up and combines with moments of uncertainty and expectation: "Sometimes my father loves my mother – and the rest of us – so much that he becomes a kissing and hugging machine . . . But most of the time he is sad, his thoughts are somewhere I cannot visit" (p. 74). Khadija's interactions with her Ma (mother) are equally unsettling:

> Ma and I have the same argument, only she gets really mad: "You are Palestinian," she says in Arabic.
>
> "*You* are Palestinian," I tell her in English. "I am American."
>
> "You are Palestinian and you should be proud of that."
>
> "Ma, I can't speak Arabic right, I've never even been there, and I don't like all of those dancing parties. I like stories and movies. I can be American and still be your daughter."
>
> "No! No daughter of mine is American." (p. 76)

The experience of living between two cultures is a recurring motif in this story.

Ahdaf Soueif's collection *I Think of You: Stories* (2007), in which the story "Knowing" appears, captures the anxieties of moving into new homes and homelands. In "Knowing," a little girl moves with her parents to England from a world which is "safe and pleasant and the worst grief I know is to be beaten at Snakes and Ladders by Uncle Murad" (p. 5). "Knowing," as the title emphatically implies, suggests how knowing or not knowing the language or the culture of the receiving country can either hinder or boost familiarity with that new culture, which otherwise could be very disruptive and alienating. It also betrays a sense of ambivalence in that knowing one's original culture might tenaciously impede assimilation.

The protagonist of the story is a little girl who enjoys the surroundings she knows very well: "I remember a time of happy, dappled sunlight" (2007, p. 3). She lives in a world that is almost perfectly hospitable: "The grown-ups are wonderful. They drink tea and smoke and laugh

and talk all the time . . . Yes. The grown-ups are wonderful. And clever. And wise. They can do anything, explain everything" (2007, p. 4). The adults offer her a world that is welcoming and familiar: "Yes. The world is safe and pleasant and the worst grief I know is to be beaten at Snakes and Ladders by Uncle Murad . . . This is my home. I know the address by heart" (2007, p. 5). She prides herself in singing songs of national identity: "I come from upper Egypt / Like my father before me, / And my granddad too, / He comes from Upper Egypt" (2007, p. 10). Childhood becomes a state of perfect innocence, and an Edenic atmosphere dominates: "Yes. To everything there is an order and a pattern. And the pattern and order are good. Time, from one birthday to the next, runs gently by, overflowing with abundance of pleasures" (2007, p. 12). This hospitable landscape is set in sharp contrast to the new world she experiences in England:

> Then there comes a break . . . After many weeks I go on a long journey across the sea alone with my father. We land in a cold dark wet windy place with a lot of people and a lot of trains . . . Now I remember a new home . . . everything here is much colder, much darker than I'm used to. There is no one; no one except my parents. And I don't see very much of them, for I am sent to school. (2007, p. 16)

Ever since her arrival in England, the girl has experienced a new world that is drastically different from the one she has known before:

> The ambience of hospitality has shifted into an air of hostility. The sunny, colourful world of the people and places she knows slips into memory. The new world has a bleaker climate and is emotionally perplexing. The feeling of estrangement does not last long. Learning the language of her new surroundings, she finds the new world seems to take over sooner than expected. It seems that only by letting familiar things go and replacing them does the new world reveal itself to her. The new world exercises its own cultural encoding and provides its own cheerful alternatives. (Abdul-Jabbar, 2014, p. 154)

The girl experiences a world in which Ramadan dissipates into Christmas festivals and the Arabic tales of Clever Hassan are replaced with comics about vampires. The story dramatizes the sense of duality that defines the experience of immigrating to another country.

Why Use Short Stories?

Certain considerations made my choice of using short stories pragmatically appropriate and aesthetically appealing. In his attempt to regulate and augment the "act of reading," Iser began his discussion by referring to Henry James's short story "The Figure in the Carpet," which he used as a warning against looking at interpretation as a means of extracting a supposedly concealed referential meaning in the text. The peculiar characteristics of short stories help accommodate them to pedagogical and theoretical speculations by virtue of their brevity and succinctness:

> The short story is one of the most common narratives that is used in the language classroom. Of course, one of the characteristics of short story is that it is short. Therefore it can be read in one sitting and the pupils are not put off by an endless amount of pages. As the short story possesses a relative length, it contains just a few characters what makes it less complex and easier for the reader to follow. The short story disposes of limited time and space dimensions. It concentrates on one section of the characters' lives and offers a direct access to the action" (Garcia, 2007, p. 5).

Moreover, in *Teaching the Short Story: A Guide to Using Stories from Around the World*, Neumann and McDonnell (1996) argued that short stories tend to reflect "the values, basic assumptions, problems, ideals, and philosophical, social, and political climates of the world that created it" (p. xiii). In other words, the form of the short story is often utilized because of its readiness to yield metaphorical or allegorical representations. From this perspective, not only are

short stories attractive for students simply due to their brevity and entertainment value, but also because of their richness, subtlety and expediency.

Chapter 7: Double Consciousness: The Poetics and Politics of Being Canadian

For immigrants there is always the possibility of oblivion. To leave without a sense of regret, nostalgia or any promise to return home. There is a relief and a sense of clearness. Those who are capable of such a grand detachment provoke a sense of admiration in me … but those who exist in a new place that will never fully be their own, they live a convoluted, intellectual existence, swinging between the pessimism of the skeptic and the optimism of the absurdist.
Rawi Hage, "On the Weight of Separation and the Lightness of the Non-belonging" (p. 345).

Introduction to the Interviews

In the winter term of 2014, I conducted a pilot study in which I interviewed and collected data from two second-generation Iraqi-Canadian high-school students who had read two of the listed short stories. Following ethics approval, I administered a questionnaire/survey to collect demographic data from the two female participants, Nina and Beth (I have used pseudonyms for each of the participants), who responded to questions about their cultural background and personal information. The pilot study served as a macrocosm of the research at large, which intended to explore the ways in which second-generation Arab-Canadian high-school students, caught between two worlds, negotiate how their cultural ties inform their sense of identity. The pilot study also helped me check the validity of the study path.

The pilot study helped me explore and test my interview questions to determine whether identity issues matter for second-generation high-school students of Arab origin, and if they were antagonized by the urgency to blend into dominant society. The findings of the pilot study suggested that the participants responded readily to the arising issues in the selected reading, which resonated with their own personal experience. I decided to include the data I collected from the pilot study alongside the large study with students.

I used in-depth interviews, conversations, and questionnaire forms/surveys to elicit information from my participants. Over the course of my attempt to understand the experiences of second-generation Arab-Canadian high-school students, I found that the data revealed the

ways in which their cultural identity affected their learning attitudes and their understanding of the selected short stories. During these interviews, I was fully aware of my subjectivity and how it might hinder or help the process. Peshkin (1988) argued that researchers "should systematically seek out their subjectivity, not retrospectively when the data have been collected and the analysis is complete, but while their research is actively in progress. The purpose of doing so is to enable researchers to be aware of how their subjectivity may be shaping their inquiry and its outcomes" (p. 17). He added, "I wanted to be aware of process, mindful of its enabling and disabling potential while the data were still coming in, not after the fact" (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18). Likewise, I was keen to audit my reactions, consciously curb my emotions and maintain awareness of my position as a researcher.

In general, the students were responsive and expressive. They appeared comfortable and kind enough to offer me their phone numbers in case I needed anything and, as far as I noticed, never hesitated to provide information. However, and surprisingly enough, they were all reluctant to share their information, names and, definitely, thoughts with other students. All my participating students declined participating in group discussions and preferred to meet in person. Most of them stated that it would be awkward to talk about personal experience in class or with others, only because these issues tend to be very sensitive and family-related or cultural and religious, and therefore, they wanted to have that personal space to express themselves freely. As reflected in the participants' responses to identity and cultural issues, it was evident that there were certain anxieties that the participants experienced pertaining to their bicultural identity that the short stories sparked.

During the data analysis and the interviews themselves, I was aware that the participants' narratives may have been influenced by my presence, culture, and my own history as an Arab, and an insider to the experiences of Arab community and culture. I was also conscious of the

possibility that the students may have projected ethnic affiliations partially in response to the context, the questions, and their urgency to be genuine informers and contributors to the study. High school is commonly known as a time of severe peer pressure, when adolescents seek to situate themselves among certain groups within certain identity frames. Dissonance and reconnection are common shifts in identity formation. Second-generation students struggle to stay connected to their family's cultural ties, whereas they may involuntarily seek assimilation in school. Lafromboise, Coleman, and Greton (1993) argued that "individuals who live at the juncture of two cultures and can lay claim to belonging to both cultures, either by being of mixed racial heritage or born in one culture and raised in a second, should be considered marginal people" in the sense that their "marginality leads to psychological conflict, a divided self, and a disjointed person" (p. 123). Accordingly, negotiating identity, in the context of individuals living between two cultures, becomes greatly significant. Identity acts as a site of conflict that dramatizes personal narratives and evokes cultural representations.

When I began to work on the data analysis, I chose to interlink the participating students' comments in relation to identity issues and pedagogical implications, as opposed to devoting individual chapters to each student. I chose to do so because the collective impact of their responses gained momentum, and certain recurring and uniting themes continued to emerge and resurface. I conducted and recorded all the interviews after obtaining their permission to audiorecord. I allowed the participants to direct the conversation, and only interrupted when I wanted to clarify or verify something. All of the interviews yielded substantial data, so I did not feel the need to ask for another meeting to obtain more information. By the end of the interviews, I had collected a vast and rich amount of information about the students' personal experience and reflections on the readings.

The interviews, which were conducted over the duration of 11 months between August 2014 until June 2015, yielded about around 9 hours of audio recordings. The data were organized according to the themes and stories discussed. The ways in which the participants responded to their personal, cultural and educational challenges in Canada required interpretation. My ability to enter their worlds in an organized manner would be strategic and helpful in term of analyzing data and unfolding meaning. It would allow me to explore each story extensively and see affinities and contrasts of narratives across participants. The multi-layered responses produced in the interviews provided rich narratives and complex, social and educational interactions. The material obtained was both useful and appropriate for responding to the research inquiries. Here is a list of the participating students with individual brief biographical sketches.

The Participants: Brief Biographical Sketches

Nina

She chose the name Nina for the study. At the time of the study, she was a 17-year-old high school student in grade 12 who speaks Arabic and English. Nina knows how to speak Arabic fluently, but does not read or write in Arabic. Her parents were born in Iraq. She was born in Libya, then grew up as a child in Yemen, and immigrated with her parents to Canada when she was 8 years old. She does not wear hijab. She is proud of being an Arab Muslim and speaks English and Arabic at home.

Khalid

Khalid was a 16-year-old high school student in grade 11 who speaks both Arabic and English fluently. He knows how to read and write in Arabic. Born in Syria, he immigrated with his parents to Canada when he was 10. His parents are from Syria. Khalid speaks Arabic at home. He is a practicing Muslim, and believes that his Arab identity completes and complements his

Canadian identity. In the questionnaire, he remarked that school was tough for him "until [he] broke through the language barrier."

Ismael

Ismael was a 15-year-old student in grade 9 who speaks both Arabic and English. Ismael was born in Canada, though his parents are from Egypt. Ismael speaks Arabic at home: "It helps me remind myself of my roots and affirms my identity as an Arab-Canadian," he wrote in the questionnaire. Ismael considered himself to have had a very pleasant school experience. He went to an elementary school that offers an Arabic bilingual program: "My elementary school had many Arabs; my junior high was very multicultural, and had people from around the world."

Hana

Hana was a 16-year-old high school student in grade 10 who speaks both Arabic and English at home. She does not write and read in Arabic, but does speak Arabic, as she explained, "with an obvious accent." She was born in Canada, and her parents are both from Egypt. Hana visits Egypt almost every year, but the last time she visited was two years before the interview. She has family there and enjoys her frequent visits. She went to a bilingual Arabic elementary school and regrets that her Arabic language skills have not been as good since she graduated and moved to a non-Arabic bilingual school.

Amani

Amani was a 16-year-old high school student in grade 10 who speaks both English and Arabic. In the questionnaire, she explains, "Since I moved from Dubai, I have been finding troubles fluently speaking Arabic." She was born in Egypt and immigrated to Canada when she was two. Her parents and she intermittently lived between Dubai and Canada for a while during her childhood. Her parents were born in Egypt. Amani is a practicing Muslim who wears hijab.

Ibrahim

Ibrahim was an 18-year-old university freshman who speaks English "with little Arabic." He was born in Canada. His father is from Egypt, but his mother is from Kenya. He feels mostly Canadian "because of my main language being English," as he wrote in the questionnaire. He is a practicing Muslim who aspires to be a successful engineer.

Beth

Beth was a 16-year-old high school student in grade 11, who speaks both Arabic and English with an amazing bilingual proficiency. She was born in Iraq, and both her parents are from Iraq. She immigrated to Canada with her parents when she was 9. She also writes and reads Arabic comfortably well: "I love my first language! It's historical and one of the hardest languages to learn! I am quite proud to be speaking Arabic." In the questionnaire, she added that she was not happy with her current school: "I am going to a different school, a larger and more diverse school, where I think I will be more comfortable."

Patricia

Patricia was a 16-year-old high school student in grade 11. She speaks both Arabic and English fluently, but does not read or write in Arabic. Patricia was born in Libya, and her parents are both from Iraq. She immigrated with her parents to Canada when she was 9 years old. In the questionnaire, Patricia wrote that she is "more Canadian than Arab because I now live in Canada and will continue to study here."

Soueif's "Knowing" and Said's "Choices"

Only six of the participating students read Ahdaf Soueif's short story "Knowing" in addition to "Fire and Sand." Most of the students found the Soueif story too abstract and slow in pace, and some of them found the female protagonist's condition rather confusing. On the other hand, only three participants, Nina, Beth and Patricia, chose to read Salwa Mohareb Said's

"Choices" in addition to "Knowing" and "Fire and Sand." Generally, they all believed that Said's story is a first-generation tale that reminded them of their parents' immigration journey, but they did not connect with the story on the personal level. The stories provoked discussions about two central issues. The first issue, the early arrival of immigrants and their subsequent struggle of integration, whether for the parents trying to start a new life or for the children starting in a new school, resonated with most of the participating students. The second issue was the struggle to acquire a new language and the impact of knowing the parents' home language.

Most of the participating students were able to connect with "Fire and Sand" because it was a second-generation story, whereas "Choices" was more about newcomers' experiences. Nina asserted that she found some sort of connection with the story:

> In 'Choices', I really liked how the character was able to let the song bring back memories, the traditions, the language and stuff, and it was all part of her, and I feel - I feel like that sometimes, especially when I . . . like, I can listen to English radio and stuff, but when I hear, like, an Arabic song and stuff, it reminds me that I do have this other whole cultural side that is different.

Nina suggested that "Choices" helped her better understand her parents' perspectives and cultural values:

> The thing that struck me the most was probably in 'Choices', 'cause I do know that my parents struggled with coming here and stuff, and it was really tough especially you had no pre-exposure to what kind of culture it was . . . for example, one time, my Dad was talking to me and I guess he kind of let it slip and was, like, I sometimes wonder if I did the right thing and I never really realized they had this kind of conflict, whether they should have came [sic] here, and in my head I always thought that it was best that they came here, but I never realized it was a big thing inside their head.

Nina, however, explained that "Choices" was not her favourite story because it is about her parents' generation and not about her choices in life:

> I do understand the character and can sympathize with her and stuff, but at the same time, it is not . . . I'm not dealing with the same struggle 'cause it is not as if I had a choice; it was more like my parents' choice.

Khalid looked at the story from a more general perspective. For Khalid, "Choices" is a story about persistence and belief: "I enjoyed how . . . a person overcame the difficulty and, instead of giving up, like her sister, . . . she actually worked hard she basically made it work."

As a story about a struggle or a failure to blend in, Soueif's "Knowing" was well-received by some of the students because of their fond childhood memories. Amani liked how the story shows appreciation of one's culture:

> While I liked 'Fire and Sand' more, I did relate to 'Knowing' more because the girl appreciated her culture, and I found that because she was so young, she was used to, like, Ramadan and Arab celebrations; it was very different from 'Fire and Sand'.

However, for Beth, the girl in "Knowing" "was confused between the two cultures." Beth started to talk about her own experience when she first arrived in Canada. She found a great deal of resemblance between the story and the way she experienced her arrival. She pointed out how adjustment can be a struggle:

> When I came to Canada I was okay; like, I started getting into the environment and it was okay, but a year back, I went back to the Middle East, and after I came back, I got a huge depression because I sort of, I don't know, like, my mind got a refreshment of how it is back there, and when I came here, I just isolated myself for, like. three months. I didn't go out. I didn't do anything, so it was kind of emotional and I just was lost.

It is important to note here that in reader-response theory, it is paramount that students make a link with the story based on their own personal experience. The ways in which Amani and Beth connected with the story are good examples of transactional theory as proposed by Rosenblatt (1978), who stressed that magnetic experience between reader and text:

> A reader brings to the text his or her past experience and present personality. Under the magnetism of the ordered symbols of the text, the reader marshals his or her resources and crystallizes out from the stuff of memory, thought, and feeling a new order, a new experience, which he/she sees as the poem. (p. 12)

Other students expressed similar links with the story.

Patricia was equally quick to relate to "Knowing" in terms of the struggle to maintain ties to one's culture:

> When I first came to Canada and we watched TV. All the TV shows, I guess, are not child-appropriate in the same way they were in Libya. So it was kind of confusing and my parents would tell us, no, you are not allowed to watch this, but this is what kids here watch, and this is what they understand.

Patricia explained that students talked about it in school, and "that's how the kids are raised here." This was quite alienating for her, and it was embarrassing "not to understand what they are talking about too." Patricia understood how subtle and complex the experience of starting fresh in a new country can be: "The cultural context in Soueif's 'Knowing' provides a subtle glimpse into how the new world intrudes upon the narrator's newly acquired stability in a highly figurative manner" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2014, p. 154). Patricia illustrated one of these subtle glimpses into the experience of being in a new school with a different culture:

> The maturity level was not the same. I guess, in Canada, you grow to be more mature, I guess. I don't know, but when I was nine, I wasn't the same as all the other nine-year-

> olds, so the things that I would talk about, like Barbie dolls and all that stuff, they were past. They didn't do all that stuff. So they would tease me about being kind of younger than what I really was.

Patricia explained that that kind of experience had a tremendously shocking effect on her childhood: "That made me let go of everything that I valued when I was just nine years old and changed my thinking completely to fit what those other people are doing." Soueif's "Knowing" in this context is a narrative that dramatizes how that act of knowing can either build bridges or cut ties with past memories, cultural values, and the things that used to matter.

Essentially, reading Soueif's "Knowing" in class can be a good opportunity for teachers to exploit the subject of immigration and newcomers; and at the same time, it can be illuminating to students themselves. Patricia remarked that the story "shows [students] how people who are not born here, how much they struggle to fit in, so they maybe would be more open-minded to new students when they see their point of view." Patricia's view of how the story yields an opportunity for reformulating presuppositions resonates with Iser's proposition that "the process of formulating, then revising various interpretations of a literary text can potentially make the reader more open-minded and flexible in her reactions to the world at large" (Booker, 1996, p. 45). Appropriately, the story draws attention to this open-mindedness and invites students with similar experiences to share their personal stories. Khalid, for instance, liked how the girl overcame her difficulty "by reading, and that's something I can relate to." He explained that in the beginning he pretended to be someone else: "I did feel the pressure then. I felt that I had to be a completely different person; that's when I relied the most on books. I came back home; I basically lived in between my house and the library." The interaction between student and story here exemplifies what Iser called the "operations which the text activates within the reader" (p. ix) or the "dialectic relationship between text, reader, and their interaction" (p. x). For example,

the connection with books continued to be a source of fascination for Khalid: “she’s clearly depending on the books. She is not depending on her friends” because “she could still be in shock.”

Nina also believed that it is the acute encounter of one culture with another that may be the cause of crippling anxiety: “It was hard to connect with ‘Knowing’ because the girl had moved at such a young age, and she was able to remember things and stuff, but I do understand how she viewed all these things, and couldn’t understand what was troubling her so much, and it was more of a cultural thing.” Additionally, Nina suggested that the girl’s inability to reconcile two cultures is expressed through the kinds of books she reads and what these books signify: “At the end, her two nightmares consisted of the vampire which she read about in the new culture, I guess, and then the genie that she’s read from the *Arabian Nights* book, and I feel like those two together was the thing that really scared her,” which was “like the conflict of not being able to connect those two.” It is the possible irreconcilability of the two cultures that causes the nightmares, and also offered the opportunity for the students reading the story to speak about living between two worlds.

Ting-Toomey (2005) argued that many ethnic minorities experience a “struggle between an individual’s perception of being ‘different’ coupled with the inability to blend in with either the dominant cultural group or her or his ethnic heritage group” (p. 211). The result may generate a double awareness that can be exhilarating. Beth, for instance, explained the traumatic feeling of being trapped between two worlds:

> When I came to Canada, I was okay; like, I started getting into the environment and it was okay, but a year back I went back to the Middle East, and after I came back, I had I got a huge depression, because I sort of, I don’t know, like, my mind got a refreshment of how

> it is back there, and when I came here, I just isolated myself for, like, three months. I didn't go out. I didn't do anything, so it was kind of emotional and I just was lost.

As Gilroy has pointed out, being torn between two "cultural forms" invokes "the structures of feeling, producing, communicating, and remembering" (1993, p. 3). Beth has experienced "the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity" that Gilroy explored within the diasporic condition, which generates both the Duboisian double consciousness as well as what Gilroy referred to as the "desire to transcend" it (1993, p. 19). After explaining the sense of anxiety that she has gone through, and some unpleasant school experiences, Beth concluded that "now I grew stronger and can stand up for myself." For instance, Beth explained how school had reinforced her sense of double awareness and being culturally different:

> My social studies teachers are always like that with me because I come from a country where there is always war, so even when we study about war and stuff, they would always ask me certain questions and certain situations if I've been in them. Some of them are extremely stereotyped, so I would clear things out for them . . . I guess it depends on the teacher . . . sometimes it gets hard [to explain] because media has affected how people see things nowadays, so I would always have to explain how it is and go back so they would understand how it really is.

Such moments of interaction could be productive but equally intrusive (Abdul-Jabbar, 2012, p. 310). Pitt (2003) explained that sharing one's story is not necessarily beneficial, because it violates what Winnicott calls the "secret self" (p. 83) that students entertain. Basically, Pitt investigated how the category of the personal shifts from being intimate into being something intimidating: "how teachers and students make good their lives in the intimate space of the classroom" (2003, p. 85); or, in this case, how "the intimate space of the classroom" reinstitutes the narrative of doubleness.

Similarly, Amani found in Soueif's "Knowing" an opportunity to address the disconnect between school and culture. Like that of Beth, Amani's early encounter with her new culture was challenging; and, as it was for Beth, Amani's necessity to transcend the new intrusive awareness of being different was equally inevitable:

> I do feel that no matter where a kid is, they will get teased for how they are . . . I did find that, since I moved from Dubai, that kids here would bug you more about your dress or your accent; like, I remember when I was in grade six, I came when I was wearing the hijab 'cause I already wore it in Dubai, and so I did find a lot of really odd questions that I've never been exposed to before . . . It is just a bit extreme here and I didn't like that at first, and there were situations where I kind of wanted to move back and everything, but then I think over the time I had to adapt to what they say and just kind of stand up for myself, which I found a lot more difficult than when I was in Dubai.

Unlike Beth, whose unexpected visit to her original home triggered latent emotions, Amani found the religious aspect of her identity to be the most estranging. The hijab she wears became a constant reminder, if not a signifier, of foreignness for both wearer and gazer. However, Beth pointed out how religious symbols can be tolerated but not necessarily accepted:

> My friend, she wears a religious outfit, so she gets teased a lot by that, and I guess she doesn't know how to deal with that as much as I can deal with it. She had lots of problems . . . she had to move schools so often, so it was bad.

Beth, however, pointed out that she could relate to the girl in Soueif's "Knowing" because her early school experience had been equally unpleasant, but somewhat different. Although Beth does not wear hijab, she is associated with Islamic extremists only because she comes from the Middle East:

> When I first came here, people would make fun of me all the time. I learned English pretty fast, but when I first came here, they would always tease me in English in words that I didn't understand and stuff. I got bullied for quite a while because of where I came from; they would always call me a terrorist or stuff like that, so I did get emotional at times, and other times I would just ignore . . . especially today, teenagers care a lot about how they look and their appearance and everything . . . I guess my culture, like, doesn't [she pauses]; my parents are pretty open-minded, but for me, I like being simple, so I got teased a lot.

Gilroy argued that to be positioned within the paradigm of double consciousness is to "stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages" (1993, p. 1). Arab ethnicity betrays a cultural assemblage in which religion is the dominant socio-political descriptor. In "Negotiating Ethno-Cultural Identity: The Experience of Greek and Jewish Youth in Halifax," Byers and Tastsoglou (2008) argued in favour of the interconnectivity between ethnicity and religion in the process of identity formation: "Both cases of the Greek and Jewish groups in Canada provide examples where ethnicity is strongly connected with religion, indeed intertwined, regardless of the particular geographical origins of their members or their ancestors, pointing to the need to take into account religion more seriously in our analysis of ethnicity" (p. 10). Similarly, Amarasingam (2008) noted that the "formation and maintenance of ethnic identity is often intimately tied to religious heritage, and it would be prudent for scholars of ethnic groups in Canada to pay attention" (p. 166). The interplay between ethnic and religious identity constitutes one of the marks of Arab-Canadian identity formation.

The story "Knowing" offered the students the opportunity to speak about the capacity of speaking Arabic, the importance of doing so in order to maintain cultural roots, and the struggle of newcomers to learn English. Like the girl in "Knowing," Patricia explained that she

encountered difficulty because of a language barrier: “Especially that I didn’t know how to speak English properly, so it was hard to make friends. It was different. You are in a different country. They value different things and have different beliefs, and it was hard to communicate.” Khalid also agreed that the story reminded him of those early days: “It was a bit difficult because I didn’t know, I might have known the language. I knew English before I came, but I didn’t know all the different jargon, I guess, the slang . . . I didn’t know the small things. It might not really seem too much, but they add up.” The participants, however, expressed a different kind of frustration, over losing their native Arabic and the possibility of severing ties with their culture due to that loss.

The intensity of being caught between two cultures implies an uneasy and often rather antagonistic, double existence between two languages. Amani touched on the issue of speaking in one’s first language at home rather than speaking English:

> because my Mom would want me to speak Arabic at home rather than English, because I go to a public school, so that’s where I would speak my English, so I would still have a balance of both and wouldn’t be losing my culture, and I would still be adapting to local society.

To Amani, this regulated aspect of language practice seemed to make sense and ultimately became rewarding. Similarly, Ismael explained how moving from the bilingual school and losing the bilingual program did not minimize his Arabic language skills “’cause we still speak Arabic at home, right? So it’s not like I completely stopped speaking Arabic.” Ismael believed that being able to speak Arabic brought him closer to the Arabic culture “’cause, like, I can’t interact with my relatives if I can’t speak Arabic, and then if I can’t speak to my relatives, I’m not sure I have a culture.” He acknowledged that there was a sense of frustration among his friends because they do not speak Arabic. For Hana, speaking Arabic was a pivotal way to better connect with her culture:

> A lot of things that are written and said about Arab culture are in Arabic . . . I feel that there are some things that you cannot get from being able to do it in English as you can in Arabic. But [it] also allows you to connect with people from your country better if you can speak in Arabic. Even if it is, in my case, a really bad accent, but at least people know what I'm trying to say. It also allows you to speak to people maybe not from your country, but you speak the same language. It is definitely an important part of being in your culture.

Soueif's "Knowing" also offered the students the opportunity to speak about acquiring a new language and the ways in which language acquisition affects one's cultural identity:

> My parents are pleased that I find my feet and learn the new language so easily. I miss my aunts and uncles and grandparents. But now I like my new friends. . . . I like cuddling up to Miss Eve at storytime. I like taking a goldfish home for the holidays. I miss the sun. But I like the evenings when I sit at my mother's feet in front of the fire. She reads and writes and I look at pictures. There are no sugar dolls, no Ramadan lantern, no Eid, and no sheep. But instead there is Father Christmas and a stockingful of presents. (2007, p. 17)

The girl in the story speaks about how learning English was an eye-opening experience for her, while the participating students spoke about either their own experience of learning English or of knowing Arabic. Patricia pointed out that knowing Arabic "wasn't [a privilege] at first. I wanted to say, no, English is my first language. But now as I get older, I value knowing a second language." In this sense, Patricia connected with the experience of the girl in "Knowing," whose urgency to acquire English exemplifies the ways in which Arabic and English become strangely oppositional. For the girl in the story, this opposition leads to nightmares populated by fictional

characters from books she has read in both languages. However, like Ismael, Patricia explained that knowing Arabic helped her connect better with both parents and relatives:

> Even just on TV, when my Mom watches Arabic TV, I can actually understand sometimes and their life is completely different, and I'm able to communicate with my grandparents and my aunts and uncles, and if I couldn't speak Arabic, then I can't even talk to them. . . If you do not know the language it is very hard to feel like you belong in your family.

Similarly, Ibrahim agreed that if he were able to speak Arabic, that would have brought him closer to the culture: "Yes, definitely, because language is a major part of any culture . . . because you can't be part of the culture if you can't communicate." Patricia, however, contended that language itself can equally be estranging if not confusing: "Probably all the glass and the pictures that say stuff in Arabic. It's not that it doesn't mean anything to me; it's just it kind of portrays how we are deep into this culture and stuff, but we live in Canada, so it is kind of confusing." Reading Soueif's "Knowing" allowed the participating students to bring in their own experience about being in a new country or of the struggle to reconcile what Gilroy calls "two great cultural assemblages" (1993, p. 1), which invokes the notion of double consciousness.

Halaby's "Fire and Sand"

Of the eight participants, only Khalid and Ismael chose not to read "Fire and Sand," preferring the other two stories. Khalid and Ismael wanted to read a story about both second- and first-generation experiences. Among those who did read "Fire and Sand," Nina was able to connect with the story because it was a second-generation story, whereas "Choices" was more about newcomers' experience. Two of the seven participants, Patricia and Ibrahim, were uneasy about using Halaby's "Fire and Sand" in class for reasons that will be discussed later on. Others felt that it would provoke a good discussion in class.

The short story starts with Khadija, the protagonist, complaining that her name sounds "cluttering clumsy." She explains, "In America my name sounds like someone throwing up or falling off a bicycle" (p. 73). Amani started her discussion of "Fire and Sand" by referring to that name issue: "I like my name perfectly fine, and I found it not even, like, that hard for my peers to say my name, and I don't know; I don't really like her name [Khadija's], but I like mine [chuckles]." Ismael expressed a similar frustration with his name: "My name is kind of long; it's kind of complicated." Beth did not exactly adore her name either because of a similar experience when she first arrived in Canada:

> When I first came here, I had trouble with my name too. Many people couldn't pronounce it at first, and many people made mistakes, even though it is very simple. I didn't really like my name for quite a long time. I guess it got better afterwards. I also had trouble with my friends and I still do have trouble making friends because of my cultural background and how the community is here.

Like Khadija, it seemed that Beth was also uneasy about her name, which betrays ethnic associations: "we read names as signifiers not only of one's individual identity and membership in a particular family, but of one's membership in a particular racial, ethnic, and/or cultural group" (Nakashima, 2001, p. 114). Beth explained that, over the years, "I got more comfortable with my name and myself now, but I see it with other friends; if they have, like, more religious names or anything, they face more problems." Ibrahim pointed out that his name is easy to pronounce and remarked that, probably, only people whose names are not very popular among Arabs, or hard to pronounce, could struggle with that issue:

> She doesn't like her name, I guess. She feels like an outsider and, of course, everyone has feelings of, okay, maybe people don't accept me, but I feel like this has never been, you

> know, it's really never been a problem about my name or, you know, it's kind of, you know, we are here and we live our lives and, generally, people accept us.

Most of the participating students seemed to acknowledge and intuitively respond to, if not identify with, how names can be ethno-religious signifiers.

Some of the participating students did not like "Fire and Sand" very much. They explained that their dislike was based on the provocative cultural aspects of the story. Amani pointed out that Khadija seems ashamed of her culture:

> I didn't really like "Fire and Sand" so much in some part because of the girl and how she is reacting and how she is ashamed of her culture, so then when her friends would come over, she'd ask her Mom to cook American food and I didn't really like that because she was ashamed of who she really is, and she tried to adapt and fit in a culture that wasn't really hers . . . I'm very much the opposite. If I were to have my friends over, I would rather my Mom cook our food and they'd like it better.

The reference is to the incident in which Khadija invited her blonde friend Patsy for dinner: "I invited Patsy over for dinner anyway, but I hope Ma cooks American food because I don't think Patsy and her blonde hair will like our food too much" (p. 79). Nina related to the food incident as well:

> I was able to connect with when her friends came over and her Mom made her favourite dish . . . this is the same, like when my friends come over and my mom would make, say, like, for dinner something that we would eat . . . and they would be, oh, this is good, but still they wouldn't be totally forward in trying it and stuff.

In this context, Halaby's "Fire and Sand" continues to assert the transactional nature of the text's dynamic interaction with the reader and generation of interpretation. In the 1938 edition of her *Literature as Exploration*, Rosenblatt wrote: "The reader brings to the work personality traits,

memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition" (pp. 30-31). Similarly, for Patricia, certain awkward moments in the story, especially between Khadija and her Mom, resonated with her and reminded her of certain personal moments:

> My Mom would be driving my friends somewhere, and I'm in the car too, but they are not Arab. They are Canadian and my Mom would have Arabic music on. That would make me uncomfortable. Just because, well, I don't even like the song and I'm sure my friends don't like the song.

The short story provided the opportunity for Patricia to capture and reflect on these family moments or conditions.

Essentially, Nina pointed out that "Fire and Sand" was a true narrative of how, in diaspora, it is the small things that really matter in daily lives: "I was able to connect with the character [Khadija]. It was little things, like how her parents wouldn't let her have a sleepover . . . or how Mom made home-made fries." However, Nina was upset to see Khadija behave in certain ways that are, from Nina's perspective as somebody who shares Khadija's Arab/Islamic tradition, culturally inappropriate:

> In 'Fire and Sand', she was looking at the magazines and I know she shouldn't be looking at them, and when she was at her house, she became fascinated by them and when her Mom noticed . . . like, I understand how she was feeling, 'cause at certain points . . . when you come here, it is such a shock when you are not exposed to it and then you keep seeing it . . . and it is not so shocking anymore, so I understand her position, but I was kind of angry at the character that she'd given in to this rather than try to fight it.

Nina was equally frustrated at how Khadija refuses to be associated with her parents' cultural background:

> I was also angry at how she viewed herself as being she had to be either American or from Palestine; she didn't understand that there could be a mixture of both; then she viewed her parents as being the ones from there, and her being American, and how her Mom could still have an American daughter.

The reference here is to the argument that happened between Khadija and her Mom:

> Ma and I have the same argument, only she gets really mad:
>
> 'You are Palestinian,' she says in Arabic.
>
> 'You are Palestinian,' I tell her in English. 'I am American.'
>
> 'You are Palestinian and you should be proud of that'
>
> 'Ma, I can't speak Arabic right. I've never even been there, and I don't like all of those dancing parties. I like stories and movies. I can be American and still be your daughter.'
>
> 'No! No daughter of mine is American.'

Patricia found an intimate and immediate connection with this incident. She referred to how her ten-year-old brother would categorize himself as Canadian and not otherwise, because he grew up in Canada:

> In "Fire and Sand," when the girl was telling her Mom that she is American and not, I think they said, Palestinian. So she said, well, no, I'm American. This is where I grew up and that is how my younger brother would describe himself: not American but Canadian, and my Dad would always remind him, 'No, we immigrated here. We are not from here. We only have citizenship here. We are originally from Iraq.' But he was one when we came here, so technically, to him, he is Canadian.

It is within the context of belonging, of the absence or the presence of another self that is defined by cultural ties away from the here and now, that the story offers an opportunity to discuss double consciousness.

Like Patricia, Nina expressed a similar frustration about the confrontation between Khadija and her Mom: “I was saddened that the character couldn’t understand this.” She explained further:

> Even if she moved in here at a young age or whatever, she is kind of influenced by her family and stuff, and the fact that, not that if your family is something, you should be something, but their ideas and stuff flow on to you, so in a way, you are what they are.

Nina’s acute awareness of the necessity of reconciliation between one’s own perception of the self and its perception by others, be it parents or strangers. Double consciousness is “the condition of having two modes of perception;” that is, seeing one’s identity from one’s own perspective and seeing one’s identity as viewed by others (Williams, 2013, p. 76). Furthermore, like Patricia, Nina also spoke about her nine-year-old brother, who seemed to lean more towards being Canadian without binding strings attached to another self:

> Even though our parents try to make it part of who we are, ‘cause, for example, for my brother, this is where he grew up in . . . and he is Canadian throughout, and I feel like, just because, for example, I’ve been exposed to the Arabic culture and it was my initial thing that being Canadian was something that I added on to who I am when I moved in here.

Nina further explained that her two siblings did not feel cultural ties as intensely:

> Like even, for example, I remember when we were back in Yemen . . . in Ramadan, I remember the whole family gathering up and how Eid it is and how the streets were and stuff . . . but they [sister and brother] haven’t been exposed to how it really feels, so it is not as strongly . . . ‘cause it is not just stuff that your parents tell you, how wonderful it is, and it’s not like you were there.

Nina pointed out that how much one is exposed to a particular culture, in terms of being actually there as opposed to sheer virtual contact and what parents say, determines the intensity of cultural

attachment. Khadija insisted that she is American because, as Nina argued, "she goes on to mention that she doesn't speak the language, she's never been there, and she doesn't like the dancing parties and stuff." Nina further explained this condition of doubleness by using examples from her personal experience:

> Sometimes, when my parents are in the car and my sister and I are listening to English radio when we are on road trips . . . and it's time for Arabic music and I know my sister and brother wouldn't like it 'cause they moved in here when they are young . . . for me I'm kind of neutral at it, and once I start listening to it, I really start enjoying myself . . . it sounds really great when I understand what's going on, and I remember that song when I was little, and stuff like that … I don't know these tiny things.

Nina's observation here is exemplary of the manner in which double consciousness is perceived by Gilroy, who argued that "double consciousness emerges from the unhappy symbiosis between three modes of thinking, being, and seeing . . . This trio was woven into some unlikely but exquisite patterns in Du Bois's thinking" (p. 127). Nina's brief recollection illustrates Gilroy's narrative, as she was actually thinking about the car incident when being there and seeing her siblings' nonchalant reaction. Like Patricia's awareness of the awkwardness of playing Arabic music when her mother was driving her friends somewhere, Nina was conscious of how music, to a certain extent, mattered to her in a way that was quite imperceptible to her brother and sister because of Gilroy's triad of thinking, being, and seeing. Hence, she was able to consciously listen and connect to that cultural side.

Beth, on the other hand, asserted how parents exercise a tremendous influence on the effect of culture on a child's identity in the future, determining how a person may react to certain culturally sensitive situations:

> For me, the way a child is raised plays a huge role. When I read the story I saw, like, the parents were really, like, closed and stuff on their children, so of course, it is going to affect the way children react to a certain situation. So in "Fire and Sand," when the girl saw her friend in bed with the other guy, the way she reacted, I guess, if she was a bit more exposed to these things, she wouldn't react in this way. I've been in that situation before, and I guess I reacted differently because I have been exposed to that kind of stuff. My reaction was less than that. She ran away and left everything . . . because she was just shocked. For me, I did not run away; I just took it easy . . . so I think that the parents play a huge role.

For Beth, raising culturally responsible and responsive children informs one's double binds. In a very similar manner, Hana pointed out that happy, well-adjusted parents can either immensely hinder or help children's integration:

> I enjoyed that they showed different perspective a little bit; it did not show what everybody expects to see when they come to America or North America. They come to North America and they expect a better way of life; they expect things to be more; they expect everybody to be more accepting; they expect everything to be better, and these stories show that you do not always get that. Sometimes you go to a new place and it's not a good experience. People around you don't accept you. Your family doesn't enjoy themselves there, so they change and they are not the people they used to be. They become ruder or they become not as kind.

Hana seemed to understand how naïve it can be to romanticize immigration, and that "Fire and Sand" invites the readers to reconsider their presuppositions about immigration as a glamorous adventure or a fairy tale.

Two participating students, however, were uneasy about using "Fire and Sand" in class. For example, Patricia pointed out that students could be very judgmental of the father's abusive behaviour:

> I don't think I want to do it in class, just because there is so many different people from different backgrounds and cultures, and they would start judging, like, for me, look at Khadija's Dad, he was very, you know, he would hit them and do all that stuff . . . and they would be so judgmental towards that.

Similarly, Ibrahim vehemently argued that the story may reinforce stereotypes about Arabs and Americans as well:

> Arabs going into the Western world shouldn't be put down to the level that their struggle is, you know, not everything is about sex . . . I don't think it was fair to Americans either, in a sense that the only thing that we see from them is they make fun of her, they look at these magazines, they have sex whenever they are with their friends and stuff. I don't think that Americans can be put down to that; there are so many things about them that it can't be narrowed down to that small part.

Ibrahim found the story guilty of overgeneralizations and misguiding representations of Arabs and the Muslim community in general: "I don't feel that they are a good representation of . . . of my life here in Canada. I was born in Canada, though; just came to Edmonton later." He explained that the father figure is a very demoralizing representation:

> Even in this story about her father's drinking, I thought even in terms of Arabs in general . . . like typically it's the younger generation that tries doing those things. I found that very strange . . . like making the father a drinker and then her mother beats her. It's not a representation of the community.

Patricia sympathized with the father's character: "I think I can relate to that just because my father would say about how coming here you're not, you can't do everything that you are able to, so I think his dreams being crushed, it just made him bitter and unhappy." However, Patricia, as a member of the Arab community, was somewhat apprehensive about using the story in class:

> Well, because there is all this thing with terrorism, and all this stuff towards Muslim Arabs, I think it is just, I don't know, I think it is just more people, like, when they think about it, there is the stereotypes where Arabs hit, you know, they are violent. I don't know about Italians. I think people would be more judgmental about Arabs 'cause I'm Arab.

Ibrahim was equally sceptical about the purpose of this story and the intention of the author:

> It makes me feel that it makes me think, like, whoever wrote the story, what was their purpose in terms of, you know, where is this coming from and why. It made me uneasy, even when her argument with her aunt, I feel like that's never, you know, most people accept that, you know, if you've been here your entire life, then you are not going to be, you are no longer just like, in her case, Palestinian; you are no longer just that if you've been here your entire life. In my experience, most people accept that you are no longer Palestinian or whatever . . . especially when you grow up here, you spend most of your time in school, I guess, with Canadians and stuff so.

Patricia's and Ibrahim's comments on cultural representations in the story, among other comments by other participants, resonate with Bleich's reference in *Subjective Criticism* (1978) to the process of interpreting a literacy piece as an act of "negotiation," and how "it is dependent on his notion of an 'interpretive community'" (Probst, 1988, 12). According to Bleich, the act of eliciting meaning necessitates establishing connections with a community: "Two or more readers come together, with a common interest in knowledge of something they have read, and talk in such a way that knowledge is the result" (Probst, 1988, 12). Bleich, one of the pioneers of reader-

response theory, argued that meaning invokes the presence of a community, and believed that community is key to interpretation.

School versus Home

Self-identification as Arab-Canadian was the basis for participation in my study. All participating students identified themselves as ethnically Arab. In general, they considered being Arab as part of their Canadianness. Their self-identification as Canadian was habitually attributed to being born in Canada, or arriving in Canada when they were very young and being raised in Canada. Another recurring assertion was that Canada was where they attended school and made friends, so Canada was the place where they feel most comfortable and therefore call home.

Essentially, double consciousness is a condition in which the individual occupies a space that "navigates between two cultural groups and occupies space within both cultural groups. This space holds a challenge and a privilege" (Smith, p. 7). In this context, the purpose of using short stories in this study is twofold: first, to enhance students' engagement in reader-response interpretation, and second, to help students negotiate that space of "a challenge and a privilege" that informs their diasporic identity and awakens their sense of doubleness.

The students addressed the ways in which school and home seemed to be conflicting spaces that project a sense of doubleness. Amani, for instance, expressed a sense of ambivalence because she had to be one person at home and another person in school:

> I would definitely say that I would act differently with my Mom than I would with my friends at school because not just simply that our values are very different than what their values are. This is where I need to be aware of what I say in my house and what I say at school, and I don't really like that, because then I'd rather be just one person, not two, during school and my house.

She argued that she found her true self within the safe ethnic boundaries of her community, marked by its congruent spirituality and commonalities:

> I think I kind of am more of a household person [be]cause specially in our community, where I am very close with a lot of Arabs and a lot of kids that immigrated, like, we still have the same experience. So I would say that I practice my household kind of personality more than I would with my school friends, because my school friends, I don't really hang out with them outside of school. I don't really think that we relate that much, and so my school personality is only during school, and I don't really take that outside with me. It's just during school hours.

Amani seemed to be conscious of the rupture between who she is at home and in school. However, she prudently navigates through both, and seems to find assurance and comfort under the wings of her community. Du Bois suggests that the goal of striving towards autonomy is a self that would be true in its conscious representation of itself. Amani seemed to be exceedingly conscious of that doubleness, especially in school, where she had almost had to pretend to be someone else:

> I find it hard to, since I'm a minority at school, it's a bit harder for me to embrace it only on my own; whereas if there was more kids, even like in North American society more kids from the same background, they would kind of like, we would always support each other, but when I was in school like last year, there was only five kids out of six hundred that were Arab, so it was definitely hard for me to do it all on my own to embrace my own culture, and I guess that's why I had two personalities.

In effect, to be positioned within the paradigm of double consciousness is to "stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 1). As a result, the individual occupies a

space that "navigates between two cultural groups and occupies space within both cultural groups. This space holds a challenge and a privilege. Two-ness can be a hindrance" (Smith, p. 7).

Nina shared a similar feeling of ambivalence. When asked if she believed she had a combination of two personalities, Nina's answer was in the affirmative: "I know in school it is hard to be both . . . even at home it's hard . . . our parents would like us to speak Arabic and stuff and some of the ideas are not the same and there is this kind of barrier sometimes." Like Amani, Nina spoke about school as a dynamic site where she was questioned and yet never given the chance to talk about it: "People say you come from a different culture at school and it's cool, but they don't really understand it, and sometimes they don't understand why I don't do this or I don't think that way." She further explained: "Sometimes they'd say, 'Do you want to go to a movie?' and I'm like, 'I'm sorry; we have a family night' . . . it is just like values that are hard for them to understand . . . it is just hard to make those two worlds go together." Furthermore, with my growing interest in what she had to say, I asked her to comment on a hypothetical scenario in which she were to move to a new school and was asked by the teacher to introduce herself. In that case, would she bring in the Arab part as she introduces herself? Her response was that mentioning her ethnicity would be, in this case, undesirable: "Probably not, though. At school I feel that's just people automatically just judge, [abruptly] not that I'm ashamed of it, but people just automatically go off." She elaborated that when new students are asked where they are originally from, they hesitate

> because it brings all these things like judgment … they think about the person before they get to know them, but being Canadian is, like, oh, you're like everybody else so we'll get to know you as a person rather than what our ideas [are] about your culture, what we've been exposed to before, like through television and stuff.

Evidently, Nina did not want "forms of orientation in the world" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 39) to define who she is, and that is essentially why she was reluctant to introduce herself as Arab-Canadian.

In other words, as Du Bois argued, "the racial and class marginalization" that the black folk "experience within the society [is] due to their 'other,' African, forms of orientation in the world, which . . . are used by their white counterparts to bar them from economic gain, equality, and recognition" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 39). These "forms of orientation" materialize, within the context of Arab Muslims, in terms of stereotypical representations of terrorism and violence that, for instance, Patricia speaks about:

> Well, because there is all this thing with terrorism and all this stuff towards Muslim Arabs, I think it is just, I don't know, I think it is just more people, like, when they think about it, there is the stereotypes where Arabs hit, you know, they are violent.

Double consciousness, in this sense, refers to an internal conflict between what is assumed to represent Arab identity, as perpetuated by media and reinforced by stereotypes, and what is Canadian. Similarly, "by double consciousness Du Bois referred most importantly to an internal conflict in the African American individual between what was 'African' and what was 'American'" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 17).

Unlike Amani and Nina, Patricia seemed to find her true self in school. She struggled to be herself at home. Her Canadian self contradicts who she was at home, intrudes, and dominates, which caused misunderstandings at home:

> At home I pretend [chuckles] but when I'm at school, I feel slowly that becomes more like my true identity, because I'm more exposed to school. I do live in Canada. I'm going to study here. I'm going to university here. I have to adjust. So it is hard to speak to my parents, and they tell me, well, when I was your age I wasn't doing this all that stuff, and I

> have to keep reminding them that I'm not the same. My life is different and that's how I adjust; that's how I cope, by trying to make my parents understand me.

For Patricia, the school-self of her true identity "gets more and more to be who I really am as I, like, lean away from my parents." Her sense of double consciousness translates into the way she attempted to reconcile herself with her parents' expectations and cultural values.

Other participating students, however, expressed more moderate views. Hana, for instance, explained how being in a multicultural school provided herself and others with friends and a safe environment that helped them accentuate their ethnicity:

> At school there is not as many people to speak in Arabic with. At home I definitely use Arabic more, but I feel at school, it gives me more space to express my ethnicity because people there, my friends and whoever, they understand that I am both, and that allows me to be not only the Canadian part of me but also the Egyptian part of me; the parts that aren't stereotypically Canadian. I think at home it is kind of the same. I get to definitely show more Egyptian than I would at school, but that's mostly because of things like language and certain ways that I do things as an Egyptian that I might not as a Canadian. I don't feel like it's a huge difference, but I feel like that's because my family has really been accepting of both cultures.

Multicultural school, in this context, helps students to navigate comfortably "between (at least) two great cultural assemblages" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 1). Like Hana, Khalid asserted that his school experience was convenient, despite some different instances:

> I did go to a very multicultural school where it would be odd to find somebody who is, like, who has a completely Canadian accent . . . but I did see people . . . who tried strongly to maybe to, like, repress, I guess, their accent or their dress to change it to become as Canadian-like as possible.

Likewise, Ismael pointed out that it was not very alienating if he was asked certain questions at school. Ismael explained that students asked him about why he did not eat pork, for example, but for him, it was a casual question that could be answered easily "'cause they [school friends] have Indian friends; they do not eat beef, so they are, like, used to that." He also believed that there was no pressure to be more Canadian at school: "I don't know; like, there is still Arabs in the school. It's multicultural. It's, like, open. I don't feel like I have to be more Canadian or be more Arab." Ismael, as noted in the biographical sketches, went to an elementary school that offers an Arabic bilingual program and is dominated by Arab-Muslim students. Patricia asserted how cultural values are easier to embrace within the household boundaries with no school strings attached:

> I think you can embrace your own culture, I guess, privately, so being in Canada it is different with the media and all your friends in school and everything, but I still, it is [difficult], like when I do come home, it is a different culture and I'm able to embrace that, but not to the extent that I would if I were living in a Middle eastern country.

In effect, the paradigm of double consciousness as the condition to "stand between (at least) two great cultural assemblages" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 1) can be seen within the matrix of the influences of home and school on students' identity.

On Being Canadian

Ideally, ethnicity and nationalism should not be treated as "clearly divisible and dichotomous categories outside Canadianness" (Mahtani, 2006, p. 171). In this study, the participating students responded to the question of how their own perception of Canadianness helped or hindered assimilating their cultural values in their attempt to occupy that space, "a space that "navigates between two cultural groups and occupies space within both cultural groups. This space holds a challenge and a privilege. Two-ness can be a hindrance" (Smith, p. 7).

Being asked if being Canadian makes it difficult to embrace one's culture triggered a variety of responses from the participating students.

Amani referred to her school experience and how nationalism and ethnicity sometimes become defining factors for some students:

> That's kind of a tough question . . . I don't think that it's kind of difficult because I know some friends who are Arab, but they are one personality both at home and at school, and they embraced their culture more than anything else; like, I was in class with a lot of kids who were very very proud of who they are and they didn't really [she pauses] like, even though they had Canadian citizenships, they did not say they are Canadian; they would say they are, like, from Syria or, like, from Lebanon, and I found that was kind of inspirational, but I don't have that point just yet, because I find it hard, like, in school to stand out of the crowd, saying that I'm only Egyptian, for example, so it is sometimes difficult … I think it depends on the crowd I'm with and their cultural backgrounds.

Amani referred here to a group of students whose double consciousness becomes a public articulation of their identity. Gordon (2007) argued that "those with double consciousness are those who appear in public life as members of a group the life-world of which has been ruptured and subordinated" (p. 153). Nina shared a similar sentiment. She believed that the Arab culture defined her the most: "I don't know if it's because I'm in a place that is full of people different from everybody else, that this is what sets me apart. I feel like without it [Arab ethnic background] I'd totally be a different person, completely not who I am." She continued, "I feel like, if I'd lived in an Arabic country, not that the Canadian culture hasn't shaped who I am, but I feel I wouldn't be that much different." When asked if this doubleness is well-balanced, she remarked that one self tends to dominate the other, depending on place and situation: "I'm kind of working on it . . . but depending on the place, one dominates the other. It's truly hard that they

can co-exist." Nevertheless, she asserted that it is the fusion of both capacities that defines who she is: "I feel I'm a combination of both; that I'm mainly Canadian at school and then at home I'm mainly like an Arabic, and I got used to it." Actually, Nina believed that there is a creative and interesting edge to being Arab: "I really like having the Arab culture; it creates just a different dimension . . . I feel like if I was mainstream, I'd be in my head right now; I'd be viewing myself as boring, really."

Nina pointed out that both students and teachers expect Arab-Canadian students to know more, especially stressing the notion of difference: "You know more about the world and more experienced and they do expect that from you . . . you've experienced so much by moving here definitely more than ordinary people would experience." Similarly, Blau and Brown (2008) noted a thriving and creative aspect that marks diasporic identity: "The dialect of consciousness, under favorable circumstances, fosters creativity and personal freedom, while it also enhances an understanding of collective experiences that in turn inform an enlightened perspective on the ethics of living" (p. 43). Moreover, Said (2000) marked "the achievement of exile" as being "permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever" (p. 173). In effect, there is a generalizing effect about the diasporic condition: "that third space between home and the self. It is located nowhere and everywhere, which is to Said a productive source of creativity, although psychologically quite crippling" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015c, p. 9).

Likewise, Nina believed that being different could be inspirational, but not necessarily always pleasant:

> I do think it's rich [being caught between two worlds] but I'm definitely not sitting comfortably . . . and I do sometimes get uncomfortable when people, say, my friends, mention something about my culture and stuff, like, oh, by the way, she doesn't drink and

> stuff because blaa blaa blaa . . . you know what I mean. I do think that it's a struggle . . . I get uncomfortable because that's my other world.

In a similar manner, Beth believed that her non-Canadian self is also inspirational. When she discussed how isolating it could be to come from a different culture, I asked her if she wished she were a mainstream student. Beth affirmatively replied that she liked her ethnic background: "No, not really. I like my culture. I like my traditions. I like many things about my origins. I enjoy being half Canadian and half Arab, so I like it. I'm fine with it." Beth explained how her parents' attitude and ways have helped her adjust:

> Like, even my parents, the only reason they were open-minded and they were not religiously or culturally strict, so even back then, I was free to do whatever, but when I came here there was even more freedom, so my parents gave me a lot of freedom. I'm free to do whatever I want. But it's me. I wouldn't allow myself to do things like that. If I go on the Arab side, I find them extremely religious and culturalized, and if I go on the Canadian side, I find them too much freedom; they are just too free, like they don't have bounds; they are just there. So I kind of sit in between. I'm happy with myself the way I am. But once again I find myself isolated.

Walker (2008) suggested that people "who change their self-concept explicitly for either hegemonic acceptance or in direct opposition to the majority view, will experience negative consequences, such as alienation or isolation, resulting in high levels of depression, anxiety and somatization" (p. 7). Walker further argued that double consciousness "is a copying skill, but it can be considered maladaptive if it generates mental conflict" since "living in a pluralistic society as a cultural minority forces double-consciousness to the forefront as a coping mechanism" (2008, p. 7). When I asked Beth how she copes with that sense of isolation, she replied that she tries to ignore that feeling as much as possible so she can move on with her life:

> I actually still think like that. That's why I don't fit in with the group here. I try to fit in, but I can't fit in as much, but I just ignore it. I had a point in my life where my self-confidence really went down due to that. I did have depression before. But after a while I've learnt to ignore because nobody, you know, there is always somebody that will criticize you, so I just learnt to ignore it.

Beth continued to emphasize that one's relationship with one's parents, and the ways the parents treat their children at home, could exercise a tremendous influence:

> I live with my Mom. My Mom deals with me different than how my Dad deals with me. So my Mom is pretty open-minded; she is into the Canadian culture, I guess. So it is okay to bring my Canadian-self home, whereas for other Arab homes, it is not okay for their children to act that certain way. My brother, because I came here rather really young, I can speak Arabic fluently, I can write and read, so I'm fine; my brother . . . my Dad tells him always to speak Arabic at home. He tells me to speak Arabic with him and stuff. My Mom used to tell him not to do that. He can grow up and learn his own language, really, 'cause he needs to learn English. So I feel like my Dad is more on the Arab side and my Mom is on the Canadian side, so because my Mom allows me to bring my Canadian-self home, I do. So I stay, like, in the middle all the time. I'm always on both sides. With my Dad when I come here. My Arab side is more dominant here because it is just the way he is . . . it kind of differs on where and how you are.

Beth's responses seem to confirm both Nina's and Hana's assertions that it is the location that determines which of the two parts of the self dominates. The transition from the ethnic-self, which usually manifests best at home, to the public, mainstream-self seems to be purposeful and accommodating, but not without nuance and a degree of discomfort.

The generally proposed and commonly accepted notion among the students was that being Canadian is about being a combination of those two parts. Hana explained how these two sometimes conflicting parts operate:

> I guess when it comes to defining the way I make a decision, I'd have to say that it's a mix of both; I'm not sure that, I think that the Canadian side may have a little bit more of an upper hand. I know that when I have to make a decision on something, I definitely look for a compromise first before I look for a decision, whereas the Arab part in me comes out that I can be very opinionated on something, and I'm very passionate about those things, but when it comes to important things, I really try to find a compromise between two things first, and that's probably the Canadian in me that's trying to look for another way out without upsetting anybody.

Khalid, on the other hand, found compromise in the way he was living now: "I love how I was living before and love how I'm living now . . . there is good here and there is good there." He commented that being in Canada has given him a different personality dimension:

> There is more nature and greenery . . . it's not necessarily better here; it's just different . . . being Canadian is, really, it's one part Canadian, one part whatever it was, so I don't really feel it's two separate matters. It's kind of connected, I guess.

He found it pleasant and accommodating to be able to enjoy a combination of Arab and Canadian heritage: "It's more like, if there was two, it becomes one . . . because I'm a Canadian, but I'm still an Arab. I'm both." However, he argued that sitting comfortably between two worlds had not been the case with others who tried to hide their true ethnic selves:

> I do find friends who, they haven't necessarily been in the country for long, but they tried to completely ignore coming from another country. For some people, this is maybe a sensitive topic. I mean I usually connect with people, people who are immigrants, people

> who are Arabs, I guess. Some people, I've noticed, try to shy away from that, I mean, I leave them alone. They do have, I guess, they don't really like themselves as being from two different countries.

Those students that decisively shun their ethnic identity seek to avoid being prejudged based on their ethnicities, and therefore try to consciously escape the Duboisian crippling anxiety of being "torn asunder:"

> It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the type of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1903, p. 12).

When asked why he thought those students tried to ignore their ethnic background, Khalid remarked: "I guess they want to fit in more."

Khalid showed a sceptical attitude towards any aspiring desire to become a mainstream student, which clearly negates the general perception of being mainstream as an absolute privilege:

> Being Anglo-Saxon doesn't mean necessarily I'm not going to have problems. I'm just going to have different problems. I mean, in my culture, there is connection to family, I guess, and I know from a lot of my friends they have divorced parents and that's something that I can find as much in my culture.

Patricia, on the other hand, explained that she had wished she were mainstream when she first arrived in Canada:

> At the beginning, yes, because I was in grade four, so yes, I wished I was born here, but now I like being raised in Africa and saying no, I was born in Libya; I wasn't born here,

> but I am Canadian. I have my citizenship. I think it makes me understand more about the world. I was born in a different world and had a different life and now I'm more privileged.

Patricia's statement exemplifies how double consciousness is about navigating between what Gilroy called "two great cultural assemblages" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 1) and the attempt to find a "space within both cultural groups. This space holds a challenge and a privilege. Two-ness can be a hindrance" (Smith, p. 7). Patricia believed that finding one's true self within the space of difference and two-ness is an act of assertions and privilege.

Stoller's claim that ethnic identity remains decidedly "selective or intermittent in nature, making few demands on the individual" (1996, p. 165) explains Ibrahim's perception of doubleness. For Ibrahim, existing contentedly with a rather balanced image or perception of what an Arab-Canadian identity is key to social integration: "Honestly, to me, it doesn't really matter . . . both of them are part of who you are; honestly, you move around in the world; it's not a big deciding factor on anything, really." He continued, "For me, I grew up here, and my Arabi [Arabic] is very weak. You know you have both and it is compatible." When asked if he had experienced any situation in which the two cultures seem incompatible, Ibrahim replied:

> I didn't feel this was a common situation . . . from the people I know, at least most of them, they have their identity from here, and then they follow what their parents do. Generally, their parents, I guess, believe in ideas, so all of that, and at the same time, they have the culture from here.

He further explained, "For example, what is, like, Canadian food? There is no . . . everything is, like, maybe Greek, Italian . . . like there is no real Canadian . . . so, you know, we're just like everyone else, bringing whatever types of food." Like Beth and Khalid, Ibrahim seemed to find some solace and comfort in ignoring any discomfort resulting from doubleness, which for

Ibrahim was the inability to belong absolutely and unconditionally to one place or the other. In Ibrahim's case, not overthinking it is often key to accommodating with one's surroundings:

> For us, like, we feel okay; maybe I don't belong, but then, even if you go back, you don't really, I guess, belong there either. So, like I said, I don't think of it too much in terms of what's your ethnic background or your culture. I don't think that really matters.

Like Ibrahim, Ismael insisted that, in his mind, he did not see a huge difference being Arab and Canadian: "I think they are similar, but in things like drinking alcohol or dating, things like that, I'm Arab, so;" later, he mentioned, "not having sleepovers is another cultural thing."

Patricia's response to the assumption of two personalities shifting between school and home was in the affirmative:

> Religiously speaking, I am the same. Both parts of me are the same, like both parts of me are the same. I do value what comes through religion. It doesn't change, but culturally speaking, just like what they teach you in school and stuff about family and how family is supposed to be and stuff, that does come in conflict because that's not how my family is. It's hard to know what to believe, and especially about when you grow up to be more independent.

Amani also discussed how living between two cultural worlds was not a comfortable zone: "I think it's like a negative thing for me. I'd rather be just one person, and everyone knows me for that one person instead of having to act differently with different people." Beth argued that sometimes society makes it harder to acclimatize:

> It is not really problematic, but it does affect like my daily life. It's not like I'm Canadian, but it is the community here, the way people react to things here, and the way my culture would react to things there. They are a completely different side, I guess. So it affects the way I deal with issues. It affects how I treat people . . . like what kind of environment I

> like to be around, the friends I make, which . . . like, I don't have that many friends; I only have one, actually.

Gilroy proposed that diaspora should no longer be "seen as unitary; instead, its sociality is seen as based on movement, interconnection, and mixed references" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, p. 359). He proposed the notion of "a cleavage between two ways of conceptualizing identity, the one stemming from the symbolism of unity and the other from mobility and changing referents" (Chivallon & Fields, 2002, pp. 362-363). The participating students described how their attainment of unity needed to be colored by their cultural referents.

The Religious and Socio-political Aspects

For Du Bois, an assertion of true self-representation necessitates an exploration of double consciousness. In other words, the struggle to seek a similar reciprocal recognition of a person's true and conscious understanding of a politically-contested identity animates double consciousness. According to Gordon (2007):

> Double consciousness is trenchantly political. It describes precisely what is misguided and disingenuous about an easy going multiculturalism, by demonstrating that not all difference is equivalent. That, in fact, relationships among racial and ethnic groups are unequally structured . . . [and] determined by the history of formations of political membership in a given place (p. 155).

Beth, for instance, believed, "Society is still on the extreme sides. They can't be in between." Amani often found herself in a position in which she had to tenaciously defend rather than define who she is:

> This is very true, especially with the things that happened in Gaza recently, and I would be interacting with people outside the Muslim community or my household. I did definitely find some points where I was trying to defend myself and say no, I'm not like

> them, because we are not all the same, and I do find that that's a bit difficult at times because people don't listen to you. They kind of focus on what the media persuades to them, and I think our identities are not always as, like, true as they should be.

Nina spoke of similar frustrating situations in which people do not necessarily try to understand cultural differences and that much is based on sheer speculation. She spoke of the cultural insensitivity of joking or talking about a culture that people do not know:

> They don't try to get to know the culture, and it's really annoying. So one time, my friend was, like, "so you speak Lebanese?" And I was like, oh no, it's Arabic, and Lebanon is a country and stuff, and she was like, "oh cool," and she did not elaborate on it . . . so they don't try to know the culture, but at the same time they go and tease it.

Beth's proposition that society "is still on the extreme sides," which seems to find resonance with both Amani's and Nina's comments, can be resolved if cultures are better understood from both political and socio-religious perspectives. In this sense, the participating students argued that familiarity breeds respect.

The political aspect of identity has been extensively explored by Gilroy since, as he noted, racist discourse perceives double identities to be "mutually exclusive" (p. 1), and denies assimilation. Accordingly, any attempt that is geared towards coexistence can be viewed as a subversion of that claimed exclusivity. Beth, for instance, talked about how most of the challenges that result from being both Canadian and Arab could be resolved based on informed acceptance and not sheer tolerance:

> There are certain parts in me that can't connect with the other teenagers here, especially the Canadian ones, because they can't really understand my cultural background, and if I hang out with, like, Arabs who have the same cultural background like me, I still can't connect with them neither, because I'm in between. I'm open-minded, but I'm also closed

> in on myself somehow. So it makes it difficult to make friends and to communicate with other people.

Khalid spoke of mild differences such as "things that are sensitive; like, for me, I can't date, and stuff like that might conflict a little bit with here." When asked if the two worlds are irreconcilable, he replied, "I think I may have found that earlier, but I think I solved these problems and then moved on." He remarked that he was not able to reconcile both parts: "Not in the beginning. Right now, I think so." When I asked him how he was able to do that, he replied that he found people in his community who share the same experience:

> See, I think I found answers when I found people who may have related to me and made friends with people with similar history and past, and that's why I could learn from them and their experiences, and they can learn from my experiences and basically help me solve them.

For Hana, however, being Canadian should not only be defined by embracing one's own culture and accepting others, but by what Canada is politically meant to be:

> For me, being Canadian is not about being North American. For me, being Canadian is about embracing your own culture while learning to accept people at the same time, 'cause Canada is meant for peoples to immigrate to from all over the world, and it's meant to be [like that] so that the entire world would have a place to come if they can't be in their own country. That's what I feel Canada is meant to be. It is not always that way . . . and I feel like a person who wears the hijab is just embracing their culture in their own way, right?

This subjective coexistence, of "occupying the space between them [two cultural assemblages] or trying to demonstrate their continuity, has been viewed as a provocative and even oppositional act of political insubordination" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 1). Consequently, for Gilroy, the concept of

racialized identity within the rhetoric of integration "is still important within current political discourse" (Blake, 2007, p. 121). Double consciousness carries a political statement that unpacks preconceived notions of identity and continuously explores challenges of assimilating into mainstream society.

For Du Bois, double consciousness is a condition in which the locus of one's identity becomes external. Du Bois described the predicament of African Americans as a socio-political situation in which they value themselves according to how others value them. True self-representation becomes predicated on external approval as the individual, consequently, seeks "to satisfy two unreconciled ideals" (Du Bois, 1903, p. 13). Beth explained how challenging and frustrating it could be to explain one's cultural position:

> It gets awkward when they ask something . . . like, how did you deal with a certain situation when you were there or something, 'cause I could never interpret that to them, because I come from a different culture and I sort of grew up into that culture, so I learned how to deal with it, but when it comes to me explaining to them, I don't think they kind of understand what I'm trying to say or what I'm getting to, because they've never really experienced that. So it gets awkward. Sometimes it doesn't, because there are immigrants in my class, so it kind of helps to see other immigrants.

It seemed that Beth's plea for understanding resonates with Gilroy's perception of diasporic people's "desire to transcend" their own "specificity" (1993, p. 19):

> the Black Atlantic can be defined, on one level, through [a] desire to transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity. These desires . . . have always sat uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black

> movements and individuals embedded in national and political cultures and nation-states in America, the Caribbean, and Europe" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 19).

More positive exposure, explanation, and familiarity seems to be one way to unlock "the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity." Beth suggested that one way to resolve misunderstandings about cultural differences would be to write an assignment explaining things about her culture: "I want to explain to my Canadian friends that my culture is not what they see on the media, all the stereotypes, 'cause that's really lead to how they tease and bully me; it's because of the stereotypes that they see, so I want to let them know more about my culture and how it actually is in reality."

Nina referred to the story "Fire and Sand" to illustrate how one's ethnic background could be enriching. Her example shows how an individual can transcend his or her "constraints of ethnicity" (Gilroy, 1993, p. 19). Nina referred to the section in which Khadija's social studies teacher expected her to know more because of her cultural background:

> Mr. Napolitano, my social studies teacher, makes fun of everyone's name. He calls me Ham Sandwich. It makes me laugh. He expects me to know more than the other kids because my parents are not American, though there are lots of other kids in the class who aren't American themselves. I want to scream at him that I am just as American as anyone here. (p. 78)

Nina commented that the teacher thought "she knew more 'cause her parents were not American; she didn't say, because I'm not American or something, and she kept saying that, even though there were other kids who are not American themselves, like she did not identify herself as something more than just American." Nina realized that one's ethnic background can be one way of transcending being labeled or reduced to one fixed identity.

As Gilroy has pointed out, “Striving to be both European and black requires some specific forms of double consciousness” (p. 1). He defined double consciousness within the boundaries to be transcended, sitting “uneasily alongside the strategic choices forced on black movements and individuals” (p. 19). Hana spoke about the challenges and the forced choices confronted by the Arab community and individuals, as she felt she was treated differently when she was mistaken as being of European descent:

> I definitely think that people who are Caucasian or European are definitely treated differently depending on who it is. It can be good or bad. Especially in a North American country, they do get kind of top priority, and as being seen as a Caucasian person or a person of a European descent, I definitely get different treatment because of it . . . when it comes to summer and I don’t look that way [Caucasian or European], I definitely get a different treatment from people who are just meeting me . . . they are more careful about what they say when it comes to things about race and Islam, and they are more apprehensive about what they say, so yes, people treat you based on what you look like.

Hana continued to explain, “even in the summer, when I mention my name, because it is very European, people automatically assume that I’m from European descent.” Other participants explained that their values and cultural practices define their struggle between being Canadian and being Arab. Patricia, for instance, said that she often had to explain why she could not do certain habits that were common among her friends: “The boyfriend kind of thing . . . like it’s just here talking to my friends who are not Muslim and stuff, like it’s just something that you do; you are not considered cool if you do not have, like, a boyfriend.” We need to be reminded here that the Duboisian double consciousness is a problematic condition in which true self-representation is conditioned by how others value and view who you are. Patricia explained that she was often forced into an apologetic position:

> So I have to remember what my parents tell me and when my friends ask me, but why not; why aren't you allowed to? It's just, well, it's not the time for that. I'm not old enough. You don't understand everything that's going on. I do have to defend myself . . . sometimes they understand and say, that's so smart, but it just doesn't apply to them, like, oh, it's good for you, but I don't want to do that.

This desire to remember, explain, and defend invokes Du Bois's idea of double consciousness, which suggests "the *desire*, of members of the black (male) bourgeoisie, to prove to their former colonizers, 'at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect'" (Mocombe, 2009, p. 69). For example, the issue of wearing the hijab came up in the discussion as an often mistaken view and as a generalized example of how Islamic values can be misrepresented. It is an example of "gendered Islamophobia," which is part of the "specific forms of discrimination leveled at Muslim women that proceed from historically contextualized negative stereotypes that inform specific individuals and systemic forms of oppression" (Zine, 2008, p. 154).

Notably, Gilroy extended double consciousness to include "all of the African diaspora . . . to negotiate the predicament of being simultaneously outside and inside the modern Western world" (Williams, 2013, p. 29). The hijab is often viewed as something that falls outside the realm of Western tradition, whereas it is "something common to all monotheistic religions," especially in the way nuns wear veils (Sibai, 2015, p. 255). According to Du Bois' notion of double consciousness, "one source of frustration for African Americans is that they are not seen as part of the American nation. Du Bois uses a visual metaphor to describe the USA's willed ignorance of its black population, writing that African America lives behind a 'veil'" (Williams, 2013, p. 80). In *The New Politics of Race: Globalism, Difference, Justice* (2004), Winant's

argument about the divisive nature of the creation of the Duboisian veil can be compared to the Muslim veil or hijab:

> The veil not only divides the individual self; it also fissures the community, nation, and society as a whole. The veil's antagonisms, however, are also thoroughgoing interrelationships, such that it not only splits self and world along the 'color-line,' but simultaneously founds the self and produces the social world. (p. 26)

Figuratively speaking, the concept of the veil as described by Du Bois resonates with its Muslim counterpart in terms of symbolic significance. I argue here that both can be seen as a symbolic sign or a constant self-conscious reminder of being different from the social and cultural fabric of mainstream society. For Du Bois, the veil is "a symbol for the irrationality of racism" (Winant, 2004, p. 26) that is imposed on African-Americans and makes them too self-conscious of the external hegemonic gaze. The hijab is often used to imply foreignness and register hegemonic images of forced oppression, which Hana most evocatively tried to dismantle based on her personal experience:

> When I was younger . . . people didn't understand the hijab, so even me as a Muslim and I'm not wearing a hijab . . . Most of the times I say hijab is not something forced on you or shouldn't be forced on you. It is something that is optional, and I often bring in the fact that my mother doesn't wear one, and my grandmother doesn't wear one, and she is a very religious person. She teaches her own Qur'an school, and she doesn't wear a hijab all the time, unless she is praying. It wasn't pushed on me by anyone, so I didn't feel the obligatory need to wear one.

Similarly, Patricia explained how wearing a hijab can be an estranging experience between household values and peer pressure:

> In elementary school, there was a girl that wore hijab and the other girls would be like, "Why can't you take it off? Your parents aren't here." And I knew, even though I don't wear hijab, I knew it was wrong. Once you wear it, you have to be committed to it, and you can't take it off in school. So that girl, I think, just wanted to fit in with the other girls. So I think that that was hard.

Likewise, Amani had a similar encounter:

> I remember when I was in grade six, I came when I was wearing the hijab 'cause I already wore it in Dubai, and so I did find a lot of really odd questions that I've never been exposed to before . . . It is just a bit extreme here, and I didn't like that at first, and there were situations where I kind of wanted to move back and everything, but then, I think, over the time I had to adapt to what they say and just kind of stand up for myself, which I found a lot more difficult than when I was in Dubai.

Amani's experience with the Muslim hijab resonates with Winant's view of the effects of the Duboisian veil: "The veil not only divides the individual self; it also fissures the community, nation, and society as a whole" (p. 26). Both the Duboisian "color-line" and the Muslim hijab stand for ways to separate the subject/wearer "from the fulfillment of their visions" only because "life behind the veil entails physical and psychological separation from the world of privilege" (Szmanko, 2015, p. 63). The misconceptions around the veil are hegemonic curtains that need to be lifted.

For Hana, however, ethnic identity is almost always linked to and associated with socio-religious implications:

> I think in Canada it is not as much of a hard thing. People are a lot more accepting here. I feel it's a little bit hard, because there is definitely some things that people are apprehensive of. For instance, Ramadan, that can be really confusing for people, and

> especially at school environment where a lot of people aren't Muslim. It could be hard for people to understand, well, "Why do you spend a month not eating? Why are you doing these things? Why do you feel the need to do these things?" . . . I definitely get a lot of questions like that.

Ibrahim, on the other hand, commented on how Islam had the upper hand in his definition of his identity:

> If we're talking about Islam, then of course, it's like you have to put in work, I guess. It's not just sitting around and enjoying your life, but when you have, I guess, right intention, yes, everyone is going to make mistakes; no one completes everything; no one is perfect, but when you have the right intention, then.

He continued, "Like I said, being like a Muslim is going to come first. After that, I am Canadian." Then he agreed that Arab comes last, with the fewest traits with which he could identify: "My close friends are the same in terms of, yea, we have problems, but you are sincere, then you practice your faith. Other people, maybe, if their friends are going drinking or partying and stuff, they know they shouldn't do that." For Du Bois, as Bruce (1992) argued, "the essence of a distinctive African consciousness was its spirituality, a spirituality based in Africa but revealed among African Americans in their folklore, their history of patient suffering, and their faith. In this sense, double consciousness related particularly to Du Bois's efforts to privilege the spiritual in relation to the materialistic, commercial world of white America" (p. 301). Similarly, religious practices such as wearing a hijab, sexual abstinence, or not drinking alcohol constitute indispensable parts of Arab identity.

Chapter 8: Implications of the Study and Final Thoughts

"The foreigner is a dreamer making love with absence."
Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991, p. 10)

The Impact of Cultural Identity on Responding to Literature

The purpose of this study is to understand the ethnic experiences of second-generation Arab-Canadian high school students in terms of how they make sense of their ethnicity, and how they interpret immigrant literature based on their personal perceptions. All the participating students identified as Arab-Canadian; however, their senses and understandings of belonging varied greatly. It was apparent that the students expressed thoughts and attitudes that betrayed a sense of anxiety and divergence. Their interpretations of the short stories reflected how, to a certain extent and in certain situations, their lives at home juxtaposed with their lives at school and the world outside. For most of those students, home was not synonymous with, and sometimes barely compatible with, who they were at school. The students were aware of an existing fissure between their cultural-transmitted home-identity on the one hand, and the locally acquired school-identity on the other, and yet it is not necessarily always enigmatic and continuously unresolved.

The interviews demonstrated the effects of racial and cultural identity on the production of meaning. These culturally-oriented texts, which are subject-specific or community-oriented, help students who live between two worlds negotiate their own identity, and in the process of that discussion, succeed equally in humanizing and animating issues such as immigration, assimilation and the dismantling of stereotypical representations to all students in class. Each interview became a true "event," as suggested by Louise Rosenblatt (1964) in her examination of the meaning and dynamics of responding to literature:

> The special meaning, and more particularly, the submerged associations that these words and images have for the individual reader will largely determine what the work communicates to him [sic]. The reader brings to the work personality traits, memories of past events, present needs and preoccupations, a particular mood of the moment, and a particular physical condition. These and many other elements in a never-to-be-duplicated combination determine his response to the peculiar contribution of the text. (pp. 30-31)

I was interested to see whether the selected short stories, written by Arab Anglophone authors, would mirror any similar experiences of second-generation Arab-Canadian high school students. Exploring the personal narratives of second-generation Arab-Canadian students as they attempt to interpret literature was quite intriguing. For instance, almost all the participants, except for Ismael and Ibrahim, seemed to agree that, in order to properly assimilate into Canadian mainstream acceptability, that is, to create a Canadian personality in Arab skin and Arab name, one requires both an effort and an assertive attitude.

The autobiographical aspect of the stories also provided students with ways to connect with the texts. The impact in this case was reciprocal in nature. Students would relate to the texts first by sharing their personal narrations, and then using these personal accounts to comment on the characters in the text. In one such example, almost all the students noted that learning English was a challenge for them, and because of that, they were able to sympathize with the girl in Soueif's "Knowing." Moreover, the use of interviews involving biographical accounts and personal experiences is not unheard of in Duboisian scholarship. P. C. Mocombe (2009) argued that the autobiographical aspect is central to the Duboisian conceptual framework:

> The 'epistemological mode of critical inquiry' which stems from the African Americans' synthesized 'double consciousness,' see *Souls* as an articulation of Du Bois's own attempt to synthesize his 'doubleness' (Dutch and African ancestry)—an experience which he

> extrapolates from to explain African American racial and ethnic difference and their keen or critical insight (i.e., 'second-sight')' (p. 48)

Du Bois himself linked his understanding of the African-American condition with his own personal life: "I forgot, or did not thoroughly realize, the curious irony by which I was not looked upon as a real citizen of my birth-town, with a future and a career, and instead was being sent to a far land among strangers who were regarded as (and in truth were) "mine own people" (1994, p. 498). Similarly, the application of theory to the participants' intensely biographical responses helped to develop and deepen my understanding of how the culturally-saturated experiences of those students affected their reading of the short stories, and to see how the chosen texts connect with their cultural identities.

Ethnic Identity, the Curriculum, and First Language Attrition

Many scholars (Isajiw, 1990; Kouritzin, 1999; Piggott & Kalbach, 2005) have explored the correlation between the loss of ethnic language and cultural ties: "In general, as immigrants become progressively more like the native born (especially in terms of language), there may be a gradual loosening of their ethnic social and cultural ties, and thus a change in ethnic identity" (Piggott & Kalbach, 2005, p. 5). According to Fillmore (1991), "few American-born children of immigrant parents are fully proficient in the ethnic language, even if it was the only language they spoke when they entered school . . . even if it is the only one their parents know" (p. 324). Second-generation or immigrant youth are constantly challenged by institutional and other discourses to facilitate assimilation to the extent that, over time, they become divorced from their vital feelings, which can ultimately undermine their capacities for reconciliation with the ethnic self. This further produces the general perception "that living between two cultures is psychologically undesirable because managing the complexity of dual reference points generates ambiguity, identity confusion, and normlessness" (Lafromboise, 1993, p. 395). In effect, living

between two worlds may often be perceived as an unfavorable departure from an assumed set of values or an expected transition into something "like us" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2015e, p. 2). There is a tendency towards a departure from one's cultural ties if modern institutions and academic life do not provide social and linguistic sites to facilitate connections with one's ethnic community.

Exploring the ways second-generation Arab-Canadian students identify with their culture of origin, and their questions about the roles of language, faith, values, and understanding of belonging, helped reveal their own self-formulated sense of identity, but also informed their readings of immigrant literature. All participants suggested that the Arabic language was crucial to their ethnic identity. Nina and Patricia argued that because Khadija, in Halaby's short story "Fire and Sand," does not speak Arabic, this has definitely negatively contributed to her increasing sense of alienation from Arab culture. This example suggests how cultural identity affects a student's response to, and interactions with, literacy texts. Moreover, all the participants expressed a nostalgic feeling towards the Arabic language and agreed that knowing Arabic is central to get to know the culture better. Ismael and Hana believed that their years in elementary school helped them improve their Arabic language skills. Hana and Ibrahim believed that their ability to speak Arabic augmented their ethnic roots. They all, including Beth and Amani, who are almost bilingual, wished they were able to enhance their Arabic language skills.

Double Consciousness and Postcolonialism

In *The Souls of Black Folk*, Du Bois suggests that the Black American's consciousness is divided between two contradictory sides: one African and the other American. However, Du Bois's notion of double consciousness does not entail a psychological case of split personality. The implied division is between "the spiritual nature (African) and the materialistic commercial world (American) that was the double consciousness of black folk," which is "viewed as two distinctive oppositional personalities (African and American) within a single body" (Mocombe,

2009, p. 17). The students involved in this project did not view their ethnic identity as necessarily oppositional. However, like the Duboisian perception of double consciousness in which "twoness" is imposed by one's perception of an external gaze, most of the students agreed that their Muslim/Arab culture is perceived by others as incongruent with common perceptions of 21st-century acceptability or mainstream local culture.

The notion of double consciousness can be subsumed within the repertoire of postcolonialism as "it enables us to provide an account of the ways in which global inequalities are perpetuated not only through the distribution of resources, but also through colonial modes of representation" (Rizvia, Lingard, & Lavia, 2006, p. 250). Postcolonialism has promised "a radical rethinking of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination" (Prakash, 1994, p. 1475). Malak (2005) pointed out how Islam, for example, has fallen victim to the hegemonic powers and representations of postcolonial domination, being increasingly perceived as an alienating factor within the current political landscape due to the 'us-versus-them' mentality:

> It is odd that 'postcolonial theory' cannot offer insights about the activism of Islam, despite the fact that one of its seminal texts, Edward Said's *Orientalism*, that 'open[ed] up the fields of postcolonial studies', is prompted and permeated by a challenge to the colonial representations of Islam as biased constructions whose corrosive corollaries are discernible today in multiple insidious fashions across diverse domains of power. (p. 17)

In this study, both Islam and the Arabic language can be seen as the strongest influences on the students' connections to their Arab heritage. They are "cultural scripts" (Amarasingam, 2008, p. 156) that help the students define their identity. When utilized in ethnicity and cultural studies, the notion of "cultural scripts" becomes that of signifiers, "systems of symbols, structures and processes, localised in what is perceived as one's 'home country,' that act as directions and

orientations for an individual's adaptation to new environments. In exile, ideas and values that people see as expressions of 'our traditions,' although no longer lived experience, still motivate people's sense of belonging" (Engebrigtsen, 2007, pp. 728-729). Accordingly, ethnic youth consciously enact "cultural scripts," which take on "symbolic significance for those who want to experience and express their ethnic identity in the 'new country'" (Amarasingam, 2008, p. 156). In other words, cultural scripts serve as guiding points for the individual "who wishes to re-entrench him/herself in his/her "birth" culture. If individuals who have grown up in Canada become drawn later in life to the culture of their parents or grandparents, these cultural scripts serve to guide them in their exploration" (Amarasingam, 2008, p. 155). Islam, for most of the students in this project, has become the most commonly identified "cultural script" that formulates Arab ethnic identity. Islam, in this context, continues to register as an essentialized Arab identity, which serves as the counterpart of the Duboisian African identity: "Because Du Bois does not prioritize an essentially African identity buried beneath an American one as the undiscovered country, Africa is not a static or repressed self, but part of a constant dialectical movement" (Goyal, 2010, p. 66). Similarly, Islam is often perceived as "the undiscovered country" beneath Arab skins, which is often betrayed, as the participants indicated, through "cultural scripts" such as names, habits, and wearing the veil.

The Arab World and the Pedagogical Implications

The pedagogical significance of this study to the Arab world is worth mentioning here as well. Faisal Al-Kasim, presenter of al-Jazeerah's *In the Opposite Direction*, the most polemical and widely viewed Arab programme, described how dialogue, or "guided conversations" (Vierra, Pollock, & Golez, 1998, p. 212) as implemented in this study, is essential to demystify misconceptions by resolving conflict through fostering mutual understanding and good-natured conversations:

> Dialogue is something missing among the Arabs. It is missing in schools, as much as it is missing everywhere else in life of the Arabs . . . Through programmes such as mine, we hope to implement new rules, those that educate the Arab human being to listen, not only to his own opinion, but to that of the other side as well. The debate-based media must enter in force and strongly in the political life of the Arabs, whether the Arab regimes like it or not. (Bahry, 2001, p. 93)

A shift into a more student-centered learning that fosters conversations and differences seems to be imperative for the Arab world. The rhetoric of listening to students rather than categorizing them as sheer receptacles is central to this study and essential to revitalize education in the Arab world, which is still trying to recover from its erudite rather than instructive learning approach. The banking educational system (Freire, 1970, p. 72) continues to "exercise its dominance over teaching practices. Students memorize and regurgitate what they learn from textbooks without applying their acquired knowledge in real-life situations" (Abdul-Jabbar, 2016, p. 297). A learner-centered approach would help liberate the Arab world from what Ridha (2013) called "the over-politicization of Arab education" (p. 12), in which "Indoctrination replaced free and critical thinking, and authoritarian values permeated every educational tool and practice: the curriculum, the textbooks, and the methodology of teaching" (p. 12). The need to revisit the educational system in the Arab world by incorporating student-centered pedagogies cannot be overstressed in order to revitalize learning approaches and offer an opportunity for students to exercise free thinking, activate self-expression, and take the opportunity to develop their own critical responses.

Research on identity politics and Arab indigenous issues has also recently become an overriding concern in the Arab world. The Muslim world in general and the Arab world in particular were swept by a colonial wave that had defined their past and shaped their current

history. As a result, a disjointed Arab identity arose out of these years of belligerence and resistance, and studies of Arab indigenous education and identity have been increasingly popularized. New York University Abu Dhabi has recognized the need for cross-cultural dialogues: one of its interdisciplinary programs, the Arab Crossroads Program, stations its academic objectives within regional and cultural contexts. Correspondingly, Georgetown University in Qatar offers a Culture and Politics program that is saturated in Arab identity politics and regional issues within a global landscape. Similarly, in 2011, Qatar University launched the Gulf Studies program, offering PhD and MA programs at the College of Arts and Sciences, to foster intercultural dialogue, stimulate scholarly interest in the Gulf region, and engage in rigorous interdisciplinary study of Arab Gulf identity and culture. Similar programs that promote a better understanding of the Arab socio-political realities are crucial and can only be instrumental within the notion of border crossings and transnational education without losing sight of the Arab/Islamic centre.

Conclusions

The notion of double consciousness in this study is meant to provide a nuanced understanding of the Arab diasporic condition exemplified by second-generation Arab-Canadian high school students, which eventually contributes to transatlantic cultural formations of identity studies. It is in this sense that this study contributes to what William Boelhower referred to as "the new Atlantic Studies matrix" (2008, p. 86). Although connections between the African-American and Arab conditions vary, the notion of double consciousness remains salient and applicable to the Arab-Canadian diasporic condition on the emotional, ethnic, and political levels. The Arab-Canadian manifestation of double consciousness, based on the data collected in this study, appears to be defined by an apologetic sense of displacement, and is marked by a struggle to defend rather than define itself. The Arab diasporic presence seems to be characterized by an

increasing need to define oneself against the already-framed discourse of stereotypical representations in which Islam and its "cultural scripts" (Amarasingam, 2008, p. 156) are always either re-enforced, generalized, avoided, or apologetically presented. As this study has demonstrated, school, in the Canadian context, becomes a site in which students defend, and not necessarily celebrate, who they are.

The aim of this study is not to make any generalizations about ethnic Arab youth beyond those involved in this project. Using a case-study research method helped me in this regard. Stake (2008) referred to the notion of the generalizability of case study research. He pointed out that the purpose of the case study "is not to represent the world, but to represent the case . . . the utility of case research to practitioners and policy makers is in its extension of experience" (2008, p. 142). It is the "particularized experience" that matters. Stake (2000) inferred that when the purpose of the research is to provide "explanation, propositional knowledge, and law . . . the case study will often be at a disadvantage. When the aims are understanding, extension of experience, and increase in conviction in that which is known, the disadvantage disappears" (p. 21). Du Bois's concept of double consciousness unravels the complexities of the diasporic experience. This awareness can be invoked to accentuate the experiences of certain ethnic communities who confront foreignness, whether in the way they view themselves or the way they are viewed by others in diaspora: "The extent to which it is generalizable . . . if it is more broadly applicable . . . If it describes everyone whose identity is not fully encompassed by a hegemonic cultural identity . . . Does any or every marginalized group manifest double consciousness?" (Gordon, 2007, p. 153). This issue of generalizability is, therefore, an essential part of the double consciousness rhetoric that attempts to account for the diasporic condition.

I have become fascinated with the "epistemological mode" (Bell, 1996, p. 96) second-generation Arab-Canadian high school students have shown in the ways they have discussed the

dynamics of their ethnic personality, and how growth and experience inform their understanding of assimilation and identity, which they demonstrated via their responses to immigration literature. Bell (1996) described double consciousness as "a biracial, bicultural state of being in the world," which signifies "a dynamic epistemological mode of critical inquiry" (p. 96). This condition of critical inquiry, of being in the world, for the Arab-Canadian participants is quintessentially diasporic, and is often defined and challenged by its departure from, and not necessarily conformity with, the dominant mainstream culture.

Mergeai (2013) argued that Gilroy's understanding of double consciousness conforms with Diana Brydon's conceptualization of diaspora as "an attempt to shift the terms of production through which identity and belonging are conceived, wrenching these away from the grip of nationally-formed imaginaries and identity politics toward an alternatively conceived view of space and of human relations within it" (Brydon, 2002, p. 114). Similarly, none of the participating students addressed his or her identity in a nationalistic manner divorced from cultural ties. Additionally, some of the participating students asserted that their identities are different from the ethnic identities of their parents. This revealed a schism, defined by the degree and intensity of attachment and displacement, between first and second generations. However, even those who chose to identify with their immigrant parents' origins have expressed points of difference and departure from some ethno-cultural aspects peculiar to their parents. Some students have striven to amalgamate their Canadian and Arab traits by attempting to foster a bicultural identity.

Whereas some participating students felt strongly about their Arabic ethnic identity, there was a wide variation in the extent to which they identified with Arabic culture. For some participants, being Arab was essential to their self-conception, while for others, it was an emotional addition, and again for a few, ethnic cultural ties were simply obligations or symbolic

practices that signified something on special occasions and were not assertively part of their daily life. The participating students showed a wide variety of Arabic language skills. Some of them demonstrated the ability to converse comfortably in Arabic, and others could throw in a few words or phrases. All were comfortable speaking in English. Some of those that were conversant or fluent in Arabic used the language with family members. Others used Arabic as a linguistic strategy when, for instance, they wanted to speak about personal matters so others would not be able to understand. Others who had limited speaking skills, such as Hana and Ibrahim, expressed a desire to reconnect with their original linguistic roots. Similarly, some of the participating students, such as Ismael and Hana, expressed nostalgic feelings towards their years in elementary school, where they were able to enhance their Arabic language skills because the school provided a bilingual program. For Ismael, in particular, the school environment was pleasantly protective and culturally rewarding.

This study ultimately contributes to the academic conversation about the ways in which students negotiate how to formulate and articulate a "homogenous and transcendental sense of identity" and to transcend "fixed scheme[s] of location and identity" (Johnston, 2003, p. 123). Since second-generation Arab Canadian youth have received little academic attention, this study not only provides a platform from which to initiate further research on the second-generation Arab identity in Canada, but also explores how these youth interpret literature about the Arab immigrant experience. Immigration, on the other hand, was central to their understanding of multiculturalism and the direct cause of their welcoming diversity.

In "Reader-Response Theory and the English Curriculum," Probst (2001) stressed the importance of recognizing the link between the text and the reader: "The literary text must not be reduced to exercise or drill but must be allowed to live as a work of art, influencing the reader to see and think and feel" (p. 42). In this reader-text context, the study has also demonstrated that

teaching diasporic immigration literature "allows us to move beyond the static, fixed notion of immigrant" (Kalra, Kaur, & Hutnyk, 2005, p. 14). The selected short stories helped the students explore issues such as immigration, identity, parent-child relationships, and their own cultural ties. Regardless of whether they have approved, liked, or disliked everything they have read in these short stories, the experience was a thought-provoking activity. It is my hope that these accounts provide narratives of honest attempts to transcend singular ethnic allocations and move into the wider terrain of commonalities among different ethnic communities.

Limitations and Suggestions for Further Studies

Reflecting on this project, I realize that other related questions have emerged throughout this study that hold potential for future research. How is Islam perceived in Canadian schools? What images/representations of Arabs exist in the curriculum? What is the image of the immigrant in general? Has the immigration narrative in Canada gone from being agreeable to becoming something less welcoming, considering the introduction of government programs such as the Super Visa Program, launched in December 2011, or Bill C-24, implemented in 2014? Is it only Arab Muslims who feel to a certain extent trapped in this Duboisian double consciousness? Do non-Arab Muslim students in general as well? Do Arab Christians feel the need to exert similar effort in school, and with friends, in order to blend in?

Over the course of this study, I found that maintaining a positive relationship with the participating students allowed me to interact with them in a non-judgmental and non-threatening manner. Over all the interviews, none of the participants showed any sense of unease. It was important to explain to them, when meeting, that it was safe for them to talk and discuss matters in a friendly learning environment. This congenial manner allowed them to comfortably speak their minds and say what they truly wanted to say. Thinking of interviews as purposeful conversations, and the participants as individuals rather than subjects of study, helped me

conduct interviews that are "essentially guided conversations" (Vierra, Pollock, & Golez, 1998, p. 212). Interviews conducted in such a self-monitored manner tend to be more productive and enriching than those that are not.

The notion of identity is difficult to pin down to one definition: "This fact should not, however, deter us from delving into those questions of collective affiliation which constitute the scope of identity" (Suleiman, 1997, p. 127). Suleiman suggested "a degree of conceptual vagueness is therefore inevitable, but not so cripplingly as to deny us the possibility of an informed treatment of identity-related subjects" (1997, p. 127). The formation of identity for the students interviewed with this project can be linked to the discipline of oral history:

> It creates a very special type of oral history to interview people of this age group, precisely because of the floating nature of their identities and the various dependencies on family and environment. They have a life ahead of them, with much more time to plan for and less that is already decided and fixed . . . Younger people are able to be more flexible and to adjust to changing ideas and notions of identity. (Hammer, 2005, p. 6)

All the students interviewed for this project are young teenagers and young adults, and most of them have experienced immigration, mainly as children; thus, their stories reflect the experience of migration from a child's perspective. However, their perceptions about growing up in diaspora and living between two cultures are based on their experiences growing up in Canada. In effect, their views of immigration and transition are limited to their memories and their parents' stories. This study, however, focuses on the latter part of their lives as they negotiate their identities between two cultures and two locales, home and school.

Notably, one's attachment to ethnic identity may fluctuate over time. Therefore, further research should examine how second-generation Arab-Canadian youth engage in Arabic ethnic culture beyond high school, as the participants may express different sentiments as they mature.

Researchers may explore to what extent this transition occurs and how self-identification may or may not change over time. Given the sample size used in this study and the inability of the results to be generalized, further research on second-generation Arab identity may take a large-scale qualitative approach beyond Edmonton or Alberta to examine how Arab youth negotiate their identities and participate in ethnic culture.

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Appendix I: Literary References

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Appendix II: Interview Questions

1. What part did you enjoy the most in the reading?
2. Was there a special part in any short story that brought back a certain memory? In other words, is there any part in the short stories you've read that reminded you of anything that has happened to you, your family, or your friends?
3. What pictures/artifacts came into your mind as you were reading?
4. Do you think the stories that you have read are suitable for classroom discussions?
5. How did you feel when certain characters reacted unexpectedly or culturally inappropriately? Can you give examples?
6. Did you see any particular behaviour or certain values that are relevant to your cultural background?
7. In what ways do you think that the protagonist is torn between two cultures, and how do people in this situation manage to reconcile themselves with both worlds?
8. Do you feel that being Canadian makes it difficult to embrace one's culture? Did you see that reflected in the stories?
9. Did you see students get shunned or teased by their pears for their accent or dress?
10. Do you see any contradictions between the two cultures, or do you see that your Arab part does not really help you to fully assimilate into the Canadian society?
11. Did you ever wish that you were a mainstream student? Were you, for example, bothered that your name is not mainstream (not Anglo-Saxon or European)?
12. Do you sometimes feel that you are a combination of two identities: Arab and Canadian?

    A. Are these two parts in conflict in you?

    B. Which part of those two has the upper hand (defines who you are)?

Appendix III: Student Survey

Please fill out the following survey questions

1. Gender: Male / Female
2. I am 14-16 / 17-18 years old
3. Were you born in Canada YES, if your answer is "No" then please respond to the following questions:
   A. I was born in _____
   B. I immigrated to Canada when I was _____ years old.
4. Are both your parents immigrants YES, if your answer is "No" then
   A. Is your father an immigrant? YES/NO
   B. Is your mother an immigrant? YES/NO
   C. Where were your parents born?

   _____

   _____

   _____

   D. What language(s) do you speak at home?

   _____

   _____

   E. Do you think that your home language has influenced your cultural identity and the way you identify yourself?

   _____

   _____

F. In your mind, what's your first language?

G. Do you think that your National identity (as a Canadian citizen and the holder of a Canadian passport) is different from your cultural identity (being an Arab)? And do you see these two identities as separate and isolated or do they complement each other?

H. In what ways do you think that your life would have been different for you if you were born inside or outside Canada?

I. Do you have any Arab-Canadian friends? YES/NO

J. Do you prefer friends from similar cultural backgrounds? YES/NO Please explain why.

_____

_____

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K. Do you feel comfortable when your parents are in touch with the Arab community? Do you feel connected or isolated?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

L. Did school ever make you feel different? Have you ever wished that your school were a bit more multicultural?