

## Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four Plays by Yussef El Guindi

Mahmoud F. Alshetawi\*

Department of English Language & Literature, The University of Jordan, Jordan

Received on: 9-11-2024

Accepted on: 17-3-2025

### Abstract

Arab American literature and drama have been considered from different critical perspectives. The main issues discussed in various studies are the negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in popular American culture, racial profiling and surveillance, identity formation and the struggle of Arab Americans to forge their hyphenated identity and be recognized as American citizens on a par with other minorities such as Latinos, African Americans and other ethnic groups. However, though the topic of acculturation of Arabs in the United States is adequately documented and analyzed in several studies, there is a paucity of scholarly research that examined acculturation in Arab American literature in general and Arab American drama. For example, Gaby Semaan looked at the modes of acculturation of Arabs in the United States (2015, 174-191). Building on John W. Berry's acculturation model, Semaan finds that Berry's four strategies of acculturation, namely assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation are adequately applicable to Arab American individuals and groups. Based on Semaan's study, and with reference to Berry's model of acculturation and other related literature, this paper will analyze the modes of acculturation in Yussef El Guindi's drama. This Egyptian American playwright has devoted almost all his plays to deal with aspects of Arab immigrants such as identity formation and countering negative stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims in American media and popular culture. However, the treatment of acculturation in El Guindi's drama is yet to be considered. For the purpose of this study, this paper will examine modes of acculturation in four plays, namely, *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*, *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*, *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* and *Threesome*.

**Keywords:** acculturation, assimilation, Arab American, drama & theater, immigrants.

### Introduction

It is commonly known that immigration to the United States from the Arab world began in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and has continued ever since to the present day. The history of Arab immigration to the US has been fairly documented by a host of scholars and researchers (Suleiman 1994, 37-60; Orfalea 2005; Kayyali 2006). The Arab immigration movement went through several waves, though the number of immigrants varied in each wave (Ludescher 2006, 93-114; Semaan 2013; Semaan 2014, 17-32). But the

---

© 2026 JJMLL Publishers/Yarmouk University. All Rights Reserved,

\* Doi: <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.18.1.24>

\* Corresponding Author: [alshetawi\\_m@ju.edu.jo](mailto:alshetawi_m@ju.edu.jo)

reasons for immigration vary from one wave to another. Arabs immigrated to the US for the same reasons that made other people from different parts of the world immigrate. Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad states that “Arabs have come to the United States for the same reasons as other immigrants have come from other parts of the world, seeking refuge and safety from political upheaval, religious strife, and economic hardship” (1994, 62).

Scholars and researchers examined various aspects of Arab immigration to the USA. In their studies, these scholars considered issues relating to identity formation, stereotyping, racial profiling and the political stigmatization of immigrants and Arab Americans. They also commented on citizenship and the civic status of Arab immigrants in the United States. Those scholars generally looked at acculturation of Arab immigrants in their new home, the USA. However, most studies of acculturation vis-à-vis Arab Americans were conducted on Arab groups and school students to find out how Arab immigrants coped up with settlement in their American host society (Al Wekhian 2016, 89-99; Bagasra & Mackinem 2019, 1-12).

Though Arab Americans have often been noted for their positive impact on American public life, politics, and culture (Suleiman, 1999), yet there has been a systematic defamation of Arabs and Muslims in American culture and media, which gained momentum in the aftermath of the tragic events of 9/11. As a result of the backlash of 9/11 terrorist attacks, Arab Americans begin to form their hyphenated identity and consider themselves as an ethnic minority like African Americans, Latinos, and other American ethnicities (Alsultany 2012). Arab American men of letters, artists, and writers in particular counter the stereotypes and vilification of Arabs and Muslims in American culture. For example, Arab American intellectuals (e. g. Edward Said), and public figures have been active across the country to correct the false images of Arabs and Muslims in American public life. By using the media and literary productions as well as the political arenas, they have attempted to forge an identity formation of what it means to be Arab American, which is characteristically hyphenated and multicultural.

The topic of acculturation of Arabs in their new host society, i.e., America, was examined and adequately documented in several studies (Nagel & Staeheli 2004, 1-36; Orfalea 2005, 47-64; Ajrouch 2007, 860-879; Kayyali 2013, 1299-1318; Al-Matrafi 2017, 436-452). Gaby Semaan examined the modes of acculturation of Arabs in the United States in his article “The Acculturation Modes of Arab Americans: An Empirical Study on the Effects of Gender, Religion, Nationality and Sojourner Status” (2015, 174-191). Based on the related literature review and existing academic studies, one realizes that little scholarship was devoted to the examination of acculturation in Arab American literature in general and Arab American drama and theater. Relying on Semaan’s study, and with reference to John W. Berry’s model of acculturation, which Semaan used as a theoretical framework, this paper will analyze the modes of acculturation in Yussef El Guindi’s drama and theater. Berry defines acculturation as follows: “Acculturation is the process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members” (2019, 10). He identifies four modes or strategies of acculturation: namely, assimilation, integration, marginalization, and separation. Building

## Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four Plays by Yussef El Guindi

on Berry's acculturation model, Gaby Semaan finds that the four strategies of acculturation are adequately applicable to Arab American individuals and groups.

Generally, there is a paucity of critical studies dealing with acculturation in Arab American literature in general and Arab American drama and theater. Therefore, it is time to examine this topic in the light of the acculturation theory and diasporic and transnational studies. It is beyond the scope of this study to consider all Arab American playwrights; therefore, the paper will be limited to the study of acculturation in selected plays by Yussef El Guindi. This Egyptian American playwright is the most prolific Arab American playwright. He has to his credit more than a dozen plays all devoted to deal with various aspects of Arab immigrants and questions of identity formation as well as countering systematic stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims in America media venues and cultural outlets. As noted by Mahmoud Alshetawi, El Guindi combatted the negative stereotypes and defamation of Arabs and Muslims in his drama and theater (2020, 177-199). However, the treatment of acculturation in El Guindi's drama is yet to be considered. For the purpose of this study, this paper will examine the modes of acculturation in four plays, namely, *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* (2006), *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* (2008), *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* (2011) and *Threesome* (2015) with reference to Berry's theory of acculturation, and other related literature (Fox et al 2013, 270-288; Semaan 2015, 174-191; Berry 2019).

### Discussion

El Guindi treats in his plays almost all aspects of immigration and identity formation of Arabs and Muslims to the USA. It is characteristic of El Guindi's plays that they are thematically connected with each other. Though each play focuses on a set of immigration issues, yet the plays in general portray the challenges, and cultural framing the Arab immigrants have experienced. As Rina S. Fox et al point out, "It has been repeatedly demonstrated that an individual's behavior is strongly influenced by culture. However, this impact is complicated, and when one's culture of origin and culture of residence are not the same, the result is commonly acculturative change" (2013, 270). To adjust to their new situation and get acclimatized to American culture, El Guindi's characters struggle to cope with the throes of acculturative change. Indeed, El Guindi's plays suggest that it is not always easy for Arabs to settle in America because of the cultural barriers, and the anti-Arab sentiments and culture of defamation associated with Arabs and Muslims post-9/11. As a host of researchers explained, Arab and Muslim immigrants to the United States have been vilified in Hollywood and media venues as terrorists, villains, and anti-West. (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr 2009; Alsultany 2012; Shaheen 2012).

By devoting most of his plays to represent Arab Americans, El Guindi intends to humanize his characters, and to explain what it means to be Arab American to the American public. Anneka Esch-Van Kan states that "El Guindi's work however does not only humanize its characters and (even though this might not be a precondition for political theatre at all) addresses current events, but it also transcends facile questions and digs deeper into the way meaning is generated and worlds constructed" (2008, 59). His plays shed light on the transnational and cultural identity of the Arab Americans and assert that they

are an ethnic minority that immigrated to America because America has always stood up as a beacon of freedom and liberty and the land of opportunity. America is an immigrant society consisting of people of all colors and ethnicities and nationalities. Once immigrants reach America, they begin a process of melting into the unique American cultural character which is unlike any other nation on earth. Arab immigrants have come from different Middle Eastern countries looking for better life and work opportunities which they could not find in their home countries. El Guindi explains that it is one of the major misconceptions to consider Arab immigrants as representing a monolithic cultural identity that most Americans have held about Arabs and Muslims. It is true that they speak Arabic and most of them are Muslims, but there is so much diversity amongst them, for the Middle East they come from is heterogeneous in terms of culture and religious identity.

El Guindi's play *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* encapsulates aspects of the acculturation theory formulated by Berry and other researchers (Berry 1997, 5-34; Semaan 2015, 174-191). The play is about the Fawzi family, an Egyptian immigrant family who grapple with their identity formation. The family consists of Kamal, the father, Mona, the mother, their two sons, Tawfiq and Hamza, their only daughter, Huwaida and their Egyptian guests, Aziz and his son Murad. The family is processing through the throes of acculturation that immigrants usually encounter as they attempt to cope with the immigration experience. Having immigrated some twenty years ago to America, Kamal has been witnessing his family falling apart. Kamal is not able to stop his family from splintering because his children have grown up in America and become adults. They are now trying to determine their identity and become independent. Being influenced by their immersion in American culture and way of life, they find themselves in conflict with their religious identity which their father Kamal insists to inculcate in them. It is the effect of the country, that is, the US secular culture, that makes them who they are. Commenting on Tawfiq's rebellion, Kamal says:

*Being disrespectful and rude is growing up? Or is that what growing up means in this country? Treating your parents like they are something that has fallen out of fashion. Disposable. ... And while we're about it, let's throw God out, too, because He doesn't go with all the latest trends either.... This is the environment we brought Tawfiq up in- we should've stayed put (28-29).*

In line with Berry's strategies of acculturation, Kamal belongs to the stage of separation in which he lives in isolation from the culture of his host society and strictly adheres to the traditions of his country of origin (Egypt) and follows the rules of Islam. Kamal stands for the first generation of immigrants who came to America looking for a better life. He has become a successful carpet merchant for he has been able to raise a family and to send his kids to college.

The play opens in the month of Ramadan, and the family is cleaning the house in preparation for an *iftar* (breakfast) to host Aziz and his son, Murad, who came all the way from Egypt to ask for the hand of Kamal's daughter, Huwaida. It is at this critical moment that Kamal realizes that his children are not tolerating his way of life anymore. The family is suddenly facing a crisis of cultural identity. Kamal thinks that he has been successful in raising his children the way he likes, that is to follow the Islamic

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

traditions as if they were living in Egypt. He does not realize that at one point his children have experienced a sort of an awakening to ask who they are, and to choose their way of life independently. Kamal is shocked when he discovers that his elder son, Tawfiq, has become skeptical about his religion and that he is drifting into atheism. Tawfiq tells his father bluntly that he does not believe in God anymore, and therefore he will stop going to the mosque with his father or do any other religious duties.

Researchers find that the second generation of Arab immigrants often rebel against their ancestral roots and the religious and social identity of their families. The second generation of immigrants are of two kinds. Those who came to the host country with their parents when they were kids. They were raised and educated in their host countries. They have learnt the language, customs and social manners of the people of the host country. There is always a gap in generation in terms of culture and ways of thinking between them and their parents, especially when these children reach adulthood. Commenting on the dilemma of the second generation of the Fawzi family as they struggle to be recognized as hyphenated American citizens, Heidarzadegan states that “The second-generation members of the immigrant family of the Fawzis... experience psychological conflicts and mental breakdown. The adherence to their roots, values, and religion is at once changed into the abhorrence of it, leading to the homosexuality of Hamza, atheism of Tawfiq, and schizophrenia of Huwaida” (37).

El Guindi writes about the children of immigrants who were brought up into their host society and raised and grew up in a country which is not their home. The older generation members still look back at their home countries and hope that one day they will go back. Most of them cannot make it, and they live and die in the host country. However, some of them were able to return and spend the last days of their lives in their home countries. Kamal in *Ten Acrobats* is often nostalgic for his home, and sometimes he regrets that he has ever come to the United States:

*Kamal: It was a mistake coming to this country.*

*Mona: Twenty-five years later, this is the conclusion you come to?*

*Kamal: Why did we come? So I could sell carpets? This is my great accomplishment? (27)*

Having realized that his children are growing differently from the way he has been raising them, Kamal blames himself for immigrating to America. Though he has been living in the US for more than twenty years, and despite the financial success he has made as a carpet merchant, Kamal feels nostalgic for his country of origin, Egypt, and its traditions and way of life. After so many years of living in America, Kamal realizes that he could not assimilate into American mainstream culture, whereas his children are adopting American culture.

Kamal realizes his failure as a father to make his children follow his cultural heritage. Strangely enough, Mona, Kamal’s wife, does not reciprocate his feelings. She is happy with who she is, and she expresses her pride in her children no matter who they are. Heidarzadegan points out that “The immigration experience for Kamal ... is accompanied with the mourning for loss of homeland and language which construct his identity. However, all immigrants are not melancholic or depressive.” For example, Mona, Kamal’s wife, is a good example of “assimilated characters” (43). The character of

Kamal is common in immigrant drama. For instance, one finds affinity between El Guindi's play and Pakistani British dramatist, Ayub Khan-Din's play *East is East* (1996). In this play, George Khan, the father, has been working hard to practice his Islamic religious duties as if he were in his home country, Pakistan. He demands that his children follow his example and stick strictly to Islamic rules especially going with him to the mosque. His children, however, like Kamal's son Tawfiq, rebel against him and assimilate into British multiculturalism and become atheists.

Second-generation immigrants who are born in the United States or immigrated to the country when they were children, and grew up in America consider themselves Americans, and look at their cultural heritage as foreign to them. Therefore, they feel estranged from their ethnic and religious identity. Julie Hakim-Larson and Rosanne Menna point out that "... those who are second generation report lower levels of engagement in Arab customs and language and higher levels of adoption of American mainstream culture" (2016, 38). Their parents attempt to mold them into their image, but as these children become adults, they rebel against their parents. Hakim-Larson and Menna comment on this issue as follows: "Age at immigration has also been linked to adaptation to American culture.... Those whose parents tried to instill the traditions of the heritage culture and separate them from American mainstream culture reported feeling controlled and restricted by their parents" (37). To illustrate, Kamal's son, Tawfiq, goes through this kind of experience, for he is now sick and tired of being molded in the image of his father. Though it is the holy month of Ramadan, and the family is preparing *iftar* for their guests from Egypt, Tawfiq has got the courage to his father bluntly that he does not want to go to the mosque, and that he doesn't believe in God anymore.

Tawfiq rebels against Islam and his father's religious and cultural identity. When asked by Hamza "Why weren't you praying?... Why were you just standing there like that?", he answers "I wasn't praying because I didn't want to. I do not want to pray. I did not want to come to the mosque. I chickened out and came anyway because God forbid, we should upset Puppy. God forbid we should have our own opinions and beliefs." (21). When Hamza asks if rejection of Islam is caused by the anti-Islamic media, i.e., Islamophobia, Tawfiq denies that this has any effect on his decision to become an apostate. Tawfiq begins to see himself as newly born. In other words, due to his assimilation into American mainstream culture, Tawfiq decides to free himself from the obligations of Arabic traditions and Islamic identity. Therefore, Tawfiq remains defiant throughout the entire play. He is liberated from the patriarchal shackles of his father. For example, he tells his father that he doesn't believe in God, and that God is fiction: "I think God's a joke... I mean... you're welcome to believe in Him... but I don't (p. 25). He also encourages his sister, Huwaida, to not marry Murad, who has come all along the way from Egypt to marry her in a prearranged marriage. In fact, he persuades Huwaida to follow her choice and not to marry Murad out of duty to her parents. He tells her: "This is too crazy. Nobody does this anymore. Not even in Egypt" (33). Obviously Tawfiq acts as a liberal who has imbibed American culture in his blood. His encouragement to Huwaida has confirmed her hesitation and supported her to decline the offer of marriage. Importantly, he doesn't blame his brother Hamza for being gay. On the contrary, he tells him to do whatever he likes, and

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

he stands as an example for him to challenge his father. Clearly Tawfiq is assimilating in mainstream American culture.

Hamza is a college student. He is docile and obedient to his parents, especially his father. Hamza, however, is afraid and hesitant. Though he is gay, he is afraid of his father and ashamed of what he has done. Whether he will follow in the steps of Tawfiq on his journey of integration remains unclear. But taken the repressive nature of his father, and his continuous gaze on him, Hamza will probably abandon Islam and the family traditions. Being homosexual is not a passing whim for Hamza that will be over in no time as his mother assumes. Hamza wants to become a musician. His father encouraged him to do so to keep his roots with his ancestors, especially his grandfather who loved traditional Arabic music. But Hamza is adapting into American musical culture, for he has adapted the songs and tunes of America's 1960's famous singer Cole Porter to the *oud*. Kevin, the American student who has met Hamza in the park, is attracted to Hamza's music while he is practicing in the park.

*Kevin: Was that Cole Porter?*

*Hamza: You actually heard a melody?*

*Kevin: Where did you learn that?*

*Hamza: Nowhere. Myself. If that isn't obvious.*

*Kevin: Cole Porter on a oud. That's a first. I'm impressed (41).*

Kevin is gay and it seems that he has been following Hamza. He tells Hamza that he likes him, and he kisses him. Hamza turns out to be gay himself, and he reciprocates Kevin's love. This is going to be devastating to Hamza's father, for homosexuality is a taboo in Arabic and Islamic culture.

Kamal cannot tolerate the fact that his younger son whom he loves and encourages to become musician turns out to be homosexual. He looks at his son's homosexuality as a "stain" in the family: "This will be in his record. This ... stain. This abomination" (65). In fact, El Guindi has mentioned this cultural issue in his play *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*. When homosexuality is brought up in a radio interfaith dialogue between Sheikh Alfani, a priest, and a Rabbi, Sheikh Alfani says it is "abomination" (76), whereas the other partners remain silent. Though Sheikh Alfani follows the American standards expected from Muslims, he, however, cannot hide his attitude on such a debatable moral issue. It should be noted that *Our Enemies* premiered in 2008, that is three years after the first stage production of *Ten Acrobats*. This means that homosexuality is an issue for immigrants to deal with in their process of acculturation in terms of adapting to American liberal culture. While LGBT is accepted in America, Arab and Muslim immigrants to the country should not show any negative attitudes towards it. The members of the Fawzi family have different attitudes towards homosexuality. Though Kamal is against it, and he believes his son, Hamza, has committed an "abomination," his other children, Tawfiq and Huwaida, are rather tolerant. Tawfiq does not blame his brother for having sexual contact with Kevin; he even urges him to rebel against the hegemony of his father. Huwaida is engrossed in her own problems, for she does not comment on it. Probably she does not know anything about it, because Kamal and his wife, Mona, have kept this problem confidential and never allowed their guests, Aziz and Murad, to know

anything about Hamza's affair with Kevin. They apologize for Hamza staying in his room by saying he has been sick.

Mona represents the strategy of integration in Berry's scheme of acculturation. She fits into American culture, and at the same time adheres to her native Egyptian culture. Mona holds the family together, and she seems to be balanced and happy in her life in America. Unlike her husband who wishes that he had not come to America, Mona does not feel nostalgic for their old life in Egypt. Unlike Kamal who stands adamant against the transformations of his children in America, Mona is too lenient towards her children's behavioral changes into becoming acculturated American citizens. Commenting on Hamza's sexual adventure with Kevin, she tells Kamal: "Maybe it was a one-time thing-It's possible. You lose your head. We all do it one time or another. He had the bad luck to get caught, or the good luck. Now he's embarrassed, he's very ashamed, and he won't ever do it again... That is also possible" (89). She apologizes for Huwaida's loud make-up and dress. When Huwaida decides not to marry Murad, Mona does not blame her or make a big fuss about this issue. She defends Huwaida's transformation of character, and she does not blame her for rejecting the arranged marriage to Murad. She even defends Tawfiq's atheism, saying that his father's strict standards for raising his children to become a copy of him are to blame (75).

However, Huwaida's case is complicated. Perhaps El Guindi wants Huwaida to represent Arab and Muslim youths who need psychological counselling because of the mental stress they face attempting to cope with the acculturative change they are going through. Mona A. Amer and Joseph D. Hovey emphasize the urgent need to do research in this area: "With an increasing number of Arab Americans reporting mental health stressors and related medical conditions, research in this area has become vital. It is impressive that further research be conducted examining acculturations and mental health among Arab Americans" (2005, 112). Clearly Huwaida is a confused young woman who is torn between her identity as a Muslim (enculturation) and her desire to be free and live the life of liberal young American girls (acculturation). Huwaida is a US-born college student who keeps her Islamic values and adheres to the Arab traditions and the dictates of her parents. She wears the hijab and agrees to be engaged to Murad, whom she has never met. She just talked to him over the phone. In other words, she accepts the arranged marriage her parents have prepared for her. However, deep down in her heart, she is not sure if this is good for her. That is why she has decided at the end to decline this offer of marriage and convince Murad that this arranged marriage will not work for both. Having made this courageous decision, she is on her way towards emancipation from Arabic traditions and family obligations.

Huwaida is also in conflict over her Islamic faith which is physically demonstrated in her Islamic dress. She is always seen when she goes to college wearing her hijab as a sign of defiance to her host society, and the stereotypes associated with Islam. However, she is clearly skeptical about her faith. Her dream or nightmare shows that Huwaida is self-split, a divided soul between her traditions, and religious identity and the demands of her host society. She often sees her psychologist, Pauline, for consultation to help her kick out her interior monsters. Pauline advises Huwaida to free herself from her religious identity which is causing her spiritual loss. H.D. or the dream is a projection of what Huwaida wishes to be--

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

liberated and independent. For instance, in one dream, Huwaida sees herself in a beauty contest wearing a swimsuit and a headdress which is rather bizarre to be like this. She does not want her parents to know anything about her dream, or that she is contacting a psychologist.

In a long speech in scene eight, Pauline explains to Huwaida what is wrong with her. She diagnoses her problem by saying that Huwaida's problems are caused by her hijab and her religion, Islam. Huwaida's confusion is caused by her inability to cope with her religious identity, and her inner desire to immerse in American mainstream culture. Though Huwaida resists Pauline and is doubtful about the interpretation of her dream, she unconsciously fulfils her advice. Later in the play, she participates in a college project wearing a gaudy outfit and loud make-up. In Act two, scene ten, she comes home in her outlandish outfit with the remnants of the make-up on her face. It is shocking to see her in this kind of guise. But as usual, her mother defends her, saying that this was part of a project she attended at college. Surprisingly, Murad is understanding and forgiving.

To sum up, El Guindi's *Ten Acrobats* is a family drama. It is about an Egyptian immigrant family going through the process of acculturation in American host society. El Guindi highlights in this play the throes of acculturation, and the psychological pain that the members of the Fawzi family are going through in their attempt to assimilate and live normally in the US which has become their home. The first generation of immigrants represented by Kamal resists the identity formation that his children are making. He wants to follow his Egyptian customs and Islamic traditions. At the same time, he refuses to allow his children to become who they are, being born and grown up in America. However, his children, especially Tawfiq, have finally rebelled against their father and what he stands for. Tawfiq makes his voice heard loud and clear in rejecting Islam in favor of his new American character identity formation. Hamza has become homosexual, and he has expressed his attraction to American culture as shown in his adaptation of the music of Allan Porter to the traditional Arabic musical instrument, the *oud*. It is true that Hamza is afraid of his father, but there is no indication that he will remain so especially if he follows the example of his older brother, Tawfiq.

Written against the anti-Arab, anti-Islamic discourse following 9/11, this play dispels many of the stereotypes and negative concepts associated with Arabs and Muslims. El Guindi presents in this play Islam and Arabic culture to the American audience. Huwaida's double, H.D.'s final speech, which is clearly addressed to the audience, explains a lot about Islam. She talks about Ramadan and the culture of food associated with it. She highlights the social and spiritual aspects of fasting in Ramadan. H.D.'s final speech educates the American audience about Ramadan in particular, and what it means to be a Muslim. El Guindi pursues the same theme in his play *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* which explains Islam to the American public in a positive manner.

*Ten Acrobat* presents an Arab family in the process of acculturation. However, El Guindi's other plays deal with individual Arab immigrants who try to cope up with American culture and respond to the backlash of 9/11. In one play after another, El Guindi presents Arab immigrants from different Arab countries who immigrated to the United States or were born in the country. The playwright creates different situations in which Arab immigrants struggle to assimilate or integrate into American

mainstream culture, and at the same time try to defend their native culture and Islam against the onslaughts of Islamophobia, and the anti-Arab polemics which prevail in America post 9/11. As pointed out by critics, Arab Americans have struggled to become visible in American society post-9/11 and worked hard to emphasize their hyphenated identity (Naber 2000, 37-61; Salari 2002, 580-588). While they insist to adhere to their native culture and ethnic identity, they are proud of being American. They want to be treated as hyphenated Americans as good as African Americans, Latino Americans and the other minorities that make up the mosaic map of American society.

However, this situation is not without its incurring problems. The Middle East the Arab immigrants have come from is not monolithic. Therefore, the response to the American culture could vary from one ethnic group to another. For example, some immigrants are easily assimilated in American mainstream culture and adapt to American way of life against their own traditional Arabic culture. Others, however, are still divided. While they generally integrate in American culture and exercise the freedom that America affords to everybody, yet they are quite critical of their fellow Arabs who have completely assimilated and accepted the American mainstream discourse, especially the one which tends to be inimical towards Arabs and Islam in general. El Guindi's plays shed light on the dilemma of these Arab immigrants who are divided; while they reject the anti-Arab discourse, and the way Arabs and Muslims are denigrated in the media and other information outlets, they also enjoy the fruits of American culture such as the freedom of speech and way of living. They live like ordinary American citizens and have no qualms about what they are doing following the American way of life; at the same time, they complain about the way Arab people are portrayed or delineated in the American public culture.

El Guindi demonstrates different strategies of acculturation in his play *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*. El Guindi depicts Arab immigrants rather negatively in *Our Enemies*; the play is about Arab immigrants (Egyptians) who are bickering with each other as they attempt to assimilate or integrate into American mainstream culture. Set against the backdrop of post 9/11 media stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims, the Arab characters in this play combat with each other, and in doing so they expose aspects of the acculturation process in America. El Guindi in this play highlights numerous issues: first, he shows the misrepresentation of Arabs and Islam in the media. The media is represented in three venues: the publishing industry, radio talk shows and TV programs. Second, he presents the hardships that Arab immigrants must combat in their attempt to cope with the stages of acculturation in American culture (Shook, 2008, 95-100; Alshetawi, 2020, 177-199).

As it is always the case with El Guindi's plays, his characters fall into two ethnic groups: white Americans, and characters of Arab descent. The American characters include Earl, a TV producer, Russel, a publisher, Olivia, his assistant and editor, and other characters including a Rabbi and a priest. The Muslim characters consist of Sheikh Alfani, imam of the local mosque, Hani, his US-born son, Gamal, a struggling Arab young man who is trying to become a published novelist, Mohsen, a successful novelist, author and a public speaker of Arab culture and tradition, and Noor, a novelist in the making. The three Arab American writers, Mohsen, Gamal and Noor, have been trying to adapt into American culture. Rania Rifaat Mohamed Radwan suggests that "The three Arab American writers struggle to be

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

assimilated in the Arab American community even if they have to abandon their Arab heritage” (2018, 11). However, one tends to disagree with Ms. Radwan for condemning Sheikh Alfani whom she considers misrepresenting Islam. Ms. Radwan is probably adopting the viewpoint of the character Gamal who is attacking Sheikh Alfani, claiming that he has been manipulated by the media. However, judicious scrutiny of the play shows that Alfani represents the voice of reason as this study will show. In analyzing the play, Ms. Radwan has relied on Homi Bhabha’s concepts of mimicry and ambivalence, concluding that the Arab characters in the play have reinforced the negative images and stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims in the USA as they have attempted to assimilate in American culture, and subscribe to the conditions of acculturation.

The play opens at a TV studio where Mohsen is preparing to appear on a talk show to talk about Arabic issues dealing with women and politics in the Middle East. Mohsen stands for the stage of assimilation in Berry’s model of acculturation which embraces cultural immersion. He is completely immersed in American culture; his lifestyle and behavior meet American liberal values. The man is divorced, but he has sexual affairs with women. For example, he is often seen with Olivia in sensuous love scenes. Mohsen reminds us of Amir in Ayad Akhtar’s play *Disgraced* (2012) who has renounced his culture and shed off everything that associates him with Islam and Pakistani ethnic traditions. Mohsen lives a free life unrestricted by his Arabic traditions. In other words, he becomes an atheist who lives a liberal life unfettered by any Arab social or moral values. Mohsen’s books and talks make him popular in the media. That is why he is seen at the beginning of the play at the TV studio preparing to appear on a show hosted by Earl. The images on the screen show demonstrations of angry Arab men in protest, reminding the audience of the political turmoil in the Middle East, and probably the Arab Spring, which are often broadcast on US TV satellites and local stations. These images give a negative picture of the Arabs and Muslims especially with reference to the post-9/11 terrorist attacks.

Mohsen denigrates his home country. He realizes that America has given him the opportunity to work and succeed. Therefore, he is against the Arab immigrants from his home country who attack him on the basis that that he has sold himself to America at the expense of his people. In a conversation with Noor in Act one, scene six, Mohsen defends himself against his fellow Arab immigrants saying that they hate him because of his success. “You must really resent my success. The “*mukwagee*’s” son who makes it big in America... If we were still in Cairo, you’d be handing your clothes for my mother to iron.” (p. 100) Mohsen’s story is the story of immigrants who flee their home countries because of poverty and political and social persecution and landed in America. This is a positive image of America that we often come across in El Guindi’s plays. Perhaps the story of Mohsen as a successful writer and media star is like the story of the playwright himself who has become famous in the United States. It is also the same story that Abdallah in *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* talks about as he comments on his immigration to the US, and the wealth that he has accumulated in the country within a period of three years. However, Mohsen has made many Arab enemies and detractors. These are represented in the play by Gamal and Noor.

Perhaps Gamal represents the stage of marginalization that Berry designates in his model. Hakim-Larson and Menna state that "(I)n the marginalization strategy, a person rejects both the host culture and the heritage culture. An individual utilizing the marginalization strategy may be at an increased risk of experiencing more psychological distress due to a lack of community and contextual resources" (2016, 39). Gamal is torn between two cultures, the American liberal culture, and his Arabic heritage. This makes him isolated and rejected by everybody. For instance, he is Mohsen's staunch enemy because he thinks that he is manipulated by the American media to reinforce the negative images and stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims. Disguised as the Make-Up Man, Gamal accuses Mohsen of writing books that reinforce the stereotypes of Arabs and Muslims: "Don't you get it? They're going to spit you out as soon as they're done with you. You're their Uncle Tom. The Good Muslim, the Good Arab who will confirm everything they want to hear" (62). Gamal continues this tirade against Mohsen and his American sponsors by saying that he has been manipulated by them for political purposes.

Gamal vents his anger at Mohsen and Sheikh Alfani because he believes that both men have distorted the image of Arabs and Muslims and reinforced the stereotypes that are associated with the Arab world in American media and public culture. Gamal is a self-appointed defender of Islam in America; he aggressively attacks both Mohsen and Sheikh Alfani thinking that he defends the cause of Islam. He goes under the cover of the Make-Up Man to insult Mohsen and write the word "whore" on his forehead. Mohsen does not realize that he has been made a fool until later when Olivia makes him aware of the stuff written on his face. He gets angry and promises that he will take revenge on the culprit who has done this to him. Later in the play, he will learn from Olivia that this person is Gamal, Noor's boyfriend, whose novel has just been rejected. Gamal also insults Sheikh Alfani because he thinks that Alfani is misrepresenting Islam on the radio shows that he holds with other religious men, Rabbi Lerner and Father Carol. Waiting outside on the street for Alfani to appear from the show that he has been doing, Gamal confronts Alfani and offends him verbally. He tells Alfani "Don't you see how you're being used? They love you. They love you for all the reasons that make most of us Muslims cringe" (p. 75). Blinded by sheer anger, Gamal shoves the cake he has bought for his girlfriend's birthday into Sheikh Alfani's face while Alfani's young son, Hani, is watching. Later at the end of the play, Hani will revenge on Gamal; Hani will thrust a knife into Hani's stomach believing that Gamal was the one who burned his father's mosque.

But Gamal is not a practicing Muslim; he is confused and drifting aimlessly. He tries to become a writer, probably a novelist, but his manuscript was rejected by the publisher, Russel. He is angry because he thinks his work was rejected because he is not in agreement with Mohsen's type. Significantly enough, Gamal cannot represent Islam or the genuine Arab character. Gamal is a hypocrite; he claims that he is the defender of his religion and Arabic culture from the onslaughts of Islamophobia and Arabophobia. However, he lives the life of an atheist. Ironically, he is almost immersed into American culture and, he seems to enjoy the pleasures America offers. His rebellion against the media representation of Arabs and Muslims sounds false, for after all he does not follow the teachings of Islam, or the Arab traditions in any way. For example, he drinks alcohol, and he has sex with his girlfriend, Noor. He is not different from

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

Mohsen though he pretends that he is his opposite. Therefore, Gamal's process of acculturation in American culture is not yet complete. Perhaps after this painful experience he has gone through, Gamal will follow the example of Mohsen and become fully assimilated in American culture. Mohsen is true to himself, and he enjoys his life in America as a secularist. He drinks, and sleeps with women and he does not hide his antipathy towards traditional Arabic life, and the repressions that people, especially women in the Middle East suffer. Therefore, he appears on media platforms to talk about his opinions, and he becomes completely Americanized.

El Guindi presents different Arab American young women characters. In *Ten Acrobats*, Huwaida is searching for her identity. She strives to keep her Arab identity; but at the same time, she unconsciously wants to become American. However, there are signs that she is on her way of embracing acculturation as American. El Guindi has tackled the same issue in *Our Enemies*, but this time the young Arab American woman, Noor, has already been immersed in American culture. Noor is living in America on her own. Her family who was living in the States decided to go back to Egypt, but Noor, their daughter, refused to go back with them and chose to live in the USA. There is almost nothing known about the background of Noor's Egyptian family. They were probably like the Fawzi family in *Ten Acrobats*, for in this play Kamal feels nostalgic for his home country, Egypt, and wishes that he had never come to the States. Similarly, Noor's family decided to return to Egypt for one reason or another. However, Noor who was obviously raised and educated in the United States refused to go back, and hence she broke with her family. Throughout the play, Noor has made no reference or mention of her parents. She lives independently on her own, and she has freed herself from all the restrictions which could be imposed on her by her religion, Islam, or traditions and Arabic culture.

Following the stages of acculturation expounded by Berry, Noor is fully assimilated into American culture. She becomes independent in America. On certain occasions, Noor has been extreme in her lifestyle. Perhaps El Guindi suggests that Noor is manipulated by the American media to reinforce the negative images of the Arabs and denigrate Arabic and Islamic cultures. For example, though Noor has been fighting with Mohsen for the way he represents the Arabs, she has been doing the same thing in one way or another. She is writing a novel with Latino characters which she wants to get published. However, her editor, Olivia, who discussed the novel with her, tells her that this kind of fiction will not sell; therefore, she asks her to modify her novel to represent an Arab immigrant woman. She wants Noor to base her novel on her experience as an Arab and Muslim immigrant living in America. "We'd like to publish *you*. And we might even publish this book. ... My point is. I'm not sure these are the typical concerns of a young *American* woman. Perhaps a young, *Americanized* woman. A young *immigrant* woman who is trying to strike out on her own and break away from her traditions. *That* would be interesting. I'd love to read about that. That would be a window into a world people are curious about" (66). Olivia suggests that the novel should talk about an assimilated Arab woman who has abandoned her Arab identity and assumed a newly formed identity based on her experience as an independent Arab woman.

In other words, Olivia wants Noor to write about an Arab immigrant woman who is assimilated into American mainstream culture. Her novel then should talk about her past life as an Arab, and her new experience in the States. Mohsen has already done this; that is why he has become popular in the media. Though at first, she has shown some resistance to Olivia's suggestions, Noor will eventually follow Olivia's recommendations. Olivia is confident that Noor will rewrite her story to deal with an Arab immigrant woman. She tells Mohsen that Noor will overcome the residue of her traditions and assimilate in American life: "Who knows what her resistance is. I get the sense she carries her fair share of baggage, lockjaw. which all feels faintly political. For someone who writes romance novels, she seems very encumbered, politically speaking. Like she's laboring under some bug that gives her creative lockjaw. 'Politicus Tetanus,' I think" (78). Noor's resistance to the temptations of success, and publicity in the America media will not last for long because she is prepared psychologically and mentally to accept them.

In fact, Noor has already changed her life into a free woman from the first time she refused to go back to her home country and live independently in America. Mohsen, who has already gone through the same process, knows that Noor's faint resistance is soon to give way. Therefore, true to his bohemian-like life, Mohsen plans to have sex with Noor just for the sake of sex. Therefore, Noor's prudish nature which she has shown to Mohsen in the party arranged by Olivia at Russel's apartment is fake. In Russel's party, Mohsen who is a sort of sex-maniac, discovers that the Make-Up Man who rouged his face and wrote 'whore' on his forehead is Gamal, Noor's boyfriend. Therefore, he plans to take revenge on him by sleeping with his girlfriend, Noor, which he does in Act two, scene two. Noor sounds hypocritical when she blames Mohsen for what he is doing. For example, Noor is immersed in the joys of American culture. She drinks though she knows that alcohol is prohibited in Islam, and it is something against her Arab social traditions. When asked by Olivia at Russel's party if she is against drinking, Noor answers "No". In other words, Noor does not follow her Arabic traditions as well. And since she has been living in the country for many years, Noor does not practice Arabic, which means she did not commingle with the Arab community living in America. She has defined herself as American. Her diatribe against Mohsen for renouncing his religious faith and assimilating in American culture and political life is soon to be exposed as fake. She will adapt to the policy of the publishing company that is sponsoring her and begin to write what the publishers want her to write. In other words, she will become another copy of Mohsen who has already accepted American culture and adopted the American anti-Arab discourse.

Noor and Mohsen are combatting; he defends his Americanization, and he is not ashamed of his assimilation into American culture. He appreciates the opportunities that America has offered him as an immigrant. For example, he becomes a celebrated author and a recognized speaker much on demand to talk about Arabic and Islamic issues. It is true that he is critical of the political oppressions in the Arab countries, and he often talks about the oppression of women in Arab societies. Noor sounds false when she censures him for his talks about the need to liberate Arab women, saying that this is the same propaganda that Americans use whenever they want to invade a country: "They *all* talk about women's rights. All of them. It's always the opening salvo. It's what they tell people who don't want their country

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

invading another country why it must be invaded. ... You've been here ten years and you regard everything you've come from as an alien planet. Stop being their goddam houseboy!" (p. 103). However, Mohsen fully understands the psychology of Noor. He knows that she is just paying lip-service to the Arab cause especially as regards the rights of Arab women. Mohsen's argument proves to be true, for this hostility with Noor will end soon when she accompanies him to her place to have sex with him. Noor proves to be ultra-feminist, who has 'violated,' so to speak, her religious and cultural identity in favor of forming a new radical identity by virtue of living in America. This is shown in her rebuttal of Mohsen in her bed when she shamelessly tells him that she is having sex with him simply because her boyfriend is not with her, and the batteries of her vibrator are dead. "Let me make this very clear: the only reason I'm screwing you is because the batteries have died out of on my vibrator, and my boyfriend happens to be out of town" (114).

Then Noor and her boyfriend Gamal are similar; their rebellion against what Mohsen represents turns out to be just talk. They have both changed their identities, and they are just waiting for an opportunity to assimilate into American mainstream culture. Embittered by Noor's radical change of character for the sake of fame and publicity, Gamal realizes lately that "identity is a-a choice, really" (128). El Guindi in this play presents Arab immigrants negatively. The three Arabs, Mohsen, Gamal and Noor, who happen to be writers, are fighting each other. They have renounced their religious identity and Arab culture and get fully immersed in the sensual pleasures that are available in American social culture. Identity is a matter of choice as Gamal states. Both Noor and Gamal finally give in to the demands of acculturation. Like Mohsen, both become extremely free in their sexual lifestyle. Their talk against the anti-Arab discourse which they think Mohsen represents proves to be just lip-service.

However, the picture of Arab immigrants in the play is not all darksome. El Guindi presents Sheikh Alfani, the imam of the local mosque, and father of Hani, as a good example of Muslim leaders in the country. Alfani is often invited to participate in interfaith conversations with a Rabbi and a priest. Alfani gives a positive example of Islam which is understanding and tolerant. He dispels many misconceptions and stereotypes that are associated with Muslims. At the beginning of the play, Alfani is introduced as an imam who is often hosted by the media to share his thoughts on Islam and other religious matters with other religious leaders. For instance, in Act one, scene three, Alfani, Rabbi Lerner and Father Carol have just ended a radio talk on interfaith dialogue. Clearly Alfani seems to be on good terms with his religious colleagues. They promise to meet on the second day on a roundtable discussion to discuss issues that relate to their three faiths and their respective communities. Alfani presents moderate Islam, which is peaceful and accepting the Other.

The following excerpt shows that Alfani has been able to reach out to the American public, and he is well-liked by his colleagues.

*Father Carol: It was good talking with you. Perhaps we can organize that interfaith meeting soon.*

*Sheikh Alfani: (accent) I would like that. I will bring the best tabbouleh to the potluck you have ever tasted.*

*Father Carol: And I can match you with the best frankfurters. For Hani here.*

*Sheikh Alfani: Hallel, I hope.*

*Father Carol: Always kosher (The two men laugh, shake hands.) See you soon, then (71-72).*

This conversation reveals that these religious men are happy with each other. They have shown great friendship and understanding of each other's faith. Their engagement in interfaith roundtable discussions shows their role as religious men to counter religious bigotry and to refute any discourse that points out that Islam, Christianity, and Judaism clash. The camaraderie and goodwill of these religious leaders are shown in their socializing-- food is always seen as part of culture, and its role to bring different people together has been documented (Ikram 2013, 39-52; Stiffler 2020, 63-86).

El Guindi presents another positive side of Sheikh Alfani. The latter wants to send his US-born son, Hani, back to Egypt to commingle with his folks and learn Arabic culture. He wants his son to keep his roots with his country of origin, Egypt. Hani writes to his father from Egypt describing social life in the country, comparing it with life in the United States. In trying to put down the fire of the mosque, Alfani has hurt himself. We see Alfani in Act Two, scene three, his hands bandaged. He sends a message to his son in Egypt telling him about the mosque fire. What is interesting in Alfani's message is that he belongs to America as much as he belongs to Egypt. He tells him that his mother is scared, and she wants to go back to Egypt. But Alfani will not be scared by his enemies who have burned down his mosque. "But I don't want to run like this. This is our home now. Yes, my home too. And we fight for it-when attacked" (122). In fact, El Guindi has reiterated in his drama that America is home for Arab Americans. For example, El Guindi raised this issue in his play *Back of the Throat* (2006). When the two government agents intimidate Khaled, he tells them: "This is my country, too, you know. This is my country! It's my fucking country!" (25). Therefore, different as they are in their approaches to the question of acculturation and identity formation, Alfani and Mohsen share the same idea--America is their home.

Finally, it would be illuminating to comment on the attitude of the American characters, especially Earl, Russel and Olivia towards the Arab characters in the play and the Orient. Russel seems to like Egypt and Arab culture. In scene six, one understands that he visited Egypt, and he was impressed by its culture and its people's perspectives on life. In the party he throws to host Noor, Russel stands as an Orientalist who only sees the exotic side of the Orient. Talking about his visit to Egypt, Russel says: "Oh, Egypt. Oh my gosh. Where do I start? I have never quite been a drunk on a place as I was with that country. And I don't mean alcohol sloshed, though God knows half the pleasure of holiday is you can drink as much as you want and not be called an alcoholic" (94). The publishing company he works for publishes books on the Orient only if they are written from Orientalist perspectives. Notice that Olivia asks Noor to change her novel in such a way to represent the exotic experiences of an Arab immigrant woman who is trying to be Americanized. The attitude of the American characters in the play are rather condescending, showing themselves to be superior to their Arab counterparts and guiding them to become Americanized. They look at the Arab characters and the whole Middle East as the Other that needs to be civilized and molded into the image of America.

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

This situation echoes Edward Said's argument in his books, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism*—that the Orient is consciously drawn up in Orientalist discourse as exotic, sensual and a place for romantic escapade. This very concept is treated as well in El Guindi's play *Threesome* at the studio setting that Doug has set up where he will take photographs for Leila's book cover, and in his anecdote about his sexual adventure with an Arab woman during his deployment as an embedded photographer in the US Army that invaded an Arab country, probably Iraq. El Guindi highlights two issues: Arab American feminism and the formation of the Arab female character; and the fact that Orient is still conceived in American culture in tandem with the Orientalist discourse. El Guindi pursues the same theme of acculturation and identity formation of Arab immigrants in his plays *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* and *Threesome* that will be considered next in this paper.

*Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* is about young Arab immigrants from Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia. We do not know how they came to the States. But obviously they are documented immigrants, for they all work, and they have never shown any fear or anxiety of deportation because of their legal status in the country. The play consists of two acts, and it is set in a large American city. As it is common in El Guindi's drama in general, his characters always include Arab immigrants, especially from Egypt, the birthplace country of the dramatist, as well as from other Arab countries. It is also characteristic of El Guindi's plays to include American characters because the playwright wants to deal with the cultural encounters between Arab immigrants and American characters. We have in this play five characters: three men and two women. The main character is Musa, a young immigrant from Egypt who works as a taxi driver. His fellow Arab friends are Tayyib from Somalia, and Abdallah from the Sudan. Abdallah who is Musa's roommate, is on a pilgrimage to Mecca, and though he does not appear in person in the play, his presence is very much felt throughout the play both physically and spiritually. He appeared twice on the stage in a surrealistic manner to reflect on his immigration experience, and the life of immigrants in America and his spiritual journey both to America to make money and to Mecca for spiritual rejuvenation. These young Arab immigrants work and live in America; obviously they are all happy and appreciative of what America offers them.

The female characters are Sheri, an American in her thirties who works as a waitress at a diner, and Gamila, Musa's fiancé who was born in the States and lives in the country. This means that Gamila's parents were living in America when she was born, but they then returned to their country of origin, Egypt. Kamal in *Ten Acrobats* regrets that he has ever come to America, and he often feels nostalgic for Egypt despite the economic successes that he has achieved in America. In the same vein, Noor's parents in *Our Enemies* returned to Egypt because they could not live in America probably because of cultural and social barriers. Gamila grew up and went to school in the USA. However, there is no mention whatsoever about her family background. We just know that she has come back from Cairo after a month-length visit to see Musa's parents and plan for their marriage. At the end of the play, when Musa deserts her for Sheri, we have no idea where she will go. It is only Tayyib who offers to help her. But she is clearly an independent young woman; she is not afraid because Musa has deserted her. The only American character who is involved with the Arab immigrants is Sheri who is entangled in a romantic

relation with Musa. And we have Sheri's boss at the diner, Andreus, who is often tough with Sheri, and he later fires her. There is also the American couple who live in the apartment above Musa's studio who are always fighting and making a lot of noise. But they do not appear in person.

The play, as reviewers have pointed out, is a pleasant romantic comedy full of joy and exuberance (Jacobson 2011; Walker 2020). El Guindi demonstrates in this play different modes of acculturation and identity formation. This is best shown in Musa's desire to assimilate into American culture. He is going to abandon his native Arabic traditions and embrace a new life in the New World, that is the USA. He wants to break away with his country of origin and indigenous Arab Islamic traditions for his new life in America. There are many examples and situations in the play that indicate his readiness to do whatever is necessary to be fully assimilated in American mainstream culture. Among the different strategies of acculturation, Berry identifies two modes of adaptation whether they relate to individuals or communities- psychological and sociocultural:

Originally, two kinds of adaptations were identified. ... First, are adaptations that are primarily internal or *psychological* (e. g., a sense of wellbeing, or self-esteem, sometimes called 'feeling well'). Second are *sociocultural* adaptations (sometimes called 'doing well'). These adaptations link the individual to others in the new society and are manifested for example by competence in the activities of daily intercultural living (2019, 24).

Musa fits well into Berry's description of adaptation. For example, when his fiancé, Gamila, asks him in Act two, scene two, what he finds in Sheri to make him abandon his own world and culture and adopt a new identity at the expense of his roots, he answers her in the following words: “

This world, the one you always- and my family as well, what they want. It's like I'm in it always, up to my eye-balls, and I can't see anything else. Why did I-why did I come to this country? So I can stay in this same world? I am like a fish in a bowl and what has changed? I look out on America in my taxi instead of Cairo but it is still the same fish bowl I am in, the same story. What is the point? (245)

In this conversation, Musa is changing into a new identity--independent and individualistic pursuing the expectations of any ordinary American citizen. In other words, Musa sheds off his traditional Arabic garb for good to wear a new American character identity. In a long speech, he tells Gamila that he is renouncing his Arabic character, and all things that associate him with that culture, be it family, tradition, religion, and customs. In other words, he is newly born into a new person fully assimilated into American culture and way of life. Sheri will give him this new spirit: “You want to keep in touch with your roots? I don't want roots. I don't want the rest of my life to be what I know. This story where I know beginning, middle and end. Yes, Sheri is not you. She is very strange and perhaps wrong for me, but maybe that is what I need” (245). Clearly Musa is rebelling against himself and traditions, and his identity is now changing into a new formation. He is assimilating into American culture, and Sheri is the medium through which he will go on this adventure.

In other words, Musa is on a journey that will take him on a pilgrimage across the USA. Where this journey takes him, he cannot tell. But the experience is worth it, and he is ready to embrace it and hope for a better future. As a matter of fact, when Sheri expresses her worry about their new life together, he

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

tells her he doesn't care. They will manage to make a living since both have a profession. She is a waitress, and he is a taxi driver. Using their skills and work experience, they will be able to make it anywhere in the States. When Sheri asks him what they will do to make money, he answers "I'm a driver. You're a waitress. We'll make money as we go" (251). This journey will give them both freedom and independence. This conversation sums up the whole American experience. Young people are brought up to depend on themselves in making their living. Musa has been able to fully understand American culture, and to accept its cultural demands of self-reliance, individualism, and freedom. Musa is an example of Berry's strategy of assimilation.

Clearly Musa is assimilating into American culture, and he is in the process of forming a new identity. His romantic relation with Sheri has just started. He has been in America for quite a long time. But there are signs that he has accepted American culture and way of life in terms of food and drinking. When he has invited Sheri to his apartment at two o'clock in the morning, he offers her alcohol, which is forbidden in Islam: "I have alcohol if you want". He tells her that his Somali friend, Tayyib, pays him alcohol instead of money for the services that he renders him: "This Somali friend, he give me Johnny Walker as payment after I help him take merchandize across bridge a few times. Says he not believe in money between friends" (197). Musa is easy going with religion; ironically, Musa does not consider his neighborhood storeowner a good Muslim because he sells drugs to the junkies. But he forgives himself drinking alcohol saying that "This is a weakness. God understands weakness" (198).

Musa's fiancé tries to dissuade him from this new path he is following; she assumes that Musa is probably marrying Sheri because she is American, and therefore, she can give him permanent residence. But as we delve deep into the play, we realize that this is not the case. After all, Gamila is American; she was born, raised, and educated in the States. She speaks English with an American accent. When Sheri asks her where she has learnt English, she tells her that she went to international school in Egypt. Of course, this is a lie because she wants to know more about Sheri's relation with Musa whether it is a passing whim or a serious relation. Having realized that it is serious, she tells Sheri that she was born in the States. Gamila is integrated into American society, but she is not completely assimilating.

Gamila is different from the other young Arab women in El Guindi's plays. In the four plays considered in this paper, Gamila is comfortable with her status and way of life. Though she was born and educated in America, and she has been living in the country ever since, she is not in conflict with her identity as a Muslim. She wears the Islamic dress, and she is sticking to her hijab. However, the other young Arab women in El Guindi's plays go through different processes of acculturation. For example, Huwaida in *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith* is confused and psychic. She is worried about her faith as a Muslim and whether she sticks to her Islamic faith. Noor in *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat* and Leila in *Threesome* are totally different. They have rejected their Arabic identity and immersed in American culture. However, they are not happy, or well-balanced as Gamila is for being Arab American. Therefore, each goes too far in her attempt to assimilate in what she thinks is typical American womanhood, that is to be free sexually, and morally lax. El Guindi suggests that identity formation is a big challenge that faces young Arab men and women who live in America. Some feel lost

and they grapple with what it means to be an Arab American. Huwaida, Noor and Leila are just a case in point. However, Gamila is a new type of Arab America character who is comfortable with her identity as an Arab American Muslim woman.

We realize that all the Arab immigrants in the play do not see drinking alcohol as sinful; this is by way of being influenced by the American culture. However, it should be mentioned here that though drinking alcohol is strictly prohibited in Islam, drinking alcohol is quite common in the Arab social life. As a matter of fact, the playwright takes a jab at some Arab immigrants who do not observe their religion rites, and even the laws of their host country, the States. For example, the store owner in the corner of Musa's neighborhood stays open late at night. Musa tells Sheri that he is not a good Muslim because he sells drugs for the junkies. "He is not very good man. Stays open for junkies. He knows they want things at night. I say, why you do that? You Muslim. This is not good. (Turns on kitchen light.) He say nothing. Says it's business" (198). Perhaps El Guindi wants to say that there are bad Arab immigrants who violate the laws of the country and denigrate Islam by doing illegal business such as drug trafficking. However, the Arab immigrants in the play are hard-working and honest people; they come to work and make money. They are all on the road towards acculturation. Perhaps Musa's is a progressive case, but the other Arab characters are in harmony with American culture. They have never maligned America or American people.

Contrary to the stereotypical image of Arabs and Muslims as terrorists or evil, which is common in American culture, El Guindi has shown Arab immigrants as peaceful and loving of America. They have come from their home countries to the States to work and make money. None of the Arab characters in the play has done any nefarious action to their host society. Musa is a case in point. His other fellow Arabs are as well appreciative of their life in the United States. For example, in a long speech in Act one, scene two, Abdallah appears on the stage wearing the Haj clothes to comment on his experience as immigrant. He says that America is a welcoming place for immigrants; he finds no problem to adapt and find a job; he likes the food, and he appreciates the beauty and manners of American women. His speech sums up the experience of all immigrants: "I do very well for myself here. Three years in this new country and I turn a poor boy from Khartoum, me, into a businessman with much cash, as thick as a deck of playing cards" (209). Despite the differences between his culture and the American culture in terms of food and habits, and the way women are treated or accept to be treated, he did not find it difficult to adapt to American culture. "So, in general, I have no problem fitting in. And finding a job right away" (p. 209). El Guindi uses Abdallah as a spokesman for Arab immigrants as well as other immigrants of different nationalities. The gist of Abdallah's long speech is to comment on the positive aspects of American culture, and that the country will host immigrants who intend to live and work.

One of the most interesting characters in the play is Sheri, a young American woman who works as a waitress at a diner. It seems that Sheri is also a pilgrim of some sort, for she wants to discover this other culture she must have heard bad things about it. She met Musa accidentally because he gave her a ride at two o'clock in the morning after she had finished her night shift. Sheri is a brave young woman who goes to the place of an Arab taxi driver. In other words, she is not afraid of Musa though the country is fraught

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

with anti-Arab, anti-Muslim sentiments. Sheri is somewhat fed up with her monotonous life as a waitress who is overworked and often taken advantage of by the diner's customers. This is why she accepts Musa's invitation to go with him to his studio apartment instead of dropping her at her place. She wants to discover who this Arab young man is, and his culture. The first thing she asks him about is when she is in his studio if he smokes. He tells her that he gave up smoking. Then she refers to an object which turns out to be a hookah. This is an Oriental object. Sheri likes the place though it looks shabby with minimal furniture. Musa tells her that he intends to buy a place once he makes enough money. This means that he plans to live permanently in America and become American citizen. He wants to be fully immersed in American culture. This is perhaps why he prefers Sheri over Gamila. It is not just a matter of gaining permanent residence in America, for he could have got Green Card through Gamila who is an American citizen by virtue of birth. However, marrying Sheri is a different story; he will be assimilated in American culture and life.

El Guindi educates his American audience about Islam and Arabic culture through Sheri. When she asks him about his roommate, Abdallah, he tells her that he went to Mecca on a pilgrimage. It seems that she has some knowledge about Islam as religion and culture. She has seen on television scenes from Mecca during Haj, and she admires to see people of all ethnicities and nations who meet on Haj days. She does not express any anti-Islamic sentiments; on the contrary, she says "It looks so intense.... I'd love to be able to lose myself in something like that" (p. 196). She looks at a copy of the translation of the Holy Qur'an, which Musa uses to learn English. Sheri reads randomly from the Qur'an the following verse: "Allah knows what the heavens and the earth contain. If three men talk in secret together, He is their fourth; if four, He is their fifth; if five, He is their sixth; whether fewer or more, wherever they be, He is with them" (199-200). Then she refers to the title of the *Sura*, or chapter, which is "She Who Pleaded".

In her conversation with Gamila, Sheri defends her relationship with Musa saying that if Gamila's objection to her is because she is older than Musa, Prophet Muhammad married a woman who was older than him: "And I'm not that much older than him if that's the issue. And shouldn't I meet the rest of the family before dismissed? And by the way, wasn't the Prophet's wife like fifteen years older than him?" (230) Sheri is in her thirties, that is, she is older than Musa by some years. But she sees no harm in that, for after all when the Prophet married his first wife, Khadija, she was 15 years older than him. It is documented in the *sirah* books (biographies of the life of the Prophet) that the Prophet was twenty-five years old when he married Khadija who was in her forties. He married her long before his mission as a Prophet. In other words, Sheri, who is an ordinary uneducated waitress has some good knowledge about Islam, and even the private life of the Prophet which she uses for her advantage to defend her prospective marriage to Musa.

Sheri justifies her attraction to Musa, saying that she sees him as a traveler on a journey to find himself. She also begins to see herself as a traveler or a pilgrim whose goal is self-discovery. It is indeed a spiritual journey that every immigrant takes towards discovering a new life and a new self. And she connects this with the Islamic culture that Gamila knows very well. Sheri tells her that she often reads some verses from the Qur'an, and she has found out that the Prophet was an immigrant too. Her romance

with Musa has opened her eyes to see Islam in a rather positive way. “I’ve been reading passages and finding out the Prophet was like an immigrant too, right? The migration he had to make, to escape persecution. Which makes him like an unofficial-American” (228). This kind of conversation is obviously directed to the American audience who could be ignorant about Islam and the Qur’an. Sheri is probably inviting her fellow American citizens to read the Qur’an, and to educate themselves about Islam. This also suggests that Sheri, like many Americans, understand the plight of the refugees and immigrants; they leave their home countries because of political persecution and poverty. It is almost the same situation that forced the early European immigrants, or Pilgrims as they often called themselves, to leave home and everything behind, and face the unknown as they crossed the Atlantic seeking a new life and a better future in the New World.

A final note about Musa’s friends, Tayyib and Abdallah. Like Gamila, Tayyib represents the stage of separation in Berry’s scheme; he lives in America, but he sticks to his native culture and lifestyle. He can work, make money, and enjoy the best of what America has to offer. But he adheres to his traditions and lives in some sort of isolation in his host society. This is in line with Berry’s theory that some immigrants refuse to adapt into their new situation and keep their traditions and moral values to themselves. This makes Tayyib like Gamila. Later in the play, when Gamila fails to persuade Musa to leave Sheri and stay with her, she decides to go on her way. It is Tayyib who will give her help and solace. They will probably get married in the future because they are of the same mindsets. Abdallah was Musa’s roommate, and as he explains in his long speech in Act one, scene three, he came into this country three years ago, and he worked at different odd jobs. But he was able to make good money and work as a middleman for many businesses. He praises America for its kindness to foreign immigrants like him; it is a country in which immigrants can find work opportunities. He is aware of the cultural differences in America. But he was fast to learn the ways of life especially after having mastered the English language. Therefore, he finds “no problem fitting in” (209).

To conclude, El Guindi’s play *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World* is about immigration and identity formation. All Arab immigrants in the play find America congenial for them. El Guindi writes this play to explain Arab immigrants to the American audience especially against the stereotypes and hostility towards Arabs and Muslims generated by the backlash of 9/11. El Guindi’s play portrays young Arab immigrants who are trying to assimilate or integrate into American culture and way of life. Some of them, like Musa, dive deep into the American culture regardless of the consequences that might have followed. For him it is a journey or a pilgrimage worth taking. Other Arab immigrants find it convenient to adapt to American culture and way of life, and they discover that America is a welcoming host to the immigrants who work hard to make a living and become rich. However, they stop short of melting into the American mainstream culture. They keep their traditions and stick to their religious duties. There is no trace of discrimination or racism of any sort against Arabs or Muslims in El Guindi’s play. The play shows Arab immigrants living and working happily in America. It also exposes different modes of acculturation such as assimilation, integration, and separation.

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

El Guindi's plays are thematically interconnected. They all present Arab immigrants living in the United States. However, the characters of each play interact with the process of acculturation rather differently. El Guindi's comedy *Threesome* depicts the assimilation of Arab immigrants into American mainstream culture. The playwright presents in this play two Arab immigrants, Leila and Rashid, who are originally from Egypt, and Doug who is a white photographer working for a certain publishing company. Leila and her partner, Rashid are fully assimilated into American culture. Set in an American city, the play consists of two acts: the first act takes place at Leila's bedroom; the second act is set in Doug's photography studio. Leila is an ultra-version of Noor in *Our Enemies*. She is super feminist, rebelling against all norms of decency and Arabic moral values. Her boyfriend, Rashid, is probably a copy of Mohsen, though less sophisticated and educated. He does the bidding of his girlfriend, Leila, with no or little hesitation or reservation. Doug accepts Leila's invitation to participate in a threesome, a sexual experiment that Leila has long been wanting, because he is looking for some excitement that will satisfy his thirst for an exotic escapade and Oriental adventure which he seems to be fascinated with.

*Threesome* could be considered a sequel to *Our Enemies*. El Guindi presents Arab American characters who struggle to adapt into the system and shed off the traces of their native culture which still stands as an obstacle to their full assimilation into American mainstream culture. The older generation members such as Kamal in *Ten Acrobats* resist the influence of the host society on their ethnic and religious identity. But they find themselves estranged from their children who have grown up in American mainstream culture. The young Arab generations consider American culture as their own culture. However, they are still tied by their Arab cultural heritage especially in the light of anti-Arab policies and the defamation of the Middle East in the American media culture. This is demonstrated by Noor and Gamal in *Our enemies*. It shows Arab American characters who have already been immersed in American culture and try to show that they are free of any religious or cultural restrictions especially when it comes to exercise their sexual freedom.

*Threesome* is like *Our Enemies* in several ways. First, the play is about an Arab immigrant woman who has rebelled against Arabic traditions and religious identity especially when it comes to her sexual freedom. Noor drinks, and sleeps not only with her boyfriend, but also with Mohsen whom she has often attacked because of his assimilation in American culture and manipulation by the American media. Leila in *Threesome* is perhaps a radicalized Noor who is excessively engrossed in her concept of women emancipation and sexual freedom. Second, *Threesome* deals with the media, especially the publishing industry. The publishers in both plays are interested to publish materials written by Arab American intellectuals who write about their experiences whether in America or in Egypt, providing that their materials reinforce the stereotypical representations of Arabs. Three, both plays present the Orient, i.e., Egypt, from an Orientalist perspective, and both plays present Arab countries in political turmoil. This is indirectly shown in the demonstrations and violence reflected on the stage screens throughout the two plays. Finally, both plays expose the double standards of Arab American intellectuals; while they are fully immersed in American culture and enjoy the individual freedom that the American culture offers, they, however, criticize the Orientalist representations of the Arab World in the media.

As mentioned earlier, Leila wrote a book about her experience in Egypt during the Egyptian revolution of 2011. The content of the book is never fully revealed in the play, but we understand that it is about what happened to her during the demonstrations. From the little details given here and there, one understands that Leila was assaulted and raped by the police and the demonstrators. She wrote about her experience from a feminist perspective to show how the female body is always taken advantage of and abused by men. The book has been accepted by an American publisher who appoints Doug to do the cover photograph for the book. The cover must feature an Arab woman wearing an exotic Arab dress, the *abaya* and veil. However, Leila disagrees with the cover picture for the book because she thinks this will reinforce the stereotypical images of the Arab woman and the Orient as a whole. It seems that the book will give negative picture of Egyptian men. Leila's boyfriend tells her later in Act two that the book will sound like a piece of "pornography" to the reader (p. 304). Facing Leila with the nature of the book, Rashid says: "And maybe a part of you wants this. Because it gives you this megaphone. Almost like maybe you-welcomed it?" (305) This reveals that Leila, very much like Noor, has exaggerated the incidents in Cairo to gain publicity in the American book market. But by doing this, she distorts the image of the Arabs and Muslims and delineates Arabs and Muslims as rapists and women oppressors.

In *Our Enemies*, Noor sleeps with Mohsen in her apartment. After having clashed with him at Russel's party over his representations of his fellow countrymen, she finally succumbs to his sexual advances and has sex with him in her bedroom. Similarly, Leila has invited Doug and her boyfriend Rashid to have a threesome in her bedroom. She is extremely independent, and she unabashedly exercises some sort of promiscuity. Her reasons to have a threesome cannot be reasonably justified. To simply go through such an experience by way of freeing herself from the burdens of the body, and to be consciously free of the moral restrictions that come along with it is strange and bizarre. Leila justifies doing this to Rashid saying: "I think this is more of how divorced we can get from our own bodies. Even with you. I see hints of that in you" (260). She goes further to say that she is doing this experiment just for fun. "Let's focus on happy. And naughty. I want to see smiles tonight. And giggles, even. Tomorrow we can cry. Tomorrow I'm sure we will. Tonight, I want happy faces, - Is that your happy face?" (263). Obviously, Leila is in charge, for she has arranged the whole show to satisfy her whim: "I've always wanted a threesome" (263). She intends to write about this kind of experience and add it in an addendum to her book. In the play, we understand that Leila lives on her own in America. She has been excessively immersed in carnal pleasure.

To have this 'fun', Leila has invited Doug, a white American photographer, to share this threesome experience with her and her boyfriend, Rashid. Doug accepts the invitation because he is looking for some exotic adventure that will satiate his thirst for an Oriental escapade. Later in Act two, we realize that Doug is an Orientalist himself. There are two examples to prove this case: one, the Oriental setting that he has prepared in his studio to take shots for Leila; and two, the exotic tale that he tells at the end of the play about his adventure with the Arab woman that he has made love to during the American invasion of an Arab country. Doug was probably drawn to Leila out of curiosity to satisfy his imagination about Arab women (being physically dominated), and the Arab country being invaded and hegemonized. Besides,

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

Doug expresses his views about the Orient in general and Arab women, saying that both stand as rather exotic just the opposite of the West. Doug's views about the Arab world are quite like the views held by Russel in *Our Enemies*.

El Guindi is probably writing back to Westernized Arab intellectuals and Anglophone Arab women writers who often depict their home countries as backward, and the men there as oppressors of women. They do this to get their works published and to be accepted in Western literary circles. To be accepted in the West, they must subscribe to the Western anti-Arab discourse that depicts Arab women as oppressed and Arab men as sex maniacs and oppressors. As Mohsen has never disputed these views, Rashid as well has little to say about the same issues. Perhaps Rashid's only remark on the stereotyping of Egypt in particular, and the Arab world in general is when he weakly tells Leila that her book will reinforce the bad things the Americans hold about the Arabs. He is angry at her because she is wearing the *abaya* and hijab to be photographed by Doug, and for the way she portrays her folks in her book.

This is the same censure that Gamal in *Our Enemies* has leveled against Mohsen and Sheikh Alfani; Gamal attacks both men for their role in reinforcing the anti-Arab and anti-Muslim stereotypes in America. However, whereas Gamal is violent physically and verbally against Alfani and Mohsen, Rashid remains docile and restrained. Both Gamal and Rashid are immersed in American culture. Though they pay lip service to the cause of Islam, they are atheists to the bone. They are not practicing Muslims, and they have never adhered to Arabic culture. In other words, both are assimilated in American mainstream culture; both have Arab girlfriends, and both make extramarital sex, and drink alcohol in violation of the teachings of Islam and traditional Arabic culture.

Leila and Noor's rejection of the Orientalist discourse sounds fake and not genuine. They are deeply assimilated in American liberal culture. Yet, they reject the depiction of their home countries, or the Orient which both have abandoned for good and chose to live in America on their own. They have boyfriends, and drink alcohol and at the same time enjoy sex not only with their boyfriends but also with anybody. Noor has sex with Mohsen whom she attacks for his views about the Arab World. Similarly, Leila has a boyfriend, and she goes a step further in her emancipation by having threesome with Doug and Rashid. Yet ironically, both have vehemently opposed the stereotypical representations of their home countries and the Oriental discourse shown by the American characters.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Arab American playwrights have addressed different aspects of acculturation. The main issues considered in their plays are the negative portrayals of Arabs and Muslims in popular American culture, racial profiling and surveillance, identity formation and the struggle of Arab Americans to forge their hyphenated identity and be recognized as American citizens on a par with other minorities that make up American society. However, the paper focuses on El Guindi because he is the most prolific Arab American dramatist who has dealt with diverse aspects of the Arab American identity formation in his plays. El Guindi's plays are interrelated thematically because he tries to counter in almost all of them the stereotypes of Arabs in American media outlets. He tackles in his plays a wide range of topics and issues

relating to racial profiling and persecution, the hybrid status of Arab Americans in the United States, and their struggle to cope with their new host culture and society. In general, El Guindi diagnoses in his plays the challenges that beset Arab immigrants in their attempt to assimilate into the mainstream culture of American society. This study tackles four representative plays which illustrate aspects of acculturation of Arab immigrants in American culture. However, El Guindi pursues the theme of acculturation in his late plays such as *The Talented Ones* (2019) and *Refugee Rhapsody* (2021) as well as in other plays. It should be noted that other Arab playwrights such as Heather Raffo and Betty Shamieh have also treated aspects of acculturation of Arab Americans in their drama and theater. This topic should be further pursued in future studies and scholarly research.

نماذج المثاقفة في المسرح العربي الأمريكي: دراسة لأربع مسرحيات ليوسف الجندي

محمود الشتيوي

قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وأدائها، الجامعة الأردنية، الأردن

الملخص

تمت عمل مقاربات للأدب العربي الأمريكي والمسرحية من جوانب نقدية مختلفة. وقد تمحورت معظم القضايا التي ناقشتها هذه الدراسات حول صورة العرب والمسلمين في الثقافة الأمريكية العامة والتميز العنصري والمراقبة وتشكيل الهوية الهجينة للشخصية العربية الأمريكية وكذلك قضايا تتعلق بمحاولة الاعتراف بالمواطن العربي الأمريكي كغيره من مواطني الأقليات الأخرى من ذوي الأصول الإفريقية أو اللاتينية وغيرها. وعلى الرغم من أن موضوع المثاقفة للعرب في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية قد تم توثيقه في دراسات عدة، إلا أن الموضوع ما زال بحاجة إلى مزيد من البحث والدراسة. فعلى سبيل المثال قام السيد جابي سمعان من جامعة توليدو، أوهايو، بدراسة النماذج المختلفة للمثاقفة للمجتمع العربي في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية حيث بنى السيد سمعان دراسته على نموذج جون بري المتعلق بالمثاقفة وقد وجد أن استراتيجيات بري الأربعة للمثاقفة وهي: الاستيعاب، التكامل، والانفصال، والتهيمش (Assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization) يمكن تطبيقها على الكيانات العربية أفراداً وجماعات. بناء على دراسة السيد سمعان وبالرجوع إلى نموذج بري في المثاقفة ودراسات أخرى نحاول في هذه الورقة البحثية تحليل نماذج المثاقفة في مسرحيات الكاتب المسرحي العربي يوسف الجندي. عالج هذا الكاتب العربي الأمريكي من أصول مصرية في معظم مسرحياته قضايا المهاجرين العرب مثل تشكيل الهوية ومجابهة الصور النمطية السلبية للعرب والمسلمين في وسائل الاتصال الأمريكية والثقافة العامة، ولكن طرح موضوع المثاقفة في مسرحيات الجندي ما زال بحاجة إلى دراسة نقدية معمقة، ولهذا تأتي هذه الورقة البحثية بهدف فحص نماذج المثاقفة المشار إليها في نظرية بري للمثاقفة وتطبيقاتها في أربع مسرحيات للجندي وهي:

*Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith, Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat,*

*Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World and Threesome.*

الكلمات المفتاحية: المثاقفة، الاستيعاب، التكامل، الانفصال، التهيمش، مسرحيات عربية أمريكية، أدب المهاجرين

العرب.

## References

- Ajrouch, Kristine J. & Amaney Jamal. 2007. Assimilating to a White Identity: The Case of Arab Americans. *The International Migration Review* 41 (4): 860-879. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1747-7379.2007.00103.x>
- Al-Matrafi, Huda B. 2017. A Century of Arab Americans: From Immigrants to Citizens. *International Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (1): 436-452. doi-<https://dx.doi.org/10.20319/pijss.2017.s31.436452>
- Alshetawi, Mahmoud. 2020. "Combating 9/11 Negative Images of Arabs in American Culture: A Study of Yussef El Guindi's Drama". *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Studies* 7 (8): 177-199. <http://dx.doi.org/10.29333/ejecs/458>
- Alsultany, Evelyn. 2012. *Arabs and Muslims in the Media: Race and Representation after 9/11*. New York: New York University Press.
- Amer, Mona M. & Joseph D. Hovey. 2015. Examination of the Impact of Acculturation, Stress, and religiosity on Mental health Variables for second-generation Arab Americans. *Ethnicity and Disease* 15 (1): 111-112.
- Al Wekhian, Jamil. 2016. Acculturation Process of Arab-Muslim Immigrants in the United States. *Asian Culture and History* 1: 89-99. doi:10.5539/ach.v8n1p89
- Bagasra, Anisah & Mitchell Mackinem. 2019. Assessing Aspects of Acculturation in a Muslim American Sample: Development and Testing of the Acculturation Scale for Muslim Americans. *Religions* 10 (1): 26: 1-12. doi:10.3390/rel10010026
- Bakalian, Anny & Mehdi Bozorgmehr. 2009. *Backlash 9/11 (Middle Eastern and Muslim Americans Respond)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Basiouni, Dalai & Marvin Carlson. 2009. Current Trends in Arab American Performance. In Silvija Jestrovic and Yana Meerzon, (Eds.), *Performance, Exile, and America*. Palgrave Macmillan, 208-219.
- Berry, John W. 1997. Immigration, Acculturation, and Adaptation. *Applied Psychology* 46 (1): 5-34. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1464-0597.1997.tb01087.x>
- Berry, John W. 2019. *Acculturation: A Personal Journey across Cultures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 10. doi: 10.1017/9781108589666
- Britto, Pia Rebello & Mona M. Amer. 2017. An Exploration of Cultural Identity Patterns and the Family Context among Arab Muslim Young Adults in America. *Applied Development Science* 11 (3): 137-150. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10888690701454633>
- El Guindi, Yussef. 2009. *Ten Acrobats in an Amazing Leap of Faith*. In Holly Hill & Dina Amin, (Eds.), *Salaam. Peace: An Anthology of Middle Eastern American Drama*. New York: Theatre Communication Group, 28-29. All references to this play will be to this edition and cited within the text.
- El Guindi, Yussef. 2019a. *Threesome*. In Michael Malek Najjar (Ed.), *the Selected Works of Yussef El Guindi*. London and New York: Methuen Drama, 304. All references to this play will be to this edition and cited within the text.

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

- El Guindi, Yussef. 2019b. *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*. In Michael Malek Najjar (Ed.), *the Selected Works of Yussef El Guindi*, 76. All other references to this play will be to this edition and cited within the text.
- El Guindi, Yussef. 2006. *Back of the Throat*. New York: Dramatists Play Service Inc., 25. All other references to this play will be to this edition and cited within the text.
- El Guindi, Yussef. 2011. *Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World*. In Michael Malek Najjar (Ed.), *The Selected Works of Yussef El Guindi*, 245. All references to the play will be to this edition and cited within the text.
- Elsherif, Ikram A. (2013). Food as a Language of Cultural Expression and Revitalization in Arab American Women's Writing. *Journal of American Studies of Turkey* 37: 39-52.
- Esch-Van Kan, Anneka. 2008. Amazing Acrobatics of Language: The Theatre of Yussef El Guindi." *American Studies Journal* 52: 52-59. doi. 10.18422/52-09
- Fadd-Conrey, Carol. 2014. *Contemporary Arab American Literature*. New York and London: New York University Press. doi:10.18574/nyu/9781479826926.001.0001
- Fox, Rina S. et al. 2013. Further Examining Berry's Model: The Applicability of Latent Profile Analysis to Acculturation. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development* 46 (4): 270-288. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0748175613497036>
- Haddad, Yvonne Hazbeck .1994. Maintaining the Faith of the Fathers: Dilemmas of Religious Identity in the Christian and Muslim Arab American Communities". In Ernest McCarus (Ed.), *The Development of Arab American Identity*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 61-84.
- Hakim-Larson, Julie, and Rosanne Menna 2016. Acculturation and Enculturation: Ethnic Identity Socialization Processes. In Mona M. Amer and Germinie H. Awad (Eds.), *Handbook of Arab American Psychology*. New York and London: Routledge: 34-47. doi/10.4324/9780203763582.ch3
- Harvey, Steve (Feb. 4, 2016). Fear over Faith: Muslims are Portrayed as High-Jackers & Terrorists. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sfCWyutycVw>
- Heidarzadegan, Nazila (2020). Representation of Problems or Problematic Representation: Three Middle Eastern American Plays. *Journal of Theatre Criticism and Dramaturg*. 30, 35-52. doi: 10.26650/jtcd.698395
- Ithawi, H. N. H. 2018. Arab American Playwrights: Hyphenated Identities and Cultural In-Betweenness. PhD Diss., The University of Texas at Austin.
- Kayyali, Randa A. 2006). *The Arab Americans*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
- Kayyali, Randa A. (2013). US Census Classifications and Arab Americans: Contestations and Definitions of Identity Markers. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studie*. 39 (8): 1299-1318. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2013.778150
- Khan-Din, Ayub. 1996. *East is East*. London: Jerwood New Playwrights.
- Jacobson, Lynn 2011. Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World *Variety* <https://variety.com/2011/legit/reviews/pilgrims-musa-and-sheri-in-the-new-world-1117945565/>

- Ludescher, Tanyss. 2006. From Nostalgia to Critique: An Overview of Arab American Literature. *MELUS* 314 (Winter 2006): 93-114. <https://doi.org/10.1093/melus/31.4.93>
- Majaj, Lisa Suhair. 2002. *Intersections: Gender, Nation, and Community in Arab Women's Novels*. Syracuse University Press, 2002.
- Majaj, Lisa Suhair 2006. New Directions: Arab American Writing Today. In Ette, Ottmar & Friederike Pannewick, (Eds.), *Arab Americas: Literary Entanglement of the American Hemisphere and the Arab World*. Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 123-136.
- Naber, Nadine. 2000. Ambiguous Insiders: An Investigation of Arab American Invisibility. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23 (1): 37-61. <https://doi.org/10.1080/014198700329123>
- Nagel, Caroline R. & Lynn A. Staeheli. 2004. Citizenship, Identity, and Transnational Migration: Arab Immigrants in the US. *Space and Polity* 8 (1): 3-24. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13562570410001678860>
- Najjar, Michael Malek. 2015. "Threesome by Yussef El Guindi (review)". *Theatre Journal* 67 (3): 554-556. <https://doi.org/10.1353/tj.2015.0088>
- Najjar, Michael Malek. 20015. *Arab American Drama, Film and Performance: A Critical Study, 1908 to the Present*. McFarland & Company: Jefferson, North Carolina.
- Najjar, Michael Malek. 2021. *Middle Eastern American Theatre: Communities, Cultures, and Artists*. London & New York: Methuen.
- Orfalea, Gregory. 2005a. Arab Americans. In John D. Buenker & Lorman A. Ratner, (Eds.), *Multiculturalism in the United States: A Comparative Guide to Acculturation and Ethnicity*. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 47-64.
- Orfalea, Gregory. 2005b. *The Arab Immigrants: A History*. Northampton, Mass: Olive Branch Press.
- Osborne, John. 1982. *Look Back in Anger*. Penguin Books.
- Radwan, O. B. 2016. "Ambiguous State of Being": Identity Construction in Contemporary Arab American (post-9/11) Poetry. PhD Diss. Dublin City University.
- Radwan, Rania Rifaat Mohamed. 2018. Enemies are Nearby: The Violent Encounter among Arab Americans in Yussef El Guindi's Play *Our Enemies*". *Majalat al-Bahth al-Ilmi fi al-Adab* 19 (6): 1-20.
- Said, Edward. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York, Vintage Books.
- Said, Edward. 1994. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Salari, Sonia. 2002. Invisible in Aging Research: Arab Americans, Middle Eastern Immigrants, and Muslims in the United States. *The Gerontologist* 42(5): 580-588. <https://doi.org/10.1093/geront/42.5.580>
- Semaan, Gaby. 2013. Arabs in America: An Historical Perspective. *Proceeding from 2013 Hawaii University International Conferences, Arts, Humanities & Social Sciences*, January 6<sup>th</sup> to January 8<sup>th</sup>. Honolulu: Hawaii.
- Semaan, Gaby. 2014. Arab Americans: Stereotypes, Conflict, History, Cultural Identity and Post 9/11. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 23(2): 17-31.

Modes of Acculturation in Arab American Drama: A Study of Four  
Plays by Yussef El Guindi

- Semaan, Gaby. 2015. The Acculturation Modes of Arab Americans: An Empirical Study on the Effect of Gender, Religion, Nationality, and Sojourner Status. *Intercultural Communication Studies* 24 (2): 174-191.
- Shaheen, Jack G. 2009. *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press.
- Sharma, Vibha, Chamaiporn Buddharat & Mohammad Yassin Mohd Aba Sha'ar. 2020. Self-Representation and the Change of Position: The Role of Arab American Theater in the 21st Century. *Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences Studies* 2 (2): 560-581. <https://doi.org/10.14456/hasss.2020.21>
- Shook, Jenifer. 2008. "Silk Road Theatre Project and Yussef El Guindi's *Our Enemies: Lively Scenes of Love and Combat*". *Ecumenica* 1(2): 95-100.
- Stahl, M. 2016. Arab and Muslim American Female Playwrights: Resistance and Revision through Solo Performance. PhD Diss. Tufts University.
- Stiffler, Matthew Jaber. 2020. "Serving Arabness": Imagery and Imagination of Arab-themed Restaurants". In Theri A. Pickens (Ed.), *Arab American Aesthetics, Literature, Material Culture, Film, and Theatre*. London: Routledge, 63-86. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315103914>
- Suleiman, Michael W. ed. 1999. *Arabs in America: Building a New Future*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Walker, Jeffrey. 2020. "Theatre Review: 'Pilgrims Musa and Sheri in the New World' at Mosaic Theater Company". *MD Theatre Guide* <https://mdtheatre guide.com/2020/01/theatre-review-pilgrims-musa-and-sheri-in-the-new-world-at-mosaic-theater-company/>