Investigating Diasporic Identities in the Arab-American Autobiographies of Leila Ahmed and Edward Said: A Socio-cognitive Approach

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the representation of diasporic identity in two Arab-American autobiographies, Leila Ahmed's A Border Passage (1999) and Edward Said's Out of Place (1999), and the impact of this identity on individual self-perception in different social contexts. The study uses Norman K. Denzin (2014)'s "interpretive autoethnography" approach, which is a type of research that focuses on the relationship between people and their lives through providing a deeper understanding of the social life of individuals. The study also adopts Teun van Dijk's (2016) socio-cognitive discourse studies framework which is a multidisciplinary type of critical discourse analysis, relating discourse structures with social structures through a cognitive interface. The study reaches the following findings: (1) The different social contexts to which the authors were exposed had a direct impact on altering their perception which was reflected on the macro-level (which refers to language in real use or social context) of their narratives; (2) The choice of linguistic expressions of the authors, on the micro-level (which refers to the linguistic components of a text), reflected their diasporic identity and their struggle to define self-perception; and (3) The integration between the previously mentioned approaches enabled us to decode the transformation and representation of diasporic identity through exploring the authors' self-writings.

Keywords: Arab diaspora, Arab-American Identity, Autobiographies, Autoethnography, Socio-cognitive Linguistics, Leila Ahmed, Edward Said.

1.   INTRODUCTION

Due to globalization, the debates about the role of minorities, and people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds in society have been largely focused on the issues of immigration and diaspora. The changes that have occurred in the past few decades in the Western social structures in terms of migration of people from the East to the West have raised the question of how to include people of different backgrounds in the country. Further, many disciplines in the humanities and social sciences have been taking up the question of human selfhood/identity as its central subject. As a result, new analytical theories and cultural discussions emerged and made the questions of identity, belonging, and hybridity increasingly important.

Autobiography or Life Writing as a literary trend was first introduced during the 18th century (DiBattista and

Wittman 2014). It then blended with other forms of self-writing, such as memoirs and letters, which date back to antiquity. However, the study of Life Writing has become a significant interdisciplinary discipline over the past few years. It has become the focus of a growing number of studies that are investigating the relationship between people and their lives (DiBattista and Wittman 2014). Writers who are able to write about their personal experiences often reveal a deeper understanding of their relationships with their surroundings. In case of immigrants who write their autobiographies, their personal writings often reveal a deeper understanding of their relationships with their new homes. These relationships are demonstrated in the way the writers perform a cognitive migration from one autobiographical community to another. This process occurs by first rejecting one set of cognitive norms, such as knowledge and beliefs, and then embracing new ones. Further, Kroskirty (1999) argues that identities are "communicated", "performed" or "displayed" through language. Matsuda (2001) also explains that the concept of the "voice" of an individual, represented in an autobiography, refers to the various choices that an individual makes and uses to identify himself/herself. Subsequently, he introduced the notion or "written identity." Matsuda defines written identity as the "Subconscious selections among culturally available possibilities for selfhood that particular individuals make when confronted by particular others in particular social setting" (Matsuda 2001). In other words, it is how identity is reflected in a written form and how it is affected by different social settings. According to him, written identity is a collection of choices that writers make as they project a certain self into the reader's mind. This process can be informed by the multiple linguistic and cultural contexts that are involved. Therefore, discourse analysis in general, or specifically Critical discourse analysis, can provide a valuable contribution to the study of how identity is reflected in writing. Ivanic (1998) further states that, "Writing is not just about conveying content, but also about the representation of self." She introduces the notion of "autobiographical self" and defines it as the identity that people bring with them when they write. It is linked to their past social and cultural history, and it is constantly changing as a result of their development. This is not a fixed, essential self-image. Instead, it is a socially constructed self-identity that is constantly changing (Ivanic 1998). Therefore, it is fair to say that self-writings represented in autobiographies provide an understanding of the authors' identities.

What is worth mentioning is that the analysis of the language in self-writings could be done on what is known as 'macro' and 'micro' levels of any given text structure. These two levels contribute to the peculiarities of the genre or the theme of the text.

Linguists argue that the key to achieving a text's macro-structure is the micro-structure of that text. According to van Dijk's framework (1980), "The notion of macro-structure refers to the global meaning of a text, and it is related to the analysis of the context in which the text is being written." On the other hand, the micro-structure of a text refers to the role that the text plays in the discourse (van Dijk 1980). van Dijk (1972) also stated that the micro-features of a text relate the linguistic components of that text (the local level) to the overall form of it (the global level). Hence, the micro- level of a text refers to the analysis of its linguistic features in a certain social context. Hamburger (1981) also states that the coherence of a text is determined by the interactions between the various micro-structures and macro-structures. Therefore, the analysis of self-writings as a means of reflecting identity representation could be carried out on the macro- and micro-levels. The theoretical framework adopted in the study will be discussed in detail and opts for the use of the term "written identity" as it adopts self-writings as a corpus to investigate identity representation.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the implications of different and non-homogeneous social contexts on identity formation of two Arab-American writers to address the question of diasporic identity representation and its impact on the individual's self-perception. It attempts to analyze identity representation in autobiographies as a hybrid or hyphenated construction. This construction involves textual factors such as language and particular projections of an individual self or even selves of the authors, cultures, social contexts and ideological constructions of selfhood that influence the autobiographical narrative. To achieve this aim, the study adopts an interpretive analytical autoethnographic perspective, postulated by Norman K. Denzin (2014), which analyzes self-writings represented in autobiographies on the macro-level in terms of the relationship between autobiographies and social contexts. The study also adopts Teun van Dijk's (2016) socio-cognitive discourse studies approach as a linguistic analytical paradigm to provide an interpretation of the language on the micro-level using the Socio-cognitive Critical Discourse Studies (SCDS) model, hence and interpretation of the authors' self-perception.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Post-colonialism and Diasporic Identity in Arab-American Autobiographies

Over the last four decades, a number of influential

postcolonial theorists such as Homi K. Bhabha, Edward W. Said, and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, emerged. Their work has been regarded as some of the most critical analysis of colonialism over the last two decades. The term post-colonialism refers to the representation of various racial and cultural identities in the modern era; mostly after many colonized countries got their independence. Despite the debate about the nature and form of post-colonial literature, Bhabha (2004) has a useful contribution to the discussion. He responded to the orientalism issue by putting the term "hybridity" into the language of criticism and argues that the relationship between Western culture and homeland culture is a vital part of the post-colonial identity. He also states that the works of writers who are from the Western culture maintain a sense of unpredictability and ambivalence. The process usually begins in colonial times when the intersection of the colonized and the colonizer's cultural practices and institutions creates the perception that the colonized subjects are the authority figures. This perception change helps explain the emergence of a new power dynamic within the colonized subjects.

Postcolonial literature provides significant insights on how the boundary of space sets the framework for behaving, adapting, and 'being' in the world. Being in a given space at a given moment can help one develop a sense of identity. Postcolonial literature also provides valuable insights into how Western discourse has become more complex. In fact, it has been argued that postcolonial writing has a great appeal as framing identities is the core purpose of postcolonial literature. Besides dealing with the politics of nationalism and framing identities, it also tackles the various issues of the colonized mind. Most writers use the local language to address these issues, and this hybrid language helps them break the notion of the colonized mind. A very important concept that lies within post-colonial discussions on identity is the notion of "Hybridity" (Creese and Blackledge 2010). According to Preece (2016), hybridity is a product of mixing. Bhabha (2004) also dealt with this notion, where he described hybridity as the process of subverting colonial authority by interrogating ordinary and initial subjectivities focusing on instances and processes where cultural differences are articulated (Bhabha 2004; Preece 2016).

The term Arab-American is not an old one. It is a combination of the two identities that emphasize multiculturalism, ethnic pride, and the sense of belonging. Arab-American literature draws parallels between the history of Arab-Americans and the various cultures that have contributed to the development of the nation. In addition, the hyphenation in the term Arab-American somehow suggests that the two identities are not yet merged which result in hybrid identities. The hyphenation also highlights the importance of multiculturalism and ethnic awareness (Salaita 2007). Recently, there has been a significant increase in the number of narrative works written by Arab-American writers in English, and they reflect self-exploration resulting from cultural transmission. Their works fall into various literary areas, however, the most significant one is the Arab-American literature. It is often influenced by other literary trends, such as imperialism and postcolonialism (Abdelrazek 2005). Further, Arab-American narratives are now regarded as some of the most prominent literary trends in Western criticism. Most of their works are short stories or novels, and they often feature themes related to the struggle for belonging. In addition to being able to express and write about their own oppression, Arab-American writers also often present a variety of discriminations and inequality that they are subjected to due to their backgrounds and Western culture's perception about them (Abdelrazek 2005). Later, they adopted a more contemporary form of writing called "narration" which is expressed in autobiographies.

2.2.   Arab American Autobiographies

An autobiography is typically written to represent a carefully constructed and highly accurate version of one's life, regardless of how they choose to interpret it. The author's motivation for telling their story is usually related to some significant psychological or experience need, and in most cases, this is the reason why they choose to write it (Andrews 1986). In addition, autobiography is not about the factual details of events or the writer's experiences, but rather, it is about how the author chooses to interpret his/her life events (Andrews 1986). Autobiographical narratives are typically focused on the author's life story. In this regard, Bhabha (1990) argued that autobiographies are a type of art that mirrors the writers' process of self-construction, which involves the creation of multiple identities and discourses. These are referred to as the Third Space, where multiple identities are explored and re-defined (Bhabha 1990). Through their personal experiences, authors in their autobiographies can share their thoughts on the world and its people; an autobiography thereby perform significant ideological work and serve as a powerful medium for understanding the world. From this standpoint, this study investigates the reason behind these selected recollections about personal experiences, in an attempt to provide an insight on the authors' self-perception and identity.

What is worth mentioning is that in cultures that are colonized, hybridity is likely to be found. Consequently, the autobiographies (narratives) that Arab-Americans write are considered to be distinct

from other literary trends because they are not only culturally and linguistically hybrid, but also because they are influenced by the effects of globalization. Individuals who are exposed to various cultural intermixtures within their communities experience the possibility of becoming dual. Although it is believed that hybridity is caused by some form of oppression, it can also be beneficial to learn more about global cosmopolitanism and local knowledge (Smith and Leavy 2008). Being hybrid can allow people to unite the world's differences, or it can lead them to wander aimlessly into a world of conflicting cultures and get lost in what is called "diaspora".

2.3.   Arab-Diasporic Identity

By definition, the term diaspora refers to the scattering or dispersion of people from their homeland. It also refers to individuals who have difficulty defining themselves or belonging to a certain political or ideological group (Shohat and Alsultany 2013). According to the literature on post-colonialism, topics related to migration movements from the Middle East to the West as well as the development of related migrant diasporas are relatively under researched. Little attention has been paid to the identity negotiation process that takes place between post-1989 migrants and their co-ethnic minority groups. What is worth mentioning is that diaspora-homeland relationship is not considered an accurate representation of the various forms of migration that have occurred since the colonial era. Instead, it highlights the emergence of diasporic/hybrid identities and the multiple cultural and racial backgrounds. The quality of the diaspora communities is important to the formation of Arab-American communities, especially since the term Arab-American encompasses a variety of national backgrounds, religions, as well as class and cultural identifications (Abdelrazek 2005; Salaita 2007) – all of which are aspects that this study considers while investigating the identity representation process of the designated Arab- American writers.

2.4.   Socio-cognition and Socio-cognitive Theory of Identity

The ability to make inferences about the mental states of others, such as thoughts, feelings, and beliefs, is known as "social cognition." Social cognition is a fundamental component of social functioning and has important implications for interpersonal relationships (van Dijk 2014). There has been a lot of research on this subject, but it is not yet clear how it affects the development of social skills. One group that is known to exhibit above average social cognition is individuals who write autobiographies. By definition, the term "social cognition" refers to the ability or facility to

interpret and understand the various aspects of an individual's thoughts, feelings, and reality on a conscious and subconscious level. This can be done through interaction, or it can be the product of a more in-depth cognitive development (Thomas and Fletcher 2003; van Dijk 2014). This study refers to level of socio-cognitive skill or ability as the outcome being explored using the terms "social cognition" or "socio-cognitive ability" or "socio-cognitive skill" interchangeably. To sum up, social cognition is a broad ability that allows people to interpret and interpret the world around them in a way that is both accurate and logical. It involves making sense of the various mental states that people have (Thomas and Fletcher 2003; van Dijk 2014).

A social identity theory states that people define their identities by their membership in various social groups (Tajfel and Turner 1986). These identities are divided into two categories: the social dimensions and the personal dimensions. The former is used to describe an individual's cognitive attributes and distinguish them from others, while the latter is used to describe an individual's social identity. Under the theory, both personal and social identities are thought to have opposite ends. Being motivated to evaluate oneself is known to motivate people to positively consider themselves and to discriminate against those groups that they perceive to be threatening their social identity. The cognitive processes that are involved in the maintenance, construction, and change of identities are also relevant to the attribution process. One of the most critical questions is whether the patterns of attribution are biased in terms of their relationship with intergroup identifications. Scholars have argued that identity is a complex and multi-faceted language that can be used to communicate both directly and indirectly through various forms of writings (Norton 2000, 2004; van Dijk 2008a). Language, thus, links the cognitive and interactive traditions (van Dijk 2008a).

A socio-cognitive approach to identity does not make the role of mental representations explicit, but also shows that various structures of discourse can only be described in terms of their cognitive notions, especially those of information, beliefs or knowledge of participants (van Dijk 2009). It also provides a variety of psychological theories about mental representations that are designed to help explain how these models act as a mediator between different social cognitions (van Dijk 2014). For instance, these models can help explain how knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, and society's structures interact with each other. The ability to relate various social structures and discourse structures in one's head becomes affective when people are able to do so. This is because the

brain is capable of acting as a mental representation of these structures, and it allows them to make sense of the world around them (van Dijk 2008b). Socio-cognitive Discourse studies (SCDS) suggest that these mental representations are also important to be taken seriously, and should be analyzed in detail, for instance, in terms of contemporary advances in the cognitive sciences. van Dijk's (2016) tools proposed in the SCDS model and adopted in this study are used to analyze the linguistic representations of diasporic identities in discourse. The study intends to provide a comprehensive analysis of the multiple features of texts and social contexts that are related to diasporic identities.

What is also worth mentioning is that according to van Dijk, quoted in Wodak and Meyer (2009), "Discourse is strategically produced and understood on the basis of these cognitive structures. Its words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, or turns are sequentially processed in WM and represented and controlled by the mental models, knowledge (and sometimes ideologies) in LTM [Long Term Memory]," (Wodak and Meyer 2009). Obviously, the critical study of discourse needs an important social component. We are dealing with power abuse of dominant groups or the resistance of dominated groups, as well as with organizations, institutions, enterprises, and nation states, among other societal macrostructures. Part of this societal account of discursive domination and resistance has been formulated in terms of social cognition, that is, as the specific knowledge, attitudes and ideologies shared by the members of these societal organizations (Wodak and Meyer 2009).

2.5. Autoethnography

According to Ellis, autoethnography emerged from the post-colonial approach to writing and research (Ellis 2008). It aims to analyze and describe the personal experiences of individuals in relation to cultural experiences. Although autoethnography was first introduced to the interpretive research world in the 1990s, it is now being used and advanced by various disciplines (Anderson 2006; Denzin 2014; Ellis and Bochner 2000; Reed-Danahay 1997). For instance, in sociology, anthropology, and education, it is being used to transform ourselves through self-reflexivity (Ellis 2008; Reed-Danahay 1997). The goal of autoethnography is to understand the humanism of the living subject. It is about coming to know the relationship between the freedoms and constraints of the individual, and the tensions between the liberal and the conservative forces. Through the process of collecting and preserving personal histories, autoethnography can affirm the ways in which people experience the diasporic experience.

Denzin (2014) defined a more generic and emerging qualitative trend that accepts the different methodological approaches under "Interpretive Autoethnography." This method stemmed from the need to understand the relationship between history and biography. He introduces a method that allows researchers to examine how individuals' private problems are connected to public issues. For instance, by locating themselves in historical time periods, individuals can get a deeper understanding of their own fate (Denzin 2014). Literature of social sciences on life story and biographical methods did not contain any extended treatment of the interpretive point of view. This was because, while these methods often focused on the personal struggles of individuals, they did not often take into account the turning points in their lives. Hence, Denzin's notion of "Interpretive Interactionism" sought to fill this void by developing a concept of interpretive interactionism (Denzin 1997, 2013, 2014) and consequently, he came up with his method "Interpretive Autoethnography".

3.   METHODOLOGY

This study is adopting a twofold methodology and utilizing two theoretical frameworks:

Denzin's (2014) Interpretive autoethnography and van Dijk's (2016) Socio-cognitive Critical Discourse Studies (SCDS). On the one hand, the autoethnographic inquiry adopted in this research is to make sense of the different, and sometimes, contradicted selves that emerge when shifting back and forth in between opposing places. It looks at the representation of diasporic identity by which one seeks to experience a relation with oneself and with the world. It focuses on analyzing the language on the macro-level using the interpretive autoethnography framework, where it focuses on analyzing different social contexts along with participants and their relationships with the authors. On the other hand, socio-cognitive critical discourse studies are a framework that explains how people and environments interact with each other and how social justice and practice can affect their interactions. It includes the relationship between social knowledge and various social structures and categories, as well as the construction of meaning and stereotyping in information processing. In addition to these, cognitive processes are also involved in the maintenance and change of identities. Therefore, in order to maximize the analytical power of a theory of identity, it is best to account for both of these worlds and their interaction, inner and outer, and how they affect self- perception and the authors' choice of language on the micro level. This investigation will be guided by the following research questions:

a) How can different social contexts contribute to diasporic identities?

b) How can van Dijk 's socio-cognitive discourse tools define self-perception of writers in diaspora?

c) How can an integration between van Dijk 's socio-cognitive approach and an autoethnographic approach enable the decoding of transformation of diasporic identity?

3.1.   Models of Analysis
3.1.1 Denzin's Interpretive Autoethnography

Denzin's interpretive autoethnography is adopted as the first model of analysis. There are certain conventions that postulates Denzin's framework, and these conventions are used to describe the ways in which people perform and write about their experiences (Denzin 2014). They change and take different forms as they are influenced by various factors, such as the place of writing, historical moments, and the writer's identity. They also shape how lives are told, performed, and understood, allowing us to create the subject matter of the interpretive autoethnographic approach. Consequently, it serves the purpose of this study in its attempt to interpret how different social contexts contribute to diasporic identities of Arab- American writers, and how they are transformed from one form to the other. The conventions/tools that postulate Denzin's theoretical framework and utilized in this research are:

(a) **Existence of others and importance of race, gender, and class:** In autobiographical texts, the presence of the "other" means that the author's perspective is always in mind and the other's eye of the other directs the eye of the writer. As for the importance of race, gender, and class, the values and biases of racism are reflected in class productions, especially when they are written about race and gender. The daily lives of immigrants. The impact of these attitudes and ideologies can be seen in the self-perception of the authors The researcher thinks it is best to combine two categories of Denzin's model of "interpretive autoethnography", namely, the existence of others and importance of race, gender, and class, together for data analysis. We perceive these two categories as inseparable as placing one-self within a certain class, gender or race necessitates that those who do not belong to the same class, gender and race are the "other".

(b) **Family Beginning:** The subjects of autobiographies are often centered on the traumas of family, with the absence or lack of a parent or both parents. Authors must start with the family, and they often find themselves questioning what it means to be "home", and in this research, the authors are questioning belonging and what could be defined as home.

(c) **Turning points (Textual):** Autobiographies and autoethnographies are written according to the idea that lives begin in families, and that major turning points in an author's life occur at various stages. Once another major turning point takes place in the author's life, it is believed it will alter their perception or ideology, hence by extension, identity.

(d) **Turning points (Non- textual):** "Epiphanies", or moments of realization, are the moments where lives changed due to significant events. According to Western thought, a life is made up of key turning-point moments that leave lasting impressions. This concept is commonly used in autobiographical texts, where the subjects talk about their significant turning-moments and how these events can alter their perception and alter their identity (Denzin 2014).

3.1.2 van Dijk's Socio-cognitive Critical Discourse Studies

The second model of analysis is that of van Dijk (2016), who formulated a socio-cognitive approach to discourse. The characteristic property of Socio-Cognitive Critical Discourse Studies (SCDS) is that it focuses on the relationship between social structures and the cognitive interface between them. In 2016, van Dijk proposed tools that provide a framework for analyzing the linguistic representations of identities. This choice is motivated by an understanding of diasporic identity as a mental model that comprises cognitive components, and by the recognition that the multiple components of identity are interrelated. The complexity of identity is a central issue in the analysis of the SCDS model. For the purpose of this study, the linguistic parameters proposed in the SCDS framework were handled flexibly to incorporate parameters that are relevant for the texts under investigation, and to disregard the parameters that are not. Listed below are the tools of van Dijk's SCDS model used for discourse analysis:

(a) Opinion and emotion words: Opinions and emotions are the expressions of one's personal feelings and thoughts expressed in multimodal mental models represented by choice of words. These terms reflect the author's perception of the world and mental state.

(b) Deictic or indexical expressions: They are expressions that refer to, or presuppose information of the context model. (The context models represent the various elements of a person's life, including their time and place, roles and responsibilities, intentions, and communicative actions. They also refer to the information that they have learned or are experiencing.

(c) Evidentials: They are expressions that describe how knowledge expressed in discourse was acquired, for instance 'I heard', 'I read', 'she said', … etc. These expressions help a researcher interpret the position of the authors and to what extent their knowledge is credible.

(d) Ideological polarization: It is the concept of separating groups that is used to describe the properties of "Us" and "Them." It is also used to express certain ideologies and attitudes, such as those related to immigration or abortion. This concept can be used to describe the way people perceive themselves and others, as well as the various ways in which they use metaphors and images to describe certain events. Separating groups and placing oneself in a certain group reflects how he/she perceives themselves and others.

(e) Intertextuality and interdiscursivity: It refers to what other texts are incorporated into the data at hand. The link between texts and genres is a reflection of the author's collective identity and how other works align with theirs. Besides intertextual references, links can also be achieved by drawing on another discourse's ideas. This study aims to investigate the links between various discourses and genres in order to determine if there are inter-group relations. Besides revealing the identity of the author, it also shows how other works are constructed to create collective identity. The goal is to find ways to distance the text producer from the other producers of discourses and texts. In addition to intertextual references, the link between genres and texts can also be achieved by referring to certain works. Referring to certain texts and relating to them highlights the authors ideologies.

(f) Metaphoric expressions: Metaphoric expressions are considered to be the linguistic or semiotic realization of an underlying conceptual idea at the cognitive level. This parameter is commonly interpreted as the one that most closely fits to a socio-cognitive interpretation. Besides being able to describe an idea's structure, metaphors also include the multiple mental models of experience (van Dijk 2016).

3.2.   Data Description
3.2.1 Leila Ahmed's Autobiography
Leila Ahmed's autobiography, *A Border Passage*, spans the life of its author from childhood to adulthood and is tracking her struggle during her journeys from Cairo where she was born and lived her early years, to Cambridge - UK, where she studies and graduates with a Ph.D., to the UAE where she works and earns money to finance her trip to the US, and finally to the US in an attempt to explore a true identity and construct a home for herself. The journey she takes in between is a long one that takes her to important points in her life. One of the most common factors that she focuses on in her autobiography is her identity's "in-betweenness". *A Border Passage* explores the various cultural differences between Arab and Muslim women, and it also counters stereotypes about them, which later turns out to be one of the reasons for her own sense of displacement (Ahmed 1999).

3.2.2 Edward Said's Autobiography
In his autobiography, *Out of Place*, Edward Said provides a powerful and rich account of his experiences as a refugee. It also explores his thoughts on exile and the various memories of displacement that affected him during his formative years. From Jerusalem, Cairo, and Lebanon to the United States, the autobiography provides a comprehensive analysis of his identity creation throughout his life – from 1935 to 1994. What is unique about Said's writing is what he brings to life his experiences as a self- identified exile and a displaced Palestinian. Through his portrayal of these experiences, he explores the ways in which memory can re-interpret and contextualize these experiences. Even though he was not aware of the implications of his own displacement at the time of writing, he was able to make use of his memories to contextualize his own experiences. Like Ahmed, in his autobiography *Out of Place,* Said expresses his linguistic alienation as he also

chose to write his autobiography in English. Throughout his autobiography and in various instances, Said expresses how he felt that Arabic language had lost its place in his academic life and that it could not play a role in the complex political situation (Said 1999).

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Upon examining the two autobiographies written by two Arab-American authors, the researcher was able to highlight a major commonality among them which is their inability to construct a place they could feel "home" even when they remained living in their homes of origin which instead functioned as sources of discrimination, oppression, violence, and internal displacement. The fact that they suffered from internal displacement in their own cultures marked the beginning of the change in their self-perception and, by extension, their identities.

We presented the two models used for analyzing the texts designated in this study. The first model is "Interpretive Autoethnography", postulated by Denzin (2014), which is an approach that used to interpret and analyze the adopted texts on the macro -level in terms of self-writings to reflect the identity formation process and how it ends up in diaspora. Denzin's (2014) model of analysis falls into several categories, among which we chose those that serve the purpose of the study and provide adequate answers to the research questions. The categories that were chosen from Denzin's model (2014) were: Existence of others and importance of gender, race and class, family beginnings, turning points (textual), and turning points (non-textual) (Denzin 2014).

4.1. Interpretive Autoethnography
4.1.1 Existence of others and the importance of race, gender, and class

As for the first category in Denzin's model, Leila Ahmed, in her autobiography *"A Border Passage",* seeks to find a true definition of herself as a Muslim woman, an Egyptian, and an Arab woman in a world that has always regarded her as an "other" or "alien". She expresses her anxiety about the various aspects of her identity that have been presented to her. For instance, it becomes clear that Ahmed's childhood days were not like those of the vast majority of Egyptian girls of her age. She mentions that she never lived a "baladi life," which refers to people who are backward and uncivilized, "mainly the poor and lower class," (Ahmed 1999, 24); hence, positioning herself in the upper-middle class. Ahmed also felt discriminated against in her own country because of her class and religion. She recalls a memory where she explained that Miss

Nabih, the Palestinian refugee Arabic teacher, hated her not because she didn't master Arabic language, her mother tongue, but because she belonged to an upper-middle class that she considered responsible for the corruption that occurred in Egypt and which accordingly led to the occupation of Palestine in 1948. Ahmed writes on this regard:

> In reality Miss Nabih's rage (as I sensed even then) was a rage at her own plight as a refugee and at those considered responsible for it, among them, presumably, the "corrupt, irresponsible Egyptian upper class" . . . My relations with Miss Nabih were only a symptom of the times: of the battering and reshaping of our identities that the politics of the day were subjecting us to (Ahmed 1999, 148).

Further, Ahmed learned the meaning of religious discrimination when Mr. Price showed prejudice against her; he expressed his dissatisfaction that Ahmed had been academically ahead of her Christian friend, Jean. She writes, "Mr. Price told Jean how sorry he was to see me ahead of her in anything; after all, he said, she was a Christian and I only a Muslim" (Ahmed 1999, 145). Mr. Price's stand against Ahmed's entry into the sciences has been based on his racist views regarding her ethnicity, despite her good grades and the fact that she wanted to be an engineer just like her father or a scientist, all because she is Egyptian. In addition, Miss Minty, the math teacher, has also showed a similar racist and sexist behavior when she refused to recommend astronomy for Ahmed because she is a "girl". Ahmed was hence discriminated against in her own country for being Muslim, upper-class child, and a girl. She described what she suffered from as "internalized colonialism," where the discrimination against her came from English/foreign people in her own country. This notion of "internalized colonialism" has promoted a cosmopolitan identity, hindering the ability for Ahmed to formulate a single identity of her own. Consequently, Ahmed had high hopes for the Western culture after hearing about the success stories of other feminists who moved to the West. She also wanted to find a home in this region. Unfortunately, when Ahmed went to England to study, she was the target of racist attitudes that made her rethink her dreams of finding a home in the Western culture. During that time, she only saw that discrimination in the Western culture is against the blacks and the working class. However, she then realized that other groups such as Muslims and Arabs were also targets of discrimination. She states that even "civilized Cambridge did not regard us [Ahmed and the other Arab and Muslim students at Cambridge] as equals" (Ahmed 1999, 225).

Similarly, Edward Said, in his autobiography, expressed in several passages that he was referred to as the

"other", or alternatively, influenced by "others". It is apparent throughout out of place that Said never felt at home in any place he had been to. He always felt like an outsider or an "Other"; hence, his ultimate question of "belonging". Said expressed in his autobiography that he discovered the duality in everything that surrounded him which rendered him with a fractured identity. He writes in this regard:

> I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities—mostly in conflict with each other—all of my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been All-Arab, or All- European and American, or all-Orthodox Christian, or all-Muslim, or all Egyptian, and so on (Said 1999, 5).

In the above extract, Said expresses his unsettlement and sense of confusion that made him feel he holds multiple identities. He was never a full Arab, European, or American, and he wishes he was referred to as a full Arab, European, American, or Egyptian. He even wishes for being a full Christian or a full Muslim. His use of the term full expresses how he is torn between different identities when it comes to his ethnicity. Hence, we argue that Said always felt like an outsider and an "other" for his ethnic origin and religion.

Said also recalls another memory, where he experienced discrimination during his stay in Cairo that made him aware of his identity as an Arab who is inferior to others (British colonizers) just because of his ethnicity, when Mr. Pilley, an English man, asked Said where he was going while he was on his way home back from school. Said's school was close to the Gezira Club which was only for English people when Egypt was under the British Empire. Later in his life, when Said moved to the United States to complete his education, thinking he will lead a life better that the ones he led in Cairo and Lebanon, on the contrary, he was confronted with a more vicious reality. He writes on this regard, "As I returned to the United States a few years later and have lived there ever since, I feel much sharper sense of dissociation about its relationship with Israel than my Palestinian contemporaries" (Said 1999, 140). Said's emphasis was on the American foreign policy against Arabs. He could not believe the American double-standard policy in the Middle East till he lived in America. Being in America was not a relief for Said, rather, it alienated him more than before and became out of place in America. The identity formation process, through which Said passed, was very difficult for him and helped him emerging from this process lending him to refuse to accept any power or any place unless it was his home country, Palestine - which he felt was stolen from him and knew he could never return. He was struck with the fact that he will be still discriminated against for being an Arab in the

United States.

4.1.2 Family Beginnings

As for family beginnings, Ahmed explains in her autobiography that although she was born and brought up in a privileged family, it seems that her life had been always overburdened with a "colonized consciousness" (Ahmed 1999, 25). The reason was how her family behaved and acted all the time. As mentioned earlier, they talked and dressed like English people, and sometimes even carried the same attitude as them. Therefore, the researcher pinpoints the fact that the sense of confusion or belonging for Ahmed started at her early childhood years. What is also worth mentioning is that Ahmed's family insisted on sending her to a school with a different educational system than other Egyptian schools - a school that followed the pattern of the English system, staffed by expat British teachers. The contents of the curricula Ahmed studied tackled nothing about her Egyptian culture, heritage, language, and art. Ahmed points out how the curricula always cherished everything European and Western while it discarded any content related to her culture, leading her to growing up detached from her own Egyptian culture. Ahmed writes:

> I knew all about the flora and fauna of British Isles and where coal was mined and about the Pennines and the chalk cliffs of Dover but NOTHING about the Nile and the ancient valley where I lived . . . And I knew all about Bismarck and Garibaldi and nationalism in Europe but nothing about Egypt, the Arabs, the Muslims, the Turks. Obviously, such schooling had distinct shortcomings for a future citizen of Egypt (Ahmed 1999, 151–52).

It is clear from the extract above that Ahmed lacked a sense of belonging to her own culture and was unable to distinguish the reason. However, the researcher relates this to the fact that her family's choice to send her to an English school as a child has a great impact on her lack of sense of belonging.

As for Said, he was also influenced greatly by his family beginnings, and it is reflected in his autobiography throughout several passages. Said's parents directed his life in their own way although Said was not in agreement with what they did. His opinion was not considered valuable although he was seen as the family man because he was the only son in his family. His father treated him as a grown-up man while he was still a young boy at school. Therefore, Said's life at home was not the way he wanted, which made him feel out of place even at home. Said elaborates, "Sometimes, I was intransigent, and proud of it. At other times I seemed to myself to be nearly devoid of

any character at all, timid, uncertain, without will. Yet the overriding sensation I had was of always being out of place" (Said 1999, 3).

Said also claims from the very beginning of his autobiography that his mother was the first source of confusion for him. She spoke to him in both English and Arabic, but she wrote to him in English. He could never quite pinpoint which language was the more intimate and more natural language for him since he was raised with both. Even though his mother was a native Arabic speaker, she chose to name Said as "Edward" while calling him "Edwaad" - an Arabic pronunciation of the English name - which tied him to both his Englishness and his Arabness simultaneously, leading to a more sense of confusion. Like Ahmed, Said explains that during his early childhood, he still experienced displacement as result of his family sending him to an English school. He says that as a student at school and among American children, he wanted to assert his identity even though he knew that his identity was temporary and ambiguous. Therefore, as mentioned earlier, he was out of place at home with his family, at school with American students, and in the outside community dominated by British racist individuals.

4.1.3 Turning Points (Textual)

As for the turning points (textual), both Leila Ahmed and Edward Said experienced several turning points in their lives, as a result of travelling and being exposed to several social contexts and eco-social environments, whether at their home country or abroad. The researcher in this study tackles the turning points in the lives of the authors in terms of the different social/political contexts, and eco-social environments they have been exposed to and attempts to highlight how these turning points altered their self-perception and ideology in many aspects. By highlighting the change, adequate answers could be provided of why the authors end up in diaspora.

Some of the titles Ahmed chose for the chapters in her autobiography actually reflects that some of them are actual turning points. For instance, "From colonial to post-colonial", "Harem", "School days" and "From Abu Dhabi to America". These titles Ahmed chose are considered a manifestation of how she perceives these periods in her life and how she recalls these memories. It is fair to say that the first actual turning point Leila Ahmed experienced was upon her moving to England to finish her studies. When she goes to England to pursue her graduate studies at Cambridge, her internally and externally constructed identities start to clearly conflict with each other. It is then and there that she becomes aware of her externally constructed Arab identity. Ahmed writes on this regard:

If I were still living in Egypt, I probably wouldn't feel that it was so absolutely necessary to extricate myself from this enmeshment of lies. IN Egypt the sense of falseness and coercion would be there in the political sense, but at least in ordinary daily life I'd be just another Egyptian, whereas in the West it's impossible for me ever to escape, forget this false constructed Arabness. It's almost always somehow there, the notion that I am Arab, in any and every interaction. And sometimes it's quite grossly and offensively present, depending on how bigoted or ignorant the person I am confronting is. (Ahmed 1999, 255-256).

The above extract shows how Ahmed reflects her own understanding of her ethnic identity as a response to the entity that constructed the concept of being an Arab. Ahmed clearly only feels she is an Arab when she is labeled as such by Westerners—and in most cases it is a biased qualifier that comes with its fair share of stereotypes and prejudices. To her, claiming to be Arab was a new identity imposed by the government which led to the redefinition of the Egyptian national identity. What is worth mentioning is that Ahmed expressed in her autobiography, through an episode at her school when she declared she was not Arab, the rejection of this identity marker which is directly oppositional to the national and political discourse of Nasser's government. Alternatively, when Westerners impose on her an identity she had resisted since she was 12, it triggers her desire to start, as she states, "Looking into this whole question of the Arabness of Egyptian identity," (Ahmed 1999, 254).

Edward Said's autobiography is full of turning points as well that he identifies in his text. Said marks the first turning point (textual) in the introduction of his autobiography Out of place, "I left Palestine in December 1947. . . For by the early spring of 1948 my entire family had been swept out of place and has ever since remained in exile ever since" (Said 1999, X). In this extract, Said reflects that he and his family have been in exile which is symbolic as he could have returned to Palestine but chose not to due to the political climate. In other words, what Said experienced was "existential exile" and not true exile, yet, it still had a major impact on his identity and sense for belonging. Further, Said's displacements from Palestine, Egypt, and other locales (different turning points) constitute his personal crisis. The researcher, however, thinks that his sense of displacement and crisis cannot be related to his existential exile from Palestine, but rather the loss of his home, physical separation, and cultural alienation. Further, Said was enrolled in a school that followed the English educational system, called GPS in Cairo. He referred to it as his first learning experience

and the first instance of recognizing himself in relation to others. In writing about the English teachers and students at GPS and how they were separate and different from himself, Said writes:

> I was perfectly aware of how their names were just right, and their clothes and accents and associations were totally different from my own. I cannot recall ever hearing any of them refer to 'home,' but I associated the idea of it with them, and in the deepest sense 'home' was something I was excluded from. (Said 1999, 42).

It is noticed that Said expressed his experience at GPS (Gezira Preparatory School) as a turning point as it was his first recognition of being different and ending up in a dilemma, aware of his own displacement from being a true Arab or Christian Arab. Consequently, the researcher's choice to mark this as a turning point for Said was based on him recognizing himself as an outsider, altering his perception onwards, and elevating his sense of diaspora.

4.1.4 Turning Points (Non-textual)

The fourth category in Denzin's model of analysis is turning points (non-textual). Ahmed in her autobiography experienced, more than once, a moment of epiphany where her perception was altered as she herself tackles issues of identity formation and reformulation. For instance, Ahmed writes:

> I did feel kin, of course, and I did feel that I was among people, who were, in some quite real sense, my community. But was this because of 'Arabness'? Was I, for instance, really likely to feel more kin, more at home, with someone from Saudi Arabia than with someone, say, from Istanbul? I doubted it . . . I am not here to betray. I just do not want to live any longer with a lie about who I am. I don't want any longer to live with lies and manipulations. I can't stand to be caught up like this forever in people's inventions, imputations, false constructions of who I am – what I think, believe, feel or ought to think of believe or feel. (Ahmed 1999, 254-255).

If we look at the above passage, it will be clear that Ahmed's articulation of her thoughts acts like an epiphany – a moment where she realizes she does not want to live a lie anymore. It was a moment where she realized she doesn't want to be what people want her to be or seen as what people want her to be seen. She detached herself from the notion of Arabness and decided to be herself without having to belong to a certain notion. However, the researcher interprets this

as a lack of sense of belonging. At Cambridge, many non-textual turning points took place in Ahmed's life. Perhaps the most important one was her understanding of the term "racism." Her own understanding of this term has definitely changed as what she experienced in England was unlike anything she had experienced before regarding racism. In other words, she had no previous intense real-life scenes which she could call racism; all what she knew about racism was only some generic ideas, mistakenly thinking that racism in the West only targeted Black people. Then, Ahmed realized that Arab and Muslim women had been targets of racism; she write that even "civilized Cambridge did not regard us as equals" (Ahmed 1999, 225).

As for Said, as mentioned earlier, he experienced and suffered from displacement throughout different stages in his life. However, Said recalls a specific memory that changed him and altered his perception. The researcher thinks that Said registered a "shift" in his narrative voice, more like a change in attitude, from the sad nostalgia of homesickness and displacement to a more independent voice and productive alienation. The researcher, hence, marks this as an epiphany that Said experienced and acted upon accordingly. To elaborate, as first, when Said remembers his experience at Mount Hermon, he writes, "All I wanted was some friendly contact emanating from home, something to make an opening in the immense fabric of loneliness and separation that I felt surrounding me" (Said 1999, 228). However, this "loneliness" he expressed and experienced at Mount Hermon was only temporary, as later he writes:

> It wasn't nostalgia for Cairo that kept me going, since I remembered all too acutely the dissonance. I had always felt there as the non-Arab, the non-American American, the English-speaking and -reading warrior against the English or the buffeted and cosseted son. Instead it was the beginning of a new independent strength . . . Independent strength or nascent will: it marked the beginning of my refusal to be the passive "Ed Said" (Said 1999, 236).

We interpret this shift as a change in the personality and identity, and not as shift in the narrative - it is a shift that occurs in Said the protagonist and not as a narrator, a shift that has an impact on his past self, and not the current one at that time. This indicates how that moment of realization had a more positive impact and constructive attitude towards exile.

4.2. Socio-cognitive Critical Discourse Studies (SCDS).

4.2.1 Opinion and Emotion Words

As for the second model of analysis, van Dijk's model comprised several categories, and similarly, the researcher chose those that are indicative and serve the purpose of the study. The categories the researcher chose from van Dijk's SCDS model were: opinion and emotion words, deictic or indexical expressions, evidentials, ideological polarization, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, and metaphoric expressions. Starting with opinion and emotion words, both authors' choice of words in their titles reflect the overall mental and emotional states. Leila Ahmed's title, *A Border Passage*, reflects that she has always been on the edge and not fully involved or integrated in a certain country or home. Hence, it reflects her blurry sense of belonging that she struggled with throughout her autobiography. Similarly, Edward Said's title, *Out of Place*, reflects how he felt throughout his journey and how he suffered from displacement. Consequently, we suggest that both titles are considered a manifestation of the diasporic emotional state of the authors.

Leila Ahmed's personal life narrative is full of historic and political narratives. However, Ahmed's choice of words [opinion and emotion words] and the language she used in her autobiography, to write about history or politics, reflects her own perception and mental state. For example, one turning point coincides with the political changes of the 1952 Egyptian revolution, which, in Ahmed's terms:

> drove the old governing classes out of power and put an end to their dreams. Democracy was abolished and Egypt was declared a socialist state, drawing its political inspiration not from the democracies of the West but from the Soviet Union. The revolution had inaugurated a new and fierce type of anti-imperialist, anti-Western rhetoric, which would become the dominant rhetoric of the postrevolutionary age. (Ahmed 1999, 7).

The political changes Ahmed referred to in the above extract coincided with her return to Egypt after attending college in England. She came back to see a country, in her own opinion, with no democracy, or at least not like the one she witnessed in the Western culture. Ahmed writes on this regard, "They changed me forever. At once turning point and crucible, they fundamentally shaped my life and my work and who I became. The story of my life, then, begins with these crucible years and the circumstances and politics of these years" (Ahmed 1999, 15). Ahmed's use of the word "crucible" more than one time reflects her emotional and mental state. By definition, crucible is the situation where several trials were made, and different elements interact leading to the creation of something

new. Hence, it is fair to say that this term suggests that what Ahmed held to be tangible foundations of national, political, or personal identity were dissolved. Thus, the repetition of "crucible" underlines that Ahmed experienced a transformative process of identity deconstruction and reformation, and that is the reason why she did not quite feel at home upon her return to Egypt. Another instance where Ahmed expressed her own feelings and emotions regarding her identity is when she said, "So there are two different notions of Arab that I am trapped in – both false, both heavily weighted and cargoed with another silent freight. She further writes, "Both imputing to me feelings and beliefs that aren't mine" (Ahmed 1999, 256). Her use of the expression "trapped", as an expression of emotion, shows how she feels about her identity, like she doesn't belong and held against her will. The researcher thinks she is clearly reflecting how she cannot accept the beliefs about being an "Arab". Ahmed clearly refuses to define herself according to the new politically constructed Arab nationalist identity.

Said, in his autobiography, also expressed his opinion and emotions vividly. Starting with the title, Out of Place, it clearly expresses his emotions and his attempt to locate a place to belong instead of his homeland. As mentioned earlier, the title is considered a place where the researcher can begin to identify Said's adverse relationship to place and locality. Said writes, "Not only could I not absorb, much less master, all the meanderings and interruptions of these details . . . I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities – mostly in conflict with each other – all my life" (Said 1999, 5). Said's choice of words such as "meanderings" and "interruptions" in the above extract is indicative of his conflict and struggle with his identity formation. The researcher believes that this identity crisis defines Said's sense of self. Towards the end of his autobiography, Said writes, "I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place" (Said 1999, 295). It is clear from his narrative that he never felt at home in all the places he has been to. His word choices indicate a pretense to be at home, whereas in reality, he is not really at home suggesting that there is a sense of achievement in pretending to be at home; hence, his use of the word "prefer" which clearly reflects his own opinion of being so willingly.

4.2.2 Deictic or Indexical Expressions

As for the deictic or indexical expressions, they are expressions that refer to or presuppose information of the context model. The context models represent the various elements of a person's life, including their time and place, roles and responsibilities, intentions, and communicative actions. Ahmed recalls the time when she was in England where the "Harem" is a concept and a space that she experienced in the Western world.

she writes, "Girton, that is to say, was a version of the community of women—the harem—as I had lived it every summer in Alexandria," (Ahmed 1999, 181). This comparison between different context models (different time, place, and perspective), along with different participants with different identities and roles, is based on the intellectual activity the harems fostered where she also remembers that the community of women at Girton had an additional level of segregation. Like the harem in the Muslim world, Girton's spatial structure reflects social separation. By comparing the two harems, Ahmed reveals the contradiction, racism, and sexism of the colonial discourse which criticizes an oppression and backwardness of Muslim and Arab women in the colonized country while applying a sexist, class stratified thought on the women of the colonial empire. The researcher perceives the comparison that Ahmed drew as a clear change in her own perception of "Harem". A change in self-perception implies a change in identity and positionality. However, Ahmed's whole experience at Girton took a different turn as she regards Girton as an ideal and perhaps idealized version of the harem. She further writes:

> Girton represented the harem perfected. Not the harem of Western male sexual fantasy or even the harem of Muslim men, fantasy or reality, but the harem as I had lived it, the harem of older women presiding over the young. Even the servers here—gyps, cooks, staff— were women, and from these grounds, these precincts, the absence of male authority was permanent. (Ahmed 1999, 183).

Therefore, from the above extract, the researcher sees that Ahmed reflects that the harem no longer represents the social segregation of genders. Ahmed claims that, "All the significant learning happened at Girton" (Ahmed 1999, 188). On the one hand, this statement confirms that her experience at Girton strongly influenced her intellectual development and identity formation. On the other hand, Ahmed seems to reject any prior knowledge acquired in her native country as being important. The researcher marks a clear sense of confusion for Ahmed when it comes to describing her experience at Girton.

Said writes about the time he went back to Camp Maranacook twenty years later as an adult, and started asking about the camp, only to find that no one around had actually heard about it. It was like it only exists in his memory, and no one else remembers it. Similarly, upon his return to Cairo in 1956, he visited his old school -Victoria College in Egypt – only to find that its name changed to Victory College and has become nationalized by the government. The change in the name of his school itself reflects rejecting the notion of an English school; hence, a rejection of a place that

he once thought he belonged to yet struggled to fit in. What is also worth mentioning is that this was the school he was once expelled from as a young boy, on this revisit, he is once again, expelled, and accused of being a trespasser. The old British system that had expelled him and turned him away before for being too insolent, and not being obedient enough or English enough, was replaced by Muslim authority, and that time he was thrown off the school premises, by an "Angry looking-looking woman wearing a head covering and Islamic-style dress", because he did not fit in – he wasn't Arab enough or not Islamic enough for the new school. Apparently, the school changed from an English school to an Islamic school. Consequently, Said felt he is being rejected by different ideologies at different times from the same place, rendering the possibility of a return to places he once thought he belonged, echoing his literal permanent dislocation. His attempts to return to places he once called home failed. The researcher interprets Said's reference to the same places in different times and how they changed as an added sense of confusion to his sense of belonging.

4.2.3 Evidentials

As for the evidentials, Leila Ahmed in her autobiography resists a fixed identity as she states:

> For the truth is, I think that we are always plural. Not either this or that, but this and that. And we always embody in our multiple shifting consciousnesses a convergence of traditions, cultures, histories coming together in this time and place and moving like rivers through us. And I know now that the point is to look back with insight and without judgment, and I know now that it is of the nature of being in this place, this place of convergence of histories, cultures, ways of thought, that there will always be new ways to understand what we are living through, and that I will never come to a point of rest or of finality in my understanding (Ahmed 1999, 25-26).

In the above extract, Ahmed's use of "not either this or that, but this and that" reflects her own perception that identity is not a single layered construct. Her use of "multiple shifting consciousness" also reflects that she herself acknowledges the idea of perception shift or change. The extract also outlines that Ahmed regards not only her identity but also her autobiography as a constructed space, a terrain for constant negotiations, and a production of knowledge. Her use of expressions like "the truth is" and "I know" justifies the researcher's assumption. Further, Ahmed's use of the term "a point of finality" reflects her knowledge of defying fixedness. She also writes, "We grew up

believing that some world over there was better, more interesting, more civilized than this world here" (Ahmed 1999, 154). That clearly reflects her growing up with the knowledge that it is much better abroad than it is where she grew up; hence, intensifying her sense of displacement. Upon moving to the West, torn between her country's turn to socialism and the hidden intentions of the imperialist powers of the West, Ahmed has again experienced ambivalence towards the anti-colonial, anti- imperialist discourse she encounters in the West because of her class affiliation. Thus, Ahmed has decided to separate her own life from what she is learning in the west. She writes on this regard, "I know that there was for me a sense of fundamental disconnection between what I was grappling with academically and my own life and entirely private and isolated struggle to make sense of what I'd lived" (Ahmed,1999, p.213). Ahmed reflects her own knowledge and perception in the above passage by clearly saying "I know". She is asserting the "disconnection" she is experiencing, after she moved to the west, between worlds even before leaving Egypt and stepping in the western world. She starts to question her identity after the 1952 revolution; therefore, she becomes the alienated westernized postcolonial subject in Egypt before entering the west a different postcolonial outsider as an "Arab".

Said also recalls a memory that had a very strong impact on his sense of belonging and altered his perception. He writes:

> I grew up sliding between being – in my estimation of my father's attitude to me – a delinquent son . . . I called my father Daddy . . . but I always sense in the phrase how contingent it was, how potentially improper it was to think of myself as his son . . . The most terrible thing he ever said to me . . . was "You will never inherit anything from me; you are not the son of a rich man" . . . From that moment I became conscious of myself as a child. I found it impossible to think of myself as not having both a discrediting past and an immoral future in store . . . Being myself meant not only never being quite right, but also never feeling at ease . . . Permanently out of place . . . I became imprisoned from the age of nine left me no respite or sense of myself (Said 1999, 18-19).

In the above extract, Said clearly reflects his knowledge and self- perception by using words and phrases like "I always sense", "I became conscious", "I found it impossible", and "I became imprisoned". The evidentials Said used in the above extract reflect how and why he started to perceive himself an outside or out of place. The researcher supports her argument by highlighting how Said stated that he is "Permanently out of place" and that he had no sense of self.

4.2.4 Ideological polarization

The fourth category in van Dijk's model is ideological polarization. Throughout their autobiographies, both authors define their self-perception by placing themselves in certain social and cultural positions and articulating the difference between them and others. By distancing themselves from others, the researcher is enabled to highlight the authors' perception and get a better insight on how they perceive their identity. For instance, Ahmed struggled in positioning herself politically and she always felt the contradictions in the different social contexts she encountered. For instance, Ahmed's social class in Egypt has intrinsically affected the way she responds to the different cultural, economic, and political forces which shape her identity throughout her personal journey. She starts from a specific site which begins with her being privileged due to her social class, but after the 1952 revolution, she starts to position herself differently as she ends up struggling with various kinds of discrimination because of her race, class, and gender. Nevertheless, her class identity has continued to play a major role in the development of her subjectivity within different positions. It is part of the historical forces that continue to transform and reshape her cultural identity as a hybrid/diasporic subject. She writes:

> For a time in the Nasser era, when Arab nationalism and socialism were the going dogmas, fluency in European languages and Western education became discredited, things that one tried to hide, markers of belonging to the wrong class, the class of the once affluent, privileged, unjust oppressors of 'the masses (Ahmed 1999, 152).

The above extract reflects how Ahmed sees the "Arab Nationalism" and how she separates social classes accordingly. However, her language emphasizes that she is pro the pre- Arab nationalism. Confused as she is about her own identity, Ahmed tries to hide from herself as she positions herself within a different category than that of the newly-introduced construction of an "Egyptian- Arab" identity. Suddenly, she found herself against all the notions that define Arab nationalist's identity politically formed by the Egyptians, and immediately distanced herself from this new Egyptian identity construct, making her struggle in this identity confusion for the rest of her life. The researcher thinks that the change and confusion in Ahmed's social class position has pushed her to reject Arab nationalism as exclusionary of the people with whom she affiliates in terms of class. Another instance where Ahmed expresses ideological polarization is during her time in England, and later in

the United States. She writes that, according to the Western Culture, Arabs are perceived as:

> 'Arabs' meant people with whom you made treaties that you did not have to honor, Arabs being by definition people of a lesser humanity and there being no need to honor treaties with people of lesser humanity. It meant people whose lands you could carve up and apportion as you wished, because they were of a lesser humanity. It meant people whose democracies you could obstruct at will, because you did not have to behave justly toward people of a lesser humanity. And what could mere Arabs, anyway, know of democracy and democratic process. (Ahmed 1999, 267)

This stereotypical categorization placed Ahmed in a group that is perceived negatively by the Western culture. No matter how hard she tried to distant herself from the notion of being an "Arab", she finds herself labeled as one by others. Hence, Ahmed finds herself torn between the colonized Egyptian, the decolonizing Arab, and the postcolonial diasporic feminist writer. We think that Ahmed is subjected to an endless process of identity making which constantly assigns to her new subjectivities that can be distinguished according to her locations and positions.

Like Ahmed, Said's family suffered from Nasser and Arab nationalism. The new definition of Arab nationalism excluded Said and his family and positioned them in a separate "foreign" group that clearly adopted different ideology and supported by only few Egyptians. To elaborate, Said writes, "In July 1952, the Free Officers' Revolution occurred, directly threatening our interests as a well-off family of foreigners, with little support inside Egyptian society of our kind." By "our" kind, Said meant "Shawam" or "foreigners", and his words reflect how he feels discriminated against by the Egyptian society and he got support of only few. He clearly reflects that his community at the time were victims and clearly adopted a better mentality than most of the Egyptians. Said further elaborates on that by writing, "so little did I, or anyone in my immediate family, have any sense of primarily religious hostility toward Muslims" (Said 1999, 169). Hence, Said's ideological polarization is between Egyptian Muslims, and foreign Christians, where he explains that Egyptian Muslims are more hostile, less tolerant, and discriminative than his own community. The researcher, thus, highlights this positioning as another influence on Said's identity, sense of belonging, and dislocation.

4.2.5 Intertextuality and Interdiscursivity

Regarding the fifth category, intertextuality and interdiscursivity, both authors, Leila Ahmed and Edward Said, refer more than once to other texts in their autobiographies. At the beginning of her work, Ahmed refers to Jalaluldin Rumi's (the Persian mystic poet) transcendental poetry. She writes:

> Sufi poetry this music of the reed is the quintessential music of loss and I'd feel, learning this, that's I'd always known it to be so . . . the song of the reed is the metaphor for our human condition, haunted as we so often are by a vague sense of longing and of nostalgia, but nostalgia for we know not quite what . . . we too live our lives haunted by loss, we too, says Rumi, remember a condition of completeness that we once knew but have forgotten that we ever knew. (Ahmed 1999, 5)

Ahmed's multiple citations of Rumi's poetry reflects how she sees herself - lost and nostalgic. They also imply a transnational identification as the poetry suggests humans', as Ahmed writes, "connections with all beings" (Ahmed 1999, 307). Her own perception is reflected as she asserts that all identities and cultures are hybrid. However, the researcher thinks Ahmed is only trying to justify her own position and normalize herself as being hybrid and diasporic. Confused and torn between the past and present, Ahmed starts to question her own identity. In her attempt to find answers, she reflects on President Anwar al-Sadat's published autobiography "In Search of Identity," and she wonders:

> If the president of Egypt himself, no less, was searching for his identity, no wonder that I, crossing the threshold into my teenage years in that era of revolution, would find myself profoundly confused and conflicted and, forever after, haunted by feelings of deep uncertainty and a mysteriously guilt-ridden sense of ambiguity. (Ahmed 1999, 10)

Ahmed's reference to Al Sadat's autobiography expresses the significant effect of her class position on the shifting and transformative cultural identity she is discovering in her autobiography narrative. The above extract reflects her sense of confusion towards her identity, elaborating that she has been exposed to multiple cultures while growing up, unlike Al Sadat, yet he himself is searching for his own identity; hence, she is wondering where that leaves her. The researcher here points out that the choice of other texts Ahmed displays in her autobiography, reflects her own perception and how she sees things.

Similarly, Said referred to the poetry of Cavafy, who was considered a Greek distinguished poet of the 20th century, as he writes:

I recognized this in the poetry of Cavafy some years later – the same indifference, the world taken for granted as privileged foreigners like us pursued our concerns and worried about our business without much consideration for the vast majority of the population. (Said 1999, 272)

In Cavafy's historical poems, he refers to people who fought their life in order to make their dreams come true but faced complete loss and failure. Similarly, Said relates to Cavafy's poetry as he expressed that foreigners, like him and his family, fought for their business and other concerns; however, they faced so much difficulties from the vast majority around them. Said expressed his disappointment in how "indifferent" Egyptians were toward foreigners, making him feel alienated. Said also recalls the time when he used to play as a child in a garden near his house. He writes, "I played Robinson Crusoe and Tarzan there" (Said 1999, 22). Robinson Crusoe and Tarzan are novels where the main characters in both were lost and lived a significant amount of their lives alone and in isolation away from their homes. The researcher interprets Said's reference to these characters as a symbol of how he relates to both of them; hence, reflecting how he actually felt and how he perceived himself – alone and isolated.

4.2.6 Metaphoric Expressions

Lastly, the metaphoric expressions; Leila Ahmed's autobiography is loaded with metaphoric expressions that, the researcher thinks, shed light on her self-perception. Starting with the title, A Border Passage; the idea of borders is a metaphor of thinking about multiple identities which is different from the actual meaning or border – a physically marker perimeter enclosing a country or a state. In this context, "border" refers to the confrontation between the old ideas of a culture, and the new ideas that emerge from crossing the national border. Ahmed reflects that she has been living her life on border passage and not a normal life passage, indicating that she never led a normal life or felt that she belonged because of her border crossing and encountering different cultures and ideologies. She has always felt she is on the border of each path she took throughout her life. The researcher thinks it is a reflection of her diasporic self, reflected in her own choice of words. She further writes:

Our house, then, standing as it did at the intersection of the country, desert and city, stood also at the edge and confluence of these many worlds and histories. It seems entirely apt now, as I look back, that Ain Shams was in this was quintessentially a place or borders and that even geographically it was so placed as not quite to belong to any one world. Or rather to belong, at once, to all of them. (Ahmed 1999, 16)

In the above extract, Ahmed refers to her own house that she grew up in as "border" that seemingly did not belong to any one world. It is a clear reflection of how she felt and how she perceived home. She is torn between not belonging or belonging to all the worlds she encountered. Clearly, she is struggling to define herself, and the language she used and metaphors she chose display her self-perception and provide the readers with a background on her diasporic identity. Ahmed further writes, after she arrived from England, "This was a period of my life when all the expectations, assumptions, certainties I had grown up with were dissolving" (Ahmed 1999, 199). Her use of the expression "dissolving" mirrors how what she once knew and grew up with is no longer there, not even in her memories. The researcher considers this as a change in identity.

Edward Said's autobiography is significantly rich in the use of metaphoric expressions, and they are very expressive of Said's perception, identity, and emotional state. Said writes about the time he was in Victoria College, and he recalls an incident where his English instructor, Marcus Hinds, accuses him of disturbing the class, and as a result, the throws an eraser at Said, as he writes, "Came at me like a missile . . . Thus were the lines drawn between us and them" (Said 1999, 183-184). On the cognitive level, Said's interpretation of the eraser as a "missile" reflects how the act of throwing an eraser at him by his English teacher is strong and full of hate and anger; another emphasis on the unbridgeable gap between English staff and natives, that had a direct effect on Said, making him feel discriminated against and alienated. Said also writes, "Nationality, background, real origins and past actions all seemed to be sources of my problem; I could not in any convenient way lay the ghosts that continued to haunt me from school to school, group to group, situation to situation" (Said 1999, 137). In this context, Said resembles his nationality, background and origins with ghosts that haunt him everywhere he goes yet do not exist in reality. Comparing them to ghosts carries a negative implication and reflects his own perception towards them. It seems he cannot get rid of them, nor embrace them as a part of who he is. Not accepting his nationality, or background is a clear reflection of inner struggle and identity formation process.

4.3. Findings and Results

Upon examining the two autobiographies written by two Arab-American authors, We were able to highlight: (1) A major commonality among them which is their inability to construct a place they could feel "home" even when they remained living in their homes of origin which instead functioned as sources of discrimination, oppression, violence, and internal

displacement; and (2) The fact that they suffered from internal displacement in their own cultures marked the beginning of self-exploration of non-belonging and the change in their self-perception and, by extension, their identities. The analysis revealed that the chosen categories in Denzin's model of "Interpretive Autoethnography" were successfully able to help us answer the first research question of how different social contexts contribute to diasporic identities. The answer is that both writers struggled in defining their self-perception and what they call "home". Both Ahmed and Said reflected in their narratives that they faced oppression and discrimination regardless of their different genders, origins, and religions and this developed a sense of inferiority for them. The analysis revealed that they were always referred to as the "other" according to their gender, race, class and even religion in various social contexts. The second model of analysis addressing the second research question of how can van Dijk 's socio-cognitive discourse tools define self-perception of writers in diaspora answered the question by revealing that the authors' choice of words reflect their overall mental and emotional states. Combining the two models of analysis mentioned above, the researcher was able to gain complementary insights on the subject of this study, in addition to constructing validity. The integration between the autoethnographic approach and the socio-cognitive approach enabled the researcher to provide an answer to the third research question of how an integration between van Dijk can 's socio-cognitive approach and an autoethnographic approach enable the decoding of transformation of diasporic identity. To elaborate, it created an understanding and meaning as the researcher interprets the self-writings against the backdrop of thinking about cognitive strategies evident in the construction of the writers' identity. The two models utilized targeted the cognitive level of the authors in relation to different social contexts, providing a better understanding of the relation between them. The interpretive autoethnographic approach analyzed the self- writings of the writers on the macro level, reflecting their own perception, inner struggles and sense of non-belonging. In addition, the socio-cognitive approach highlighted their perception according to their choice of words, hence, analyzing the language, on the micro-level, used by the authors while reaching the same result. Therefore, both approaches were successful in highlighting the reasons and conditions that contributed to the authors' diasporic identities.

5.   CONCLUSION

The study is investigating the different social contexts in the autobiographies of two Arab American writers, Leila Ahmed's *A Border passage* and Edward Said's *Out of place* and how these social contexts contributed

to their diasporic identities. The two methodological frameworks utilized in this study were introduced: Denzin's (2014) Interpretive autoethnography and van Dijk's (2016) Socio-cognitive critical discourse studies model (SCDS). The first model of analysis helped analyze the adopted texts in terms of self-writings on the macro-level, to reflect the identity formation process and how it ends up in diaspora and illustrated how the different social contexts contributed greatly to the writers' self-perception. As both authors were being discriminated against in their own cultures, they suffered from "internal colonization" and this promoted a cosmopolitan identity, hindering their ability to formulate a single identity of their own and hence ending up in diaspora. The data analysis revealed that Ahmed and Said's family beginnings contributed to their sense of displacement and their family choices for them often caused a sense of confusion. For them, everything at home worked toward their exile, alienation, and displacement. Both authors expressed that growing up in families acting different from other families around them made them feel they do not belong to their home cultures. The analysis revealed that the several textual turning points and the writers' choice to refer to them such as travelling and being exposed to several social contexts contributed greatly to their sense of belonging and their identity representation. The several turning points in the lives of the authors in terms of the different social/political contexts they have been exposed to, altered their self-perception and ideology in many aspects. By highlighting the change in perception according to the exposure to different social contexts, adequate answers could be provided of why the authors end up in diaspora. In addition, the several non-textual turning points, also referred to as 'epiphanies', reflected the alteration in the self-perception of Ahmed and Said throughout their autobiographies. The analysis highlighted how certain situations changed the way the authors perceive themselves, and how this perception changed their identity or contributed to a diasporic one. Other situations made the authors realize how they are perceived by others, and consequently, starting to believe they are what they are referred to, rather than what they believed about themselves.

The second model of analysis measures word choice and phrasing which are perceived as a reflection of such things as the effect of cultural and different social contexts on identity and disposition. The model proposed by van Dijk (2016) aimed to highlight the linguistic manifestation, on the micro level, of diasporic identities. The integration between the two models helped decode the transformation of the authors' diasporic identities. Accordingly, we conclude that the writers' choice of words significantly reflected struggle, confusion, and anxiety to define their identity, and define what they considered as "home".

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Not being able to define a home or a place they belong supports the researcher's argument that both authors developed diasporic identities. Throughout their autobiographies the authors' opinion and emotion words reflected their own perception that kept changing according to different social contexts. Both Ahmed and Said often reflected, by their choice of words, the conflicts and struggles they faced with their identity formation. They also reflect in their autobiographies multiple perceptions that conflict with each other, hence, reflecting a struggle in self-perception. The analysis also revealed that the use of deictic and indexical expressions reflected their presupposed information and they significantly reflected how they are always perceived as outsiders or inferiors. In addition, the use of expressions that reflected the authors' knowledge – also known as "evidentials" – enabled us to interpret their perceptions and justified the way the authors are thinking or how they define themselves. The analysis revealed that the authors in this study exhibited ideological polarization when they were exposed to various social contexts. As a result, their perceptions of the world changed. The way the authors separated groups and placed themselves in certain groups reflected how they perceived themselves and others which reflected that the authors usually perceived themselves as outsider or inferiors in both cultures – the Arab and the Western culture. As for the intertextuality and interdiscursivity, the analysis revealed that the choice of texts the authors referred to in their self-writings reflects on collective identity by showing what features the author borrows to construct that identity. The texts the authors chose reflected nostalgia and struggle which mirrors self-perception. Finally, the use of metaphoric expressions is considered to be the linguistic or semiotic realization of an underlying conceptual idea at the cognitive level. Therefore, they reflect the inner self-perception, identity, and emotional state of the authors. The use of metaphoric expressions in both autobiographies revealed dislocation, struggle, sense of confusion, change in perception and not belonging.

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