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Hybridity and Cultural Identity in Jasmine Warga's Novel *Other Words for Home*

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to show how Jude, as a Syrian character, in Jasmine Warga's *Other Words for Home* (2019), interprets the notion of a home and how it explicitly opposes American Exceptionalism. The writer chooses the study of home in the novel to enhance the analysis of *Other Words for Home*, which generally focuses on the novel's Syrian character. This research uses postcolonial diasporic criticism, especially hybridity and cultural identity as the theoretical framework in evaluating Warga's *Other Words for Home*. The home is not only a place of immigrants for the diaspora but is related geographically and psychologically. For diasporas, the home has become a wounded concept that forces them to deal with scars, blisters and sores, and psychic traumas while on migration. Warga tells the story of Syrian immigrants who moved to America due to the political turmoil in Syria. She portrays racism, alienation, and prejudice as a black spectacle in which Jude becomes a victim. Jude is depicted as a teenager struggling to acculturate herself in in-between spaces between homeland and host land. It creates a hybrid identity as Jude's identity is manifested by her use of mixed dialects in daily conversation, behaviour, and triumph. This study demonstrates that identity is a fluid concept. Thus, through this hybrid identity Jude challenges the dominance of American Exceptionalism in the US and in the world regarding Arab Muslims.

Keywords: *American Exceptionalism, Cultural Identity, Hybridity, Home, Syrian Character.*

INTRODUCTION

When some individuals first meet, they are forced to ask about their home, but the question becomes more complicated when it is posed to the diaspora community. In reality, the home is more than just a structure with numerous shapes or a previous residence. Home as the field of day-to-day living experience is a spatial locality discourse, the place where perceptions of identity and belonging arise from ordinary and unintended daily experiences (Raj 90). In this case, the home becomes a location where the community becomes the owner or supporter of a particular culture through its behaviour in the daily life system. Immigrants leave a place known as home or homeland and then reconstruct it by migrating outside, and "Home is no longer just one place. It is locations" (Bhabha 57). Home is not only an imaginary location from which one's identity is derived but also an imaginative line that appears to be a marker for the relative-limiter—the socio-cultural life circle. It is not a place we "come from" but rather a place "we are" (p. 297).

Moreover, immigrants have long grappled with identity difficulties as a community isolated from their hostland. In some instances, immigrants identify a place where they live in the sense that a hostile situation is referred to as "not a home"; in some words, a person



cannot feel a bond to their current place (Coward 283). Identification of the meaning of a home is difficult since the concept of a home is continually juxtaposed with diaspora identity. In seeking self-identity, if they try to stick to an essentialist view of homeland identity, it becomes outdated and loses its allure (Raj 93). The immigrant who insists on applying their previous identity regardless of the socio-cultural conditions in the host country will face many difficulties. It is easy to lose one's identity, change one's identity, and reform one's identity while transiting (Grace p. 264). According to Salman Rushdie in his book *East, West*, "Home has become such a dispersed, broken, varied term in our current travails" (Rushdie 93). Immigrants organize groups to celebrate their history while supporting its growth beyond the country to avoid being absorbed by the host culture. The ways they establish narrative links with faraway people and places have been selected and changed through time to sustain a connection with a "remembered homeland" and recreate that tie for present needs and future generations (Story and Walker 136).

Immigrants who migrate from their native country to the West are more likely to accept ideologies such as Eurocentrism. Eurocentrism is a form of seeing European or western countries, which postcolonialism has criticized. Postcolonialism is a major threat to the deployment of Eurocentrism (Matin 355). Jim Blaut said that Eurocentrism was dangerous for the people of the world because it was dangerous to the people of the world. Its name was white people who set out to dominate, influence, and irrevocably improve a deeply mistaken world (Blaut 86). Modern colonialism forms a historical discourse that legitimizes itself as Eurocentric (Montón-Subías and Hernando, p. 455). Political issues and the search for identity are part of the postcolonial discourse (p. 210). A nation's dependence on a Eurocentric viewpoint has a considerable impact, especially regarding identity. According to Loomba, colonialism distributes knowledge to several processes, blurring the identity of the colonized, marginalizing a conflict, and utilizing indigenous ideas to gain access to colonial practices (Loomba 87).

The domination of western is a transformation in the development of Eurocentrism. The promise of egalitarian enlightenment was launched as the consumer's right to choose, buy, and be under American Fordism. It is said that the people of the world look with envy and imitate Americans (Peet 938). America is a picture of perfection, it has become the most dangerous belief in consciousness with its great technological sophistication (938). This domination gives rise to American exceptionalism.

Americans have always thought of themselves as distinct from the rest of the world. American exceptionalism is about the differences between civilized and uncivilized countries. This thinking style relies on orientalism, where there is a differential conquest and mission justification (p. 267). America's exceptionalism is a form of historical clash in the Western world. Examples of forms of violence against Muslims or Arabs. According to Said, the West can distinguish itself from others, namely the Islamic culture in the East. Orientalism created a false perception of the early Islamic civilization (as well as Islamic culture, including its contemporaries) (Said p. 6). This led to a critical situation between Muslims and Americans.

"*Other Words for Home*," tells the story of a Syrian family consisting of a father, a pregnant mother, a son, and a daughter called Jude. They live an ordinary life, but it becomes dangerous when widespread anti-government demonstrations result in war. Her father sent his wife and Jude to her uncle's house in Cincinnati to prevent any unpleasant incidents. Adolescence is a period when someone experiences confusion in life when a teenager begins to doubt what they have gotten from their parents or when they find

something new that can be believed to guide living life (Klimstra and van Doeselaar p. 296). Jude, as a teenager, is experiencing doubt about what is going on in her life. She felt a lingering feeling of un-belonging, realizing that America is not a place where she should be. Stuart Hall stated, "The link between these communities and their 'homeland' or the possibility of a return to the past is much more precarious than usually thought" (p. 355).

Furthermore, the seeking process in humans always forces them to move from one place to another. It has been going on since the stone age and has changed as the world has become more sophisticated with modernity globally. While migrations and diasporas have always been, after two world wars and many other conflicts in this century, the mix of people within borders increasingly rendered traditional national models anachronistic (158). The novel's search for identity carried out by the Syrian character focuses on this research. It becomes the focal point of this research. However, this makes the writer interested in exploring further how the Syrian character in this novel opposes colonialism discourses in constructing American exceptionalism. According to the explanation before, the writer is interested in depicting the notion of Home in the diaspora world through the perspective of a Syrian character named Jude. To examine how Jude defines home create acts of the character as opposed to colonialism, the writer uses the theory of hybridity by Homi K. Bhabha and Stuart Hall's theory of cultural identity and diaspora.

Method

This research attempts to home study the field of postcolonialism through the Syrian Character in *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga. This research identifies how Jude, as a Syrian character in *Other Words for Home* interprets the notion of a home and how the notion of home explicitly opposes the notion of American exceptionalism through hybridity and cultural identity. The writer uses the qualitative method with descriptive analysis. Qualitative research focuses on investigating comprehension that explores social or human problems (Creswell and Poth 70). Through the participants' subjective experiences, qualitative research seeks to obtain insight into the precise meanings and behaviors experienced in a given social phenomenon (Aspers and Corte 16). It attempts to understand human behavior, emotion, attitudes, and experiences (Mohajan 2). The writer analyzes the data using close reading or reading techniques. After reading the object of this research, which is *Other Words for Home* novel by Jasmine Warga, the writer re-reads it carefully, highlights the critical parts, and pays close attention to the words and ideas of the passages that have been gathered to be the evidence of the analysis. Close reading investigates the relationship between discourse's internal workings to discover what persuasively makes a particular text function (Allen and Brearton 41). As a way of enriching a reader's experience of a given text, close reading is fruitful; a scholar's interpretation of a text may help another reader to —see or observe in the text elements that might have otherwise remained latent. In essence, by using close reading, the writer concentrates on reading the text, gathering the passages, and observing it.

Result and Discussion

In this chapter, the writer examines and describes the research data from Jasmine Warga's novel *Other Words for Home* to answer questions concerning the perspectives of Syrian immigrants defining the notion of home with the use of postcolonial home studies. The writer focuses on describing the notion of Home articulated by the Syrian immigrant in this

novel and the link between 'home' and the narrative form of resistance to an ideology of American exceptionalism that is mirrored in the novel's tale with this concept.

Jude defines the notion of the home encompasses home as a source of cultural identity, a sense of belonging, memory, the process of being, and the process of becoming. Another term for dwelling tells the story of a Syrian family living a typical life on a coast. Moreover, all changed when their nation became embroiled in political instability, and they realized that the location they were living in was no longer secure for their survival. They lead conventional lives, but it quickly gets perilous. At the same time, large anti-government demonstrations escalated into war. Then Jude's father chooses to transfer Jude, along with her mother and future sister, to live with her long-lost uncle in Cincinnati.

Furthermore, *Other words for Home* essentially depict the narrative of immigrants who battle against culture and the defense of a memory of the country and how the individuals' reasons for moving to differ. As a result, the writer argues that the Syrian character who challenges the notion of "home" undergoes identity conflict, resulting in the Syrian character Jude, suffering a hybridity state as a opposed to the ideology of American exceptionalism.

East and West

The concept of dividing the world into two halves has existed since time immemorial. Views of the West and East are included. The existence of this point of view resulted in an identity crisis in the eastern world. Binary opposition structure Such dichotomies, according to Western thought, are overly reductive because they imply that any national culture is unitary, homogeneous, and defined by fixity or an essential core (Djohar p. 83). The West is always convinced that it is the most advanced country, whereas the East is regarded as a civilizational backward nation. The separation of the two worlds, western and eastern, gives rise to hierarchical thinking. Hierarchical thinking is defined here as a point of view that creates a class order and then illustrates that the West is superior and special to the East. A hierarchical view like this makes the Western nation arrogant and believe that the Eastern nation lacks what the Western nation has. Furthermore, the West sees the East as a nation that must be conquered and educated in order to become civilized.

Western nations use their superiority to conquer and deceive the East, not only through education but also through oppression and exploitation, in order to broaden their ideology. Western nations take advantage of their power to oppress the passive peoples of the east. The author of the novel *Other Words for Home* depicts racism experienced by minorities in the West due to the binary opposition between the West and the East. Jude is the main character in *Other Words for Home*, and he is subjected to the conditions of both the West and the East. Jude is frequently subjected to racist treatment by an American in her life in Cincinnati. The colonialists always assumed that the original cultural identity was the foundation for a nation built on unshakeable historical divisions and changes. The existence of the diaspora group in facing the dual state between homeland and hostland was made a gap by the West in order to maintain the western nation's identity. To maintain a western identity, the West tends to create an inhospitable environment for the diaspora. So, in contrast to the increasingly bleak situation, the move should have been a happy beginning. The image of an expanding homeland and increasing resistance pressure the West took advantage of this situation to maintain its dominance over the eastern nation.

In this subchapter, the writer discusses defining the notion of a home described by the character Jude as immigrants from Syria who live in Cincinnati, U.S. Cultural identities

are the unstable points of identification or suture formed within the discourses of history and culture. It is not an essence but rather a positioning (Hall 226). Jude experiences obstacles in adapting to face racism, alienation, and marginalization at this stage. It is because there is a continuous and inherent stereotype of Arab Muslims who are considered as inferior. The discussion about the home begins to be explored a lot Jude and her mother begin to live in Cincinnati. The reality they face says they are already in America, and there is no certainty that they will return to their homeland. A home is no longer just a building that has a foundation. It is all more complex when the writer explores the *Other Words for Home* novel more deeply. Home is described in this novel as a feeling of unpretentiousness: indecision, dilemmas, anxiety, feelings of rejection, and unbelonging.

The story begins with a background in a middle eastern country, namely Syria. A land between Turkey and Jordan. Exactly a decade ago, the turmoil in Syria began. In 2011, a wave of the Arab spring phenomenon started to spread in Syria. It led to the rise of a revolutionary movement against the government of Bashar al-Assad, founded on an insurgency and armed forces attacking health facilities, civilians, terrorism, and chemical attacks (Cheung et al. 2), which caused the Syrian civil society to leave Syria in droves. The Syrian war has culminated in the world's largest humanitarian disaster since world war ii, with more than 4 million people fleeing the country and another 7.6 million displaced (Flanigan and Abdel-Samad 52). In this spread, they have to leave the culture and language they remember before. *Other words for Home* begin the story with the beauty of life in Aleppo, Syria, where Jude and her mother live, forced to migrate to their uncle's house in Cincinnati, in several cities in Syria where war begins. There are many differences between the culture of the homeland and the hostland, it will be difficult for Jude to adapt.

Of course, she says.

I walk over to the bed

And hoist myself up onto the mattress.

Mama wraps her arms around me,

Pulling me close to her,

And she smells like she always has,

Agarwood oil and rosewater.

It is the smell of Home,

Of love,

Of safety.

It is a smell that makes me feel like it is okay

For me to say anything.

Why did you bring me here? I ask, the same question

I am always asking,

But am never getting a satisfactory answer to (Warga 54).

The quote above shows that the home described by Jude is the trepidation that Jude felt the night before going to her new school in Cincinnati for the first time. Smells that she always encountered when she lived in Syria. Through the aromas of "agarwood oil" and "rosewater", she feels the warmth and serenity. Memory and the sense of smell are inextricably intertwined. It can happen spontaneously, with a smell functioning as a trigger to recall a long-forgotten memory or experience. Through smells, Jude can feel her origin country again. "Here" in the line thirteen is referred to "America". Although she can find her home through the smells, she cannot find the true home like Syria. This demonstrates that the house Jude describes is a type of mythological narrative created by the mind using

Jude's memories from her time in Syria. Jude moving to America still requires a long adaptation process because Jude is a minority in a very different environment from her life in Syria. The question Jude asked to her mother was an expression of Jude's concern when she had to adapt to a new environment.

*The sun is still out
Even though the days are getting darker and darker
Earlier and earlier (Warga 54).*

Afterward, Jude felt that her life was not as bright as it used to be when she lived in Syria. In the process of becoming Jude, she encounters cultural differences that cause problems.. Immigrants are viewed as exhausted, fearful, depressed, hopeless, and perpetually nostalgic for their loss (bobowik et al. 3). Jude felt the unfriendly society in the environment towards her. Jude's days did not turn out well. So Jude can only think that every day she goes through will end badly. It gives Jude its own difficulties.

*I tell myself that she doesn't invite me
Because there isn't any space,
But then one day,
I notice there is an empty seat
At the very end of the table.
I get up from the table
Where I have been sitting
By myself
And run to the bathroom,
Where I hide in a stall,
And sob
And wonder if this lonely ache
Inside of me
Will ever go away (Warga 66).*

Nevertheless, there is a cause and effect that is felt by Jude when she feels a rejection in her new environment, namely being alienated. In this case, Jude is part of "the other" an individual from the East that means different and has nothing in common. The mentality of superiority among the Americans makes them closed to accepting differences, especially for easterners. The quote above is a moment where Jude finds discriminatory behavior from her cousin. Discrimination occurs through residential segregation when individuals are treated unequally in accessing jobs, education, health care, social services, because of their race or ethnicity, status as a foreign-born person, ethnic origin, and race (Szaflarski and Bauldry 174). Sarah, Jude's cousin who is half American-Syrian because her father, feels overbearing of her identity born in America, so she feels appropriate to do this domination. Jude realizes that her cousin's treatment at school is excruciating; with her disappointment and sadness, she cries with feelings of loneliness that have not ended. It did not happen when Jude was in Syria. A method colonizers use to weaken the colonized is to isolate the colonized mentally and physically from the new environment in which their hostland.

I am scared that the only place
In middle America that I belong
Is a middle eastern restaurant
I push open the door,
And at once, I feel at Home,

Greeted by old friends
The smell of cumin and thyme,
The strong scent of Arabic coffee brewing on a stove
In the back of the kitchen (Warga 76).

As the writer explained, smells and memory have a very intense bond. In Jude's loneliness. Jude finds a home where she can revisit her old memories of living in Syria. A restaurant with the aroma of artin at Jude's home, Syria. Everyone can empathize with various immigrants' loneliness, particularly Arab immigrants (Djohar 84). They have a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland—its physical location, history, accomplishments, and, often, sufferings. A space intended not only for people to eat but as a space to pour out their worries when the new culture they face is not as good as their previous life. In the warmth Jude felt at the restaurant, she discovered a fear where Jude was afraid that the only environment that could accept Jude's presence was a Middle Eastern restaurant.

But ever since I heard the news about Issa,
I can't imagine not having the security of mama's
Solid body there in the middle of the night
When my sleep breaks
And I am filled with a terror of not quite knowing
Where I am or
Where I am going.
I wrap my arms around her
And I hold on,
I hold on to that feeling of Home (Warga 93)

Based on the previous quotation, Jude feels the pain in the middle of her sleep. Jude's emotional pain increased when she heard the news about her brother in Syria. She comes across the juxtaposition of ambiguous notions about the two worlds, which leads her to an ever-tormenting state of dual existence. She frequently discovered, to their horror, that she belonged nowhere and are resident of no man's land. She cannot forget their past or fully embrace the new land, so they try to live with the duality of mind.

But then, right as we are walking out
Of the hospital doors,
A woman stops us.
Hey! She says, pointing a finger at mama's face.
Hey! She repeats, the word like a stone thrown,
You don't have to wear that anymore (Warga 100).

Jude and her mother felt various hatreds. The quote above shows a picture of islamophobia in America. Jude and her mother went home after a check-up at the hospital. Jude and her family believe that when a woman reaches the point of maturity marked by menstruation, she is required to wear a scarf. While they were walking, an American stopped them and loudly shouted at Jude's mother not to wear the scarf. In a country where the Islamic religion is a minority, the stigma of a terrorist for someone who dresses as a Muslim is very high. America is a country that most upholds freedom in all aspects. But it is different if it is associated with Muslims. Because of their visibility, Muslim women dressed in Islamic garb attract negative attention, increasing Islamophobic violence and hate crimes against many women (Grayson 130). This form of hatred will lead to discrimination. The integrity of Muslim women regarding their right to wear a scarf as a form of obligation and

obedience in their religion seems to be limited. In diaspora must undergo major reshuffling of their thoughts and activities, which causes them to feel alienated in their new life. Still, in this situation, Jude and her mother chose to maintain the values they had before move to immigrate to America.

That I try my best to keep at bay,
That are like wolves in the night,
Howling that I am not from here,
That I don't belong here,
That I will never belong here (Warga 104)

The sense of belonging to the family and the nation is shattered for the diaspora. The quote above expresses Jude's dissatisfaction with the process of adjusting to her new environment and culture in America. One of the main characteristics of diaspora is the desire to return, but they do not. Jude is in a dual-state. As a result, they are pursued by feelings of loss, hopelessness, and alienation (Paudel 70). As from the quote above, Jude has done her best to assimilate the host culture, but to no avail. Jude also realized that she would not be able to fit anywhere. As newcomers, they are unable to integrate into the local culture fully. Because locals perceive immigrants as foreigners, breaking down the barriers to their social lives is difficult.

Sarah gives me a look and I know it is a warning.
Mina says, *are you thinking of trying out?*
But the way she says it
Does not sound like a question,
More like a joke (Warga 106).

Arab people are always considered as individuals who are different and do not follow the western image. The many stereotypes that construct the East are inherent in western people, so European society easily underestimates Eastern people. East is always depicted as feminine and passive that needs to be dominated, exotic, and mysterious. The quote above illustrates when Jude's school will hold a performance. With mediocre English skills, Jude is considered not to have a role in the performance because the actors in the performance are actually played by natives who speak English natively. Jude, as a migrant student from Syria, is considered unable to meet the qualification standards for participating in the performance.

When I hear the shoes
Pounding on the pavement behind me.
I glance over my shoulder
And see that the man is following me.
My heart jumps up in my chest,
And it hammers furiously.
Go back to where you came from, he says.
We don't want you here (Warga 137).

That they all see people like me
And think
Violence
Sadness
War (Warga 142).

The quote above is a picture of American society after an explosion. The horrific tragedy happens in a city far from Cincinnati. An uncontrollable explosion occurred with bloodshed and death. It happened when the media speculated that the perpetrator of the blast was a Muslim and of Arab descent. The "othering" of Muslims since 9/11 has had a long-term impact on Muslim Americans' lives, affecting their sense of belonging and inclusion in the fabric of American society. Muslims in America have been racialized as 'dangerous' and 'uncivilized' (Tariq 1). After the bombing tragedy, the image of Muslims as the subject of radicalization narratives of negativism increased, thus pairing Islam as an opposition party to the West. This narrative is what connects western hatred against Muslims in U.S. However, it is not Islam's religious or cultural aspects that are threatening, but rather the fear of political and economic power shifting to the Middle East that causes western concerns (Silva 3). Jude becomes a suspicious subject for westerners because she is a Syrian.

Terrorists.

The red paint glistens in the winter sunlight like jewels,
Like blood.
It is splashed across
The storefront of Layla's parents' restaurant.
My vision blurs with tears.
For the first time since I've been in America,
I wish I didn't read English (Warga 143).

The quote above is an image of the West that Jude had never imagined before. Jude's did not expect the impact of the aftermath of an explosion that occurred far from where she lived happened to her own best friend. The hateful behavior caused by the West after the bombing tragedy caused a deep trauma in American Muslims. Terror after terror came one after another. The restaurant owned by Layla's parents has become the target of Islamophobic terror. Jude finally understood why Layla was always so gloomy after the explosion. They worry about the future, feelings of anxiety and fear of hate crimes, stigmatization, and the break-up of Arab communities, which has its members in isolation (Ciliaa 78). The sadness that caused Jude's pain might not have happened if Jude had not learned English as expressions of regret and disappointment about the social situation that occurred after an explosion.

Hybridity

In this subchapter, the writer discusses the definition of a home described by Jude's character as a Syrian immigrant in Cincinnati, America, which is an unavoidable form of cultural contact. In the novel *Other Words for Home*, the character Jude interprets the hybridity problem. Jude, the main character, describes her experience as a Syrian refugee mixed with American culture. Syria's political unrest forced Jude and her mother to flee to the United States. Her uncle is married to an American woman named Aunt Michelle, and they have a daughter named Sarah, who is Jude's age. Her uncle was a Syrian, but he had lived in America for so long that her Syrian identity had long since faded. This is where the hybridity begins, beginning with Uncle Mazin's house. Jude is confronted with new habits, meanings, and languages. Jude discovered that she and her homeland, Syria, had nothing in common.

Jude noticed a difference, as did her cousin Sarah. Other than that, Sarah sees Jude as someone who is different from her. The factors that influence cultural hybridity toward

Jude are environmental factors. Jude continued her education in Cincinnati, where her cousin was enrolled. She discovered circumstances he had never seen before while living in Syria. At her new school, she meets students who each have their own personality traits. Jude and her classmates share a common ancestry, that of a diaspora group. As a result, Jude and her classmates are enrolled in an ESL, or English as a Second Language, class. English is the language she hears daily at school. Syria's Jude only speaks in Arabic. Jude understands English but is not very good at pronouncing it. As a result, Jude faces many challenges in developing herself at her new school. Jude's inability to learn their culture and language makes him look down on them.

According to Esser, mastery of the language of the country of migration destination is critical for obtaining education, employment, and social contacts (Esser). This motivates Jude to learn more, particularly about the language, so that she can use English fluently and correctly. Considering the attitude described above, it is clear that the author places that a diaspora that is a minority is able to equate themselves with the dominant environment in their environment. In marginalized groups, Minorities are always perceived to be inferior to and worse off than the dominant group. As a result, minority groups feel isolated and rejected in their surroundings. The feeling of loss, dislocation, alienation and rootlessness, unbelonging, and unhomeliness, which Jude feels, creates a new form of cultural identity. Jude will feel a sense of belonging and attachment to a new culture and social system at this point. However, her sense of belonging and attachment is solely based on her level of importance because this process aims to ensure her acceptance of a new social system.

The feeling of loss, dislocation, alienation, and rootlessness, unbelonging, and unhomeliness, which Jude feels, creates a new form of cultural identity. Jude will feel a sense of belonging and attachment to a new culture and social system at this point. Moreover, Jude is a young girl from the Middle East. The relationship between the West and the East is regarded as unequal, where the West is always superior and special in all aspects. In contrast, the East is antithetical to the nature of the West. In practice, colonialism was not truly finished after it ended. Thought colonialism is a form of colonialism that still exists today. The East is always portrayed as a passive object. Jude becomes the main character, positioned as an eastern minority who demonstrates that Jude can surpass the superiority of western identity as an Eastern minority.

Through exploring more than one culture "in-between space" or the 'third space of enunciation, as Bhabha mentions it in the location of culture (Bhabha 19). It forms a cultural identity Jude into a hybrid. Jude, a character who experiences a hybrid, is described through the process of thinking, behavior, and language. However, the treatment that Jude gets is a form of American exceptionalism in which the school's friendship with American dominance proudly feels superior and exceptional compared to students from other countries. As a Muslim girl who migrated from Syria, Jude represents an inferior position in the eyes of the West. However, Jude's adaptation process has resulted in a new identity that allows him to stand out more in society, both at school and in her home surroundings. In other words, Jude's character can be seen in the resistance of a minority when he encounters racism, oppression, and social injustice. Jude also demonstrates her ability in a school competition. Jude's existence in the novel *Other Words for Home* aims to oppose an understanding of American Exceptionalism, that an Arab Muslim has the right and is able to obtain an equal place both in the environment they live in and in the world of education without positioning themselves as the other.

I am less afraid of getting wet

than I am of what is inside.
I swallow the knot in my throat
and replay my brother's parting words to me,
Be brave.
Be brave, be brave, be brave
echoes like a chorus in my head as I climb the stairs
and enter my brand-new world (p. 57).

For diaspora, homeland always evokes painful nostalgia. According to the quote above, Jude's memory of her brother, who still lives in Syria, gives her the strength to overcome the obstacles she faces in adapting to her new environment. Jude's bravery has earned her social recognition from her classmates, and she has successfully resisted all forms of discrimination that she has faced. However, the greatness demonstrated by an Arab Muslim demonstrates that American Exceptionalism is a concept that is not absolute and unstable in maintaining its superiority.

I push open the door,
And at once, i feel at Home,
Greeted by old friends
The smell of cumin and thyme,
The strong scent of Arabic coffee brewing on a stove
In the back of the kitchen.
Marhaba, I call out,
More to the smells than to
Anyone,
But a girl emerges from the kitchen.
I recognize her.
I have seen her in the halls.
She is the only girl in my school
Who wears a headscarf.
She asks in Arabic (Warga p. 76-77).

Jude's new life in Cincinnati is filled with the dominant aspects of western culture. The language she uses when starting interactions with her new environment is English. The dishes made by aunt Michele were identical to European food that she had rarely encountered before and had never tasted. Jude met new people who were not of Jude's origin identity. The quote above is a picture of when Jude re-discovers her previous identity before moving to her uncle's house in Cincinnati. In the middle of America, Jude finds a room she never encountered during her move to America. A warm space full of nostalgic memories. A woman wearing a headscarf approached Jude in Arabic. Jude finds warmth amidst the indecision and loneliness she feels in the process of adapting. It proves that culture is an unstable entity where the long period of an immigrant living in western lands does not make them forget where they came from.

*That you can write in two languages. I wish Sarah knew how
To speak Arabic.*
I shrug.
In America,
I have picked up a habit of shrugging (Warga 97).

The quote above described a moment when she was jealous of Jude. Jude, who left Syria, began to study English seriously. Although not long ago she spoke English, she

displayed her ability to use two languages at once. Also, the shrugging behavior above shows a new habit of Jude in shrugging. In America, the behavior of shrugging the shoulders indicates either helplessness or innocence. It shows that Jude is starting to absorb the hostland culture. There is a process of mimicry in the formation of a hybrid identity; the act of mimicry is built unconsciously by the colonized to emulate the colonizers. The colonized developed a new mindset, behavior, spirit, and way of life, resulting in a new identity. According to Bhabha in the concept of mimicry there is also an element of mockery (Bhabha).

Hey! She says, pointing a finger at mama's face.

Hey! She repeats, the word like a stone thrown,

You don't have to wear that anymore.

The cold air from outside hisses in through the

Half-opened door, and it no

Longer feels festive.

Her finger moves from mama's face to

Point to her head,

To her Hijab.

You're in America now. You're

Free.

As I pass the woman, my shoulder inches from

Her chest,

I say,

Excuse us. Thank you. We are

Happy (Warga p. 100-101).

Based on the quote above, it can be seen that Jude put up a fight when a woman committed an immoral act by pointing at Jude's mother's face and Hijab. In the modern world, forms of colonialism are packaged according to the times. Globalization and westernization are new forms of colonialism. Today, America, the world's largest economy, has become the ideological source of globalization. The strategy created by the colonial group is a form of disconnectedness (939). The behavior of the woman pointing her finger to Jude's mom is a disconnected strategy by making Jude and her Syrian mother feel ostracized and oppressed. West consistently portrays women as a symbol of subjugation, oppression, and coercion. According to Baat's perspective, wearing the Hijab is a form of oppression by Muslim men against Muslim women. But Jude proved it with her attitude and said, "we are happy" meaning that Jude's mother wearing the Hijab was not a compulsion that oppressed her by this situation. In this case, Jude shows a form of effort to destroy negative discourse about the East, especially Arab women.

Or there is aunt Michelle who

Pulls me aside and asks me if

I really want to wear it

And I look beautiful no matter what

But she hopes I know it is my choice.

No matter how many times I explain to her

That of course it is my choice

As angry as it makes them.

I want women like aunt Michelle

To understand

That it is not only women who look like them
Who are free
Who think
And care about other women (pp. 124-125).

From the quote above, it can be concluded that the Hijab used by Jude is also a symbol of an individual's freedom and absolute rights. America is the most vocal country in promoting independence in all fields, especially human rights. Jude's assertiveness shown in the quote above is Jude's resistance in defending her identity as a Muslim and Syrian. She also shows with the firmness that Jude said to aunt Michelle that a Muslim with a hijab dares to fight against America's social structure for women who wear the Hijab. For Jude wearing the Hijab is a choice herself.

Its acidic tang in my mouth
Fades
The moment Layla rushes over to me
And squeezes my shoulder.
You got a part!
She shouts so loud that people
Turn their heads to look at us
Two Hijabi girls
Standing in the middle of the hallway
In the middle of America
Celebrating (Warga 127).
But then I remember it doesn't matter,
I have a role!
I'm in the play!
And I have this magical thing called
Punch.
Liters of it. (Warga 129).

The quote above shows an expression when she gets a role in a stage. Schools become a target space for developing the ideology of superiority in America. In this case, Jude, a Syrian girl wearing a hijab, becomes a field of ridicule for her American theme. However, the binary opposition about the Arab stereotype is an uncivilized, mute, incompetent group growing up at Jude school. In addition, Jude experienced hybridity in language. Jude, who speaks Arabic at home, adapted perfectly when she proved her ability by successfully winning a role for a stage at her school. This certainly breaks down the wall about the hijab stereotype that is a barrier to growth, and a Syrian immigrant with language limitations that she has can adapt and compete with Americans.

Conclusion

Other Words for Home tell about the life of the Syrian immigrant diaspora who were forced to move to America because of the political turmoil in Syria. Jude, who is a teenager, goes through difficult times when she has to adapt to her new environment in Cincinnati, United States. During the process of adapting, Jude was always approached by memory while living in Syria. In accordance with the research findings in chapter three, the writer concludes that the definition of home for Jude is a feeling of discomfort, belonging, and alienation where Jude feels attracted to herself when she wants to start socializing in her new environment. As a result, Jude's life in Cincinnati is filled with complexity and confusion. Jude received was

discrimination, a stereotype of Jude's anxiety if the place she was walking on wasn't meant for her. It made Jude realize that her memories of Syria stuck with Jude. Yet from Jude's homeland, she also got the strength to be someone who was brave. However, Jude experiences a hybrid identity regarding language use and behavior. Jude, who used Hijab and had not much studied English in Syria, managed to get a role with a good performance in the school musical. It is a competence that the view of superiority in the understanding of American Exceptionalism towards Muslim Arab women who are considered weak and should not be questioned.

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