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PARENTS AND DAUGHTERS IN TWO NOVELS BY ARAB AMERICAN AUTHORS: “KHALAS, LET HER GO”

Summary

Multiple intersecting pressures bear upon immigrant parent-child, and especially immigrant mother-daughter relationships depicted in Randa Jarrar's novel, *A Map of Home*, and Mohja Kahf's novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. Each of these novels is a Bildungsroman story, the protagonist of each being a budding artist. As the growing daughters struggle toward autonomy and parents react from complex pressures upon them, the reader gains insight on the interconnected structural and psychological factors in the intergenerational dynamics these novels portray, often with humor. The personal psychological history of the parents, as well as their displacement through immigration, in addition to anti-Arab racism in their U.S. settings and how each of these factors relates also to gender, complicate the parents' relationships with their daughters. Through a close reading informed by postcolonial and psychological approaches, this article argues that these novels do not depict only one category of oppression but also offer multiple layers of critique.

Keywords: Randa Jarrar, Mohja Kahf, Arab American novels, gender, intergenerational family dynamics, parent-daughter relationships, Bildungsroman, immigrant parenting

Randa Jarrar's novel, *A Map of Home*, and Mohja Kahf's novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, offer Arab American twists on the Bildungsroman form. These novels depict a young immigrant woman's journey toward becoming an artist, focusing on the parent-child relationships affected by intersecting

pressures, psychological and structural. The parents' fears of letting go of their daughters have to do with realities of structural violence, as well as gender issues; add the psychological strain of their personal and inherited trauma, and it is no wonder that the parent-daughter relationships are so difficult. Can the parents "let go" of their daughters as the young women head toward adult autonomy, despite the macro pressures of immigration, patriarchy, and racism, and the micro-level impact of inherited family and personal trauma?

A Map of Home is a coming-of-age story about a Palestinian-Egyptian in the U.S., whose father's initial attempt to settle in the United States is thwarted. After the protagonist's grandmother dies, the family must return to Egypt to support the widowed grandfather, but then must move to Kuwait when the economy of Egypt proves scarce. Then Saddam Hussein invades Kuwait and the U.S. attacks to repel the invasion. As bombs drop, the family flees back to Egypt. Finally, they return to the United States due to the father's pursuit of the American (and also Arab and Palestinian) dream of owning a home and educating his children. *A Map of Home* does not narrate a simple immigration from a country of origin to the United States, but a multi-staged displacement that shows the complexity of immigrations shaped by larger level geopolitical processes and the ensuing smaller level family dilemmas.

In his novel *Which Way to Mecca, Jack?*, William Peter Blatty, an earlier representative of Arab American writing, produced a comic burlesque of an exuberant Arab mother who represented the awkwardness of Arab ethnicity from which the young man in the narrative wants to distance himself (Shakir 8-9). Jarrar's protagonist, Nidali, from *A Map of Home* does not need to be in America to be embarrassed by her exuberant mother, although the mother in that text is validated in ways the Blatty mother is not. Young Nidali is embarrassed by her mother in Kuwait when she comes to pick up her teenaged daughter in full view of Nidali's friends:

Mama suddenly appeared in the Olds; she came careening down the street like she'd just robbed a bank.

"Is that..." my friends asked in unison.

"Yes," I said, covering my face with my hands.

And we stood there as the beast came nearer and nearer. (113)

Whether “the beast” means the mother or the car is left unclear, offering a twist of humor in the indirect voice of the young protagonist. The mother moves unapologetically in the world while here the young daughter and her peers are (ironically) the ones conforming to normative ideas of femininity. The scene is set in Kuwait before Saddam’s invasion; it is not the ethnicity of the mother, nor her gender, which is highlighted, but the mother’s dramatic personality. By allowing the reader to see her personality at work in an Arab-majority country, the novel shows that it does not exclusively deal with the mother’s personality in the context of American stereotypes toward Arabs, or the angst of an immigrant’s child, as is the case in Blatty’s novel.

Nidali’s mother, Fairuza, does almost everything with exuberant drama, including noisy fights with Nidali’s father. In these battles, Fairuza demands that her husband give more freedom to their daughter, siding with her daughter’s quest for what young Nidali later calls “a life.” Nidali learns this American teen idiom to express her need for autonomy. Jarrar writes some sections in the second person from Nidali’s point of view:

“Enough, man,” Mama tells your baba. “Let the child go, she’s suffocating here.”

“You, you be quiet, the girl’s not going to rap concerts and getting drunk and pregnant. No, no, and no. Full stop.” And to seal it, he farts three times.

“I want to have friends!” you scream and run to your room.

“We are not here to make a friend, we are here to study and get the best out of America!” This is your baba’s mantra the entire time you are living under his roof. This is why he is in America, but not you. You want “a life,” a concept you’ve just learned of. (234-5)

In Jarrar’s humorously hyperbolic way of depicting the father’s fears, American music leads straight to drunkenness and unwed pregnancy. The father cites the possibility of Nidali’s sexual activity as an immediate consequence of her going out into the world of American music and social life. However, the father-daughter tensions over sexuality begin not in the United States, but in Cairo, without any American teen life in sight. Even earlier, in Kuwait City, seven-year-old Nidali is attracted to her classmate, Ahmed, and her father tells

her, "we don't have boyfriends" (16). Thus, the daughter's push for freedom to talk with boys begins not with American teens, but with Arab boys. Like her discomfort with her mother's personality, the theme of Nidali's sexuality does not begin in the U.S., but has its roots in the Arab world. Nidali has a sexual encounter with an Arab girl, Rama, as Iraq invades Kuwait, and during the family's sojourn in Alexandria, Nidali has another lesbian experience, with an Egyptian girl (175-176). By queering Nidali's sexual explorations, and by placing these explorations before immigration, the novel disallows easy conclusion that what is at work here is a simple binary of a clash between "Arab" and "American" values. It challenges notions that queerness is alien to the experiences of women in the Arab world—or that it is a "Western" phenomenon. The novel's refusal to explicitly name Nidali's actions as "queer" foregrounds the fluid nature of her sexual experiences in the Arab world. The text shows that "taboo" behaviors have always been around in the Arab world, and are not inherently "Western." Moreover, attentive reading of the text shows that it disrupts Orientalist constructions that render life in the Arab world as unchanging and stuck in a past that is far from the fast-paced dilemmas of "American life." In this manner, Jarrar's novel refuses a simple binary opposition between "East" and "West," between "Arab" and "American," and even between "life before immigration" and "life after immigration." Jarrar's "map" is more complicated, and it criss-crosses many countries, returning and re-routing several times, not just going from a point A to a point B. As literary scholar Amira Jarmakani maintains, "Cartography is actually an apt metaphor for exploring the orientalist production of knowledge in the United States as mapmaking is always already embedded in the political perspectives and biases of those who draw the map. One must always ask what premises and assumptions guide the creation of each map, determining which vision of the world will be centered" (185). The "map," metaphorically speaking, of Nidali's progress in this Bildungsroman focuses on a queer Arab girl's vision of the world. The novel draws a figurative map that shows the concentric circles of complexity around Nidali, whether her family travels from Cairo to Boston and back again, or flees Kuwait as it is invaded to head back home to Cairo, then to Texas in search of a new—but still "mobile"—home. Thereupon, this novel shows the possibility of what a "map" that does *not* replicate Orientalism can contribute.

The father's physical abuse of his children, despite his insistence that he has only ever "hit" Nidali "five times in [his] life" (132), is mobilized by him apparently to curtail sexual activity and to force his daughter do her homework in Kuwait. Remarkably, Jarrar portrays a violent father without

rendering Nidali a victim, dehumanizing the father, or making the narrative rotate around the issue of child abuse. This is accomplished through her style of writing which blends pathos and humor skillfully. This is also due to the portrayal of the father as genuinely working toward his daughter's intellectual advancement, such as by making Nidali write extra compositions, which the daughter labels "Combozishans," poking fun at his Arabic accent (261). The novel also gives complexity to the father by characterizing him as an artist at heart whose conditions of life as a Palestinian have frustrated his vision, but who is able to inspire artistry in his daughter, as when he paints the walls of the apartment in Kuwait:

Baba got up and said, "Do you want to know Baba's idea for this wall? You can help fill in the empty spots." He took his paintbrush and painted long, giant trees on our living room against the blue sky of the wall. . . . Baba let me paint small nests in the grooves between branches . . . and, at the very bottom of the wall, right by the wooden floors, we painted grass. Low on green paint, we used a mixture of green and red. Because of this, the grass and the earth were violet in our forest—on the wall—inside our house. (17)

The mentor-protégé artistic relationship is touchingly shown here through the use of the first-person plural pronoun in "our forest" and "we painted grass." These expressions show that Nidali internalizes the artistic mission that her Baba has given her. It is through her father's pushing her to do well in school that Nidali discovers her love of writing and knows that she has a future in that regard. The father nurtures his daughter's budding creative path, an important feature in the Bildungsroman genre, as the person coming of age discovers a means through which she/he can pursue her/his future adult identity, livelihood, and role in society. This makes Baba a key contributor to Nidali's identity even as she pushes against his "compositions." Additionally, Nidali is the "only one" in the family who cries when her father, her "Baba," leaves Egypt for the U.S. She thinks, "What if he never sent for us? . . . What if I never saw Baba again?" and her "stomach folded into itself" (205). This implies that daughters also have separation anxieties toward their fathers, not just fathers toward daughters, and not just because they are Arab.

We also learn something of Nidali's father's psychological history—as a child he "watched his sisters grow up and go away, each one more miserable than the last, and didn't want to have to be a spectator to such misery ever again: to witness his own girl's growing and going" (5). This helps the reader to

relate his anxieties about his daughter leaving home not just to factors related to his Arabness but also to his personal psychological and family history. The father's anxiety may be rooted in his genuine witness of the sexist realities women navigate in a patriarchal world (and not just Arab world) that stunt their creative potential with domestic obligations. His sisters' lack of education resulted in misery; they were consigned to having babies and cooking and cleaning "for useless husbands," he tells his daughter as he pushes her to do homework in Kuwait. "Do you want to be like them?," he adds (23). All these factors offset the reader's ability ever to see Baba as simply a stereotype of an oppressive Arab father controlling his daughter. According to Naber, the tendency to associate "a constructed image of 'Arab/Middle Eastern/Muslim' men with violent misogyny" (37) is one the major media stereotypes affecting Arab Americans. Nidali's Baba is Arab, Palestinian, and Muslim. One might say that he fits all three categories. However, Jarrar's novel forces the attentive reader to understand Baba in a far different way than this media stereotype would allow. The novel sensitively explores immigrant parent-child dynamics against the background of the past and ongoing imperialism, affecting Baba's ability to take care of his family, the effects of diaspora and displacement, and inter-personal factors in his birth family, all layers that contribute to the complexity of his character. The text demonstrates how a writer can avoid producing a stereotype of an Arab, Muslim, immigrant man in literature written in English, even while confronting violence and misogyny inside the family and community.

Mohja Kahf's novel, *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, is a coming-of-age story about a Syrian girl, Khadra, who grows up in the state of Indiana with conservative Muslim parents (Ebtehaj, the mother, and Wajdy, the father), in an insular Muslim American community. This novel follows a straightforward narrative of immigration to America, and even refers to other American immigrant literature, such when it salutes *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros (16). Ebtehaj, the mother of the protagonist in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, is characterized by dramatic intensity just like Fairuza, the mother in Jarrar's *A Map of Home*; yet, Ebtehaj's intensity is more conservative and humorless than Fairuza's. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* it is the mother, rather than the father, who is most afraid of the children navigating the alien world of the American "Other."

Early in the plot of *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Khadra and her brother, Eyad, are out one day as children, exploring their working-class apartment complex's landscape as modern-day "Lewis and Clarks," with two African American Muslim siblings, Hakim and Hanifa (65). By comparing the four

children to the nineteenth-century white American explorers, who took part in the colonial settlement of the United States and its occupation of Native American land, and by pairing an immigrant Arab brother/sister with an African American brother/sister, the scene touches on complex, intertwined ethnic-racial relations in the United States. Native American displacement, to which the immigrant family seems oblivious, is underlined by such details in the novel as the reference to the Battle of Fallen Timbers in the name of the apartment complex where the immigrant family lives, and even the family's address, 1492 Tecumseh Drive (5). Furthermore, the "Lewis and Clark" scene contains deep irony, as the immigrant children, along with children descended from enslaved, kidnapped Africans, navigate the ghost trail of U.S. settler-colonial violence against Native Americans. Both sets of siblings attempt to emulate the white settlers they are taught to idolize, on land stolen from indigenous people they do not know about, in a state characterized by systematic racist terror against Black people, Jews, Catholics, and immigrants—showing the complexity of relations among marginalized groups in the U.S. It is not until later that, as adults, they begin to understand the power and privilege dynamics between at least their own two overlapping communities—the immigrant Muslim community and the African American Muslim community.

"Lewis and Clarking," the children forget the time, causing all four parents to worry and almost to call the police. Although Khadra and Eyad's father drags his mud-covered children home "by their ears" (66), a description evoking his own mixture of anxiety and anger at their prolonged absence, it is Ebtehaj's reaction as they arrive at the door that the text highlights:

She looked like she was about to cry, but what she did was scream, "Do you think we are Americans? Do you think we have no limits? Do you think we leave our children wandering in the streets? Is that what you think we are? Is it?" Then she burst into sobs.

She marched Khadra up the stairs and pushed her into the bathtub. ("Don't go anywhere!" she yelled at Eyad. "You're next!"). With the water running hot and hard . . . she scrubbed and scrubbed her daughter with an enormous loofah from Syria. "We are not Americans!" she sobbed, her face twisted in grief. "We are not Americans!" (66-67)

Firstly, the fact that the parents are upset is understandable simply as a safety concern, for the children appear to be quite young in this scene, as they completely “surrender” their attention to “frogs and crawdads and other small rustling life” (65). With their young age in mind, then, the fear of the parents is not initially or exclusively portrayed in terms related to their Arabness or immigrant status, for the parents of Hanifa and Hakim, who are not recent immigrants but part of the African American longstanding presence in American society, are just as concerned about the missing children as are the immigrant Arab parents. The mother’s reaction reflects a common concern of parenthood. However, as the scene develops, Ebtehaj’s response evokes immigrant concerns in no uncertain terms as she repeats, “We are not Americans!” (67). The text, thus, makes it clear that to Ebtehaj being “American” means having “no limits,” and that she fears the children will lose their heritage identity. She is not in her home society; she is in a country whose distillations of values she does not feel mastery of or understand, except as having “no limits,” and being utterly different. In other words, Ebtehaj is overwhelmed by multiple challenges posed by the doorway moment of immigration that, according to Tummala-Narra, challenges the “Conceptions of the psychologically healthy mother-child relationship” (172). “Becoming a mother in a new country,” cut off from one’s cultural resources, can trigger a need to “refuel” by remembering one’s own mothering model and the cultural identity of those childhood experiences, which can even take the mother by surprise, and which can sometimes overwhelm the “engagement with the new cultural context” (Tummala-Narra, 170-171).

In addition, the worries of the parents of the African American children, Hakim and Hanifa, reveal the novel’s intersectional analysis of racial and ethnic dynamics in the United States. While the Arab immigrant parents have their own set of reasons, both larger structural and more personally psychological, for being worried, the African American parents, Jamal and Khadija, are plagued by an additional layer of concern—their knowledge of the possibility of white supremacist violence in a country where a Black child may be criminalized for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The novel’s critique of anti-Black racial oppression becomes evident later in the plot in the scene when the Shamys take U.S. citizenship and the father gives a sermon about justice in the U.S., as compared to Syria, which is not well-received in the African American mosque (143-145). This tension shows the contrast between the Shamys, as an Arab immigrant family entering the U.S. racial order with naïve hopes about justice, and the Black communities’ experience of centuries of racist white supremacist terror. The Syrian

immigrant family is depicted as deaf to understanding anti-Black racism in both the U.S. society and within themselves, such as when the father steers the daughter away from listening to the history of Aunt Khadija (24-25) and when the parents reject their son's idea of marriage to a black woman, who is both Muslim and Arab (137-139).

The bathing scene in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* in which the Arab immigrant mother, Ebtehaj, tries to scrub American dirt, literally and figuratively, off her children is followed by a passage that seems to reflect Ebtehaj's voice through a child-like sensibility, implicitly Khadra's, expressing extreme cultural dissonance. This voice, following the bathing scene, details how utterly different, and wrong, "the Americans" are. The passage begins, "Who were the Americans?" (67) as if in reply to Ebtehaj's cry, "We are not Americans." It goes on to caricature "Americans" in ways that seem to reflect the beliefs of Khadra's immigrant family, the Shamys (resonating the words of the father from *A Map of Home*): "Americans cussed, smoke, and drank, and the Shamys had it on good authority that a fair number of them used drugs" (68). The narrative voice here seems to be poking fun at these beliefs about Americans, even while enumerating them in a childlike voice. The passage continues with more of these stereotyping statements: "Americans dated and fornicated and committed adultery. They had broken families and lots of divorces. Americans were not generous or hospitable. . ." (68). Note how the detachment between "American" parents and children is portrayed as extreme: "Khadra's dad said Americans threw out their sons and daughters when they turned eighteen unless they could pay rent—to their own parents! And, at the other end, they threw their parents into nursing homes when they got old" (68). Khadra's father seems to be implying here that close attachment and non-separation between parents and children should be the norm, based on his socio-cultural concepts. Later in the novel, the beliefs constructed in this passage will be called into question, one by one, by Khadra as she grows to adulthood. "Americans" have "lots of divorces," but Khadra gets divorced. "Americans dated," but Khadra will date, and she will meet Muslims who drink and smoke, and so on. The final part of the "Who are the Americans?" passage strikes a humorous note, with the Shamy family's discussion of Americans' unclean bathroom habits. Eventually, the implied disagreement with the exaggerated opinions voiced in this passage suggests that it is not "the Americans" but the Shamy family, with its black-and-white ideas about "the Americans," who are being satirized here.

In the bathing scene, Ebtehaj's fear of contamination by the American Other shows itself in her idea of cleanliness. Culturally constructing one set

of people or another as physically dirty is a way of establishing a figurative border between certain groups—one culture as “pure” and “untainted,” and another as corrupted and morally depraved. For Khadra’s highly religious parents, cleanliness relates to Islamic concepts of ritual purity and impurity, which are often mentioned in the text. The parents tend to fall into the trap of characterizing Arab culture as conservative, unchanging, and “pure” in danger of being “tainted” by the West. This assumption is no better than racist, Orientalist binaries that boast the superiority of the “West,” because the parents romanticize their cultures, fossilizing them in order to “preserve them” from the “outside pressures” that are not at all foreign to Arab culture itself. Ebtehaj uses a material artifact which, like her, has made the journey from Syria—a “loofah from Syria”—to wash her children not only of the residual mud and berry-stains from their neighborhood adventure but also of the Americanness that tainted them from those hours they spent outside of her control (67). Ebtehaj’s tears are under the surface when she stands at the door to receive the muddy children from their father, while holding her infant boy. Yet, she does not cry until she has delivered her initial diatribe about Americans. She moves from the wild grief of potentially losing her children to angry screaming and a harsh scrubbing of the children’s bodies in the bath, though she does give way to sobs before expressing more of her anger. Her big sobs come in the bath, perhaps released by the flowing water and the rhythmic motion of scrubbing.

Part of mothering is typically understood as taking physical care of a child, and Ebtehaj’s bathing of Khadra is an act of mothering at a basic level. However, this scene shows how the trauma of cultural displacement underscores the way she mothers her children. According to Tummala-Nara, mothering in a foreign land poses special challenges for immigrant women as “cultural displacement has an impact on the dilemmas of motherhood” (167). Parenting in general, including mothering, involves both attachment to and detachment from the child, and knowing when each is appropriate, throughout various stages of parenting. At the same time, the parent-child connection and detachment are very culturally constructed concepts. In Jarrar’s novel, *A Map of Home*, the mother often pushes the father to relinquish some of his control over the growing daughter, a control that was perhaps appropriate when the girl was very young but is no longer appropriate for her as a teenager. Nidal’s mother, Fairuza, is intimately aware of the consequences of overly-rigid models of parenting. Fairuza’s Greek Orthodox mother was shunned by her own family for marrying Fairuza’s Egyptian father. Perhaps Fairuza does not want to repeat another cycle of excommunication and trauma on her

daughter for wanting to leave home. However, Nidali's father's boundaries in regard to detachment are thrown off course by the move to the United States. If the family had stayed in Egypt, he might have felt comfortable to allow his daughter more space. For example, in Egypt he grudgingly let Nidali stay at the apartment of her maternal grandfather ("Geddo") for a time, although he put up a fight at first, saying, "Geddo is going to keep an eye on you, so there'll be no whoring around the streets until midnight" (179). Although Nidali is there to take care of the ill grandfather, she briefly experiences greater freedom at the city apartment. The father needs a bit of convincing, but not much, to give her that distance from the family home, in his wife's country, where he feels somewhat at home (although he is a Palestinian Arab, not an Egyptian Arab)—and it is her grandfather, another paternal figure, to whom she is sent. Even there, she tells Geddo, "You know Baba, he never would've let me" come if you had not been sick (180). In America, however, the father resists giving autonomy to Nidali, and the conflict between daughter and parents escalates as the growing teenager quests for more freedom.

In the bathing scene in Kahf's novel, Ebtehaj's sense of attachment is more understandable since her children at this time are young, but she is also responding to being culturally displaced by her immigrant status and feeling helpless in the adoptive country. Tummala-Nara argues that "The experience of pre- and post-immigration interpersonal violence plays a critical role in maternal identity formation for many immigrant women" (Tummala-Nara, 169). In the same way, Ebtehaj has carried in her psyche her own experiences with violence all the way to her adopted country. Later in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, a shocked Khadra learns that her mother was raped by a teacher as a teenager on a school field trip that took her far away from home, to France. The trauma of sexual violence for an Arab woman on her journey to the "West" haunts Ebtehaj as she returns with her family to the "Western world" and feels helpless before the violence and structural oppressions she feels she is up against. This discovery late in the novel puts into perspective Ebtehaj's flat rejection of young Khadra going on a field trip early in the novel: "stay home. Right here next to me," she says to her daughter (93). Her fear of letting Khadra go stems from the generational trauma she has developed as an Arab woman survivor of patriarchal and colonial violence. Khadra also later learns that Ebtehaj herself was badly mothered by a stepmother who made her feel unwelcome in her own home, during Ebtehaj's teen years when this school trip took place. Maybe Ebtehaj's painful personal experience as a teenager taught her that better quality mothering means keeping the child closer to home, and that if she had had such a mother she might not have

been raped. As a survivor, she has internalized the notion that women can protect themselves from sexual violence if they take the right precaution. She feels that her experience could have been prevented by careful mothering, not understanding that her experience was created by larger structural conditions of sexist violence from which even the best mother cannot protect her daughters. Her rape experience and her stepmother, who provided little support, function as a cautionary tale used to police Khadra, which the novel critiques. The axis of Ebtehaj's lessons from life is fear. Even Khadra realizes this. During her college years, she remarks to her father, "You sound like Mama." "What do you mean?," her father says, and Khadra responds, "Paranoid." (195). Ebtehaj's fear is shaped by gendered experiences at home in Syria, the legacy of sexualized colonial violence Syrian women experienced long after the French occupation was gone, and by the immigrant feelings of displacement in the U.S., combined with Ebtehaj's conservative religious outlook—her fear of contamination and belief in the evil eye (93).

Even though, in the Kahf novel's scene with the four "lost" children, the parents' fears are equally about female and male children, the theme of parental protection has a gendered emphasis in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. It is seen in many places in the novel in regard to Khadra herself. When she goes to college, she is not allowed to live on campus (although her brother is), and she is not allowed to take trips on the Indiana highway alone. The story of Zuhura, a Kenyan American girl in the Muslim community a few years older than Khadra, most clearly illustrates the dangers of young women going far from the parental home. It is at Zuhura's engagement party that young Khadra first learns to handle a camera, which becomes the gateway to her artistic life as an adult (81). Zuhura goes off to college with the eyes of the girls in her community looking up to her. Like the immigrant parents in Jarrar's *A Map of Home*, the Muslim parents in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* encourage academic achievements for girls as well as boys, but girls' academics are circumscribed by issues of women's mobility in terms that are gendered, not equitable. Zuhura's parents are proud of her when she goes to Indiana University, about an hour away from her family's home, and begins to succeed there. The parents are criticized in the Muslim American community for allowing her to come and go to the campus even in the evening on the highways alone. One night, when Zuhura has stayed too late even by their standards, her stepfather instructs her to wait on campus until he can drive there to pick her up. However, she does not wait, and that is the night she is murdered. Her body is found in a ditch near her car on the highway (92-93). Her murder is subject to two differing explanations. She was targeted by the

external forces of white supremacist Klan racism, or she was murdered by someone in the community, a product of jealousy about a romantic relationship Zuhura is suspected of having formed. The murder is left unsolved, and the issue of which explanation is more plausible is left unresolved. What it shows is the combination of two fears located in the religious community that encompasses both Zuhura and Khadra—the immigrant’s fear of anti-immigrant hostility and racially/ethnically motivated violence from the adopted country, and the parental fear of sexual transgression by the daughter, under the influence of the adopted country’s different values. There is a parallel between the violence Zuhura faces and the violence Ebtehaj faces. Both are sexualized acts of colonial and/or racial terror that occur because they are women—Zuhura as a young Black immigrant woman in Klan-infested Indiana, and Ebtehaj as a young Syrian woman in “post-”colonial France. The communal response to both situations is victim-blaming. This emphasizes the mobility of women as the problem, instead of placing the blame on the structural violence of racialized, sexualized terror.

“She should not have been traipsing about the highways at midnight alone; Wajdy and Ebtehaj [Khadra’s parents] agreed in late-night kitchen-table voices” (95), criticizing Zuhura’s behavior, and by implication, her parents for not “protecting” or restricting her. This shows how hate crimes against a community stereotyped for its restrictions on women can, ironically, increase pressure to restrict women’s mobility in that community. The cautionary tale posed by the parent’s judgment on Zuhura is not lost on Khadra as she enrolls at the same university. She seems to go through her adolescence and young adulthood quite compliant with her parents’ rules. Speaking of a trip desired by Khadra to the far north of the state of Indiana, the narrative voice, taking Khadra’s perspective, reads: “Going up by herself on that far a drive with just some other girl from college was not going to happen. But Khadra persuaded Eyad to come along . . . making it okay with her parents that she’d be spending the night away from home” (187). Thus, Khadra learns to use the limited options available to her within her parents’ rules, but not to challenge the restrictions themselves. Khadra is unlike Nidali from *A Map of Home*, who challenges the limitations her parents place on her. It is partly Khadra’s acceptance of parental limits that causes her to accept a marriage proposal, as she seems to see marriage as a way to establish a life away from her parents while doing so in a way that her parents regard as legitimate. During the period of Juma’s courtship of Khadra, the text reads:

And then something happened that added to the appeal of Juma's proposal. Wajdy was

exploring the prospect of a job in South Bend [a city many hours' drive farther from Khadra's campus] What would Khadra do? Eyad could dorm on campus, but it was not acceptable by the Shamy's highly conservative standards for Khadra, as a young unmarried girl, to live out on her own. How would she finish her degree? She could move with her parents, transferring to a school up there. Go on as before [i.e., under the parental control]. Or she could get married and stay in Bloomington. She could start a new stage of life, an adventure. A change. (207)

Only through the religiously condoned, parentally approved avenue of marriage can Khadra think of leaving parental control and yet carefully stay within their standards; otherwise, the daughter leaving the home is equated with her activation of illicit sexuality, as it is emphasized over and over by Nidali's father in the Jarrar novel, *A Map of Home*.

Khadra's compliance with her family's plans for her finally stops short, however, at the point where she is to become a mother. She realizes that having Juma's baby, and thus becoming not only a wife but also a mother like Ebtahaj, would mean not just reproducing biologically but also reproducing the family's values. It is at that point of no return, as one might call it, when she realizes that she has compromised too much of herself. She has an abortion. Her family is taken aback, and so is her community, although she is not completely cut off by either. Her rebellion is at first muted, but she begins to claim her autonomy in the second half of the novel, unlike Nidali in *A Map of Home*, who is insistent about her sexuality, her body, and her choices from much earlier in her development. Khadra flees her former life to find her self. At first, this leads to a sort of a nervous breakdown in the refuge of her grandmotherly great aunt's home in Damascus. If Nancy Chodorow argued long ago that "a woman's psychological capabilities for parenting are built into her personality through her continuing intense relationship with her own mother" (Lorber et al. 483), then perhaps the abortion shows Khadra's radical departure from the parenting model of her mother, who tends to cling to her children intensely. It seems that Khadra has to reach around her mother to her grandmother-figure, Teta, for a model, at least for a model of how to separate her identity from her parents. However, after a period of distance from her parents, Khadra manages to embark on the journey of

self-discovery in a way that still tries to reconcile the needs of her individual self and the ties of family and community.

In *A Map of Home*, Nidali, in contrast to Khadra, confronts her parents' limitations directly while still a teenager, and begins her journey of self-discovery earlier than Khadra. Nidali also experiences physical violence from her father, which Khadra in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* does not. In addition, teenaged Nidali repeatedly does go outside the parental bounds but keeps it a secret, while Khadra does not venture out of parental expectations until her abortion-divorce-breakdown, in adulthood.

Like Khadra, Nidali is expected by her father to go to college. The portrayal of the Arab American girl who is encouraged by her immigrant parents to pursue education takes its place, in these novels, to challenge stereotypes about Arab men and women even while critiquing sexism. The portrayal of Wajdy challenges the stereotype of oppressive Muslim men restricting women from pursuing education. Wajdy, Khadra's very religious father in Kahf's novel, drives his daughter to a mosque in the city of Terre Haute for advanced Quranic studies classes (195-196). Nidali's father in the Jarrar novel tells her, "You will write the greatest dissertation of all human times. People will make *bilgrimage* to see your manuscript, like they do for the guttenburger or whatever it's called . . . that bible" (239). Yet, the academic encouragement comes with particular conditions for these two protagonists. Just like Khadra, Nidali is not allowed "to apply [to college] anywhere but locally" (253). Unlike Khadra, however, Nidali resists. She writes a series of application essays that cannot be submitted to colleges because they are addressed to her father, use profanity, and make fun of him:

Ibn Battuta [a medieval Arab explorer] Did Not "Discover" America

Despite all your efforts to prove otherwise, he just didn't. There's no fucking way.

Why don't *you* apply to grad school or something and write your own compositions, instead of beating me up and ripping my shit apart? (266)

In these passages, Nidali sees right through her father's manipulation of her. She sees the way he views her as a way to continue his own ambitions that have been frustrated by his economic conditions in life, which have been

impacted by geopolitics. Nidali's essays also challenge her father's Arab-centric narratives of history, in a parallel to how the Kahf novel complicates the parents' ethnocentric reaction against the corrupted values of the "West." Finally, Nidali tells her father, in a way that could not be more honest or direct, "I want to go to a good college, because I deserve to. That's what you've always taught me! I've worked hard and studied all my life to earn it. If it means leaving here, so be it." A confrontation ensues, and her father replies,

"Is that what you want then? To leave here?"

"Yes."

"*Khalas*, Waheed. Let her go," Mama said, fanning herself with sheet music.

"My daughter will not go anywhere!" he shouted. "She will not leave my house."

"But we haven't even built it yet," I said. (280)

"You will not leave my trailer, then" (280), the father responds, speaking directly to the daughter in the second-person pronoun in this line. This echoes the words the mother from *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* speaks to her daughter, "stay home" (93). The father and daughter arrive here at what is the underlying emotional issue in their discussions about compositions and college: the possibility of the daughter leaving home.

In *A Map of Home*, when the mother, Fairuza, says to the father, "*Khalas* . . . let her go," the term *khalas* is an untranslated word in the passage, a transliteration of an Arabic expression colloquially meaning, "enough" (Jarrar 2015). Thus, the reader can understand Fairuza's line in a larger sense, not just in the sense of "let her go away for college," but in the sense that the mother recognizes that their oldest child has entered a phase of life in which some letting go is appropriate and healthy. In addition to showing the mother on her daughter's side, these lines express the ongoing tension in this section of the novel—the father's failure to provide anything more than mobile housing for his family in America, something for which his wife has threatened to divorce him. These lines also illustrate how Jarrar often swerves into humor, avoiding conventionality in the scene, and perhaps also achieving another thing—the mainstream U.S. reader may not be able to stereotype if he or she were too busy laughing at the text's witty portrayal of very human characters. The passage above also shows that Nidali as a character is able to hit her

father's vulnerable points and is perceptive about her parents' weaknesses in a way that Khadra is not.

While the mother in *A Map of Home* is the one who says, "Let her go," it is the father in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* who gives the daughter more opportunities outside the home, offering building blocks in her education. Of course, by driving her to Terre Haute, he provides her with male guardianship for her trip and remains within conservative limits. Ultimately, the parents in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* are united in reluctance about Khadra leaving home, even though the father is milder and provides an illusion of freedom for Khadra. It is Khadra's grandmaternal figure, Teta, who provides the financial means for pursuing her artistic education and a model for really leaving home, a key part of the Bildungsroman protagonist's experience. This contradicts the idea that older generations back in the Arab home country are always more conservative and that only the "West" provides a liberatory model. If there is one character in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* who plays a supportive role in the daughter's journey of self-discovery, it is Teta. In *A Map of Home*, the family figure who is the most accepting of Nidali's leaving for college is her mother Fairuza. However, this acceptance is not Fairuza's response to Nidali's first attempt to leave home when Nidali runs away. Fairuza responds with a dramatic search for her daughter in order to bring her back. It is only after the trauma of this experience, which changes her hair to white, that Fairuza comes to accept and support the idea of Nidali setting off for an independent future.

Nidali's running away from home is the climactic moment in *A Map of Home*. This act of direct rebellion by Nidali is very different from Khadra's more gradual path away from home in *The Girl with the Tangerine Scarf*. Furthermore, Khadra circles back to home, and tries to reconcile her artistic self with family and community. Nidali circles back too, returning from hiding at a friend's house because she comes to realize that her running away at this stage is not a realistic path to "a life" and that she must leave home for good, not by hiding. Nidali's running away is a momentary flight, not one that enables her to set up a new life. Khadra runs away initially, too, when she goes to her Teta in Damascus, and her emotional breakdown there is a kind of hiding, not truly setting up a new life for herself. Khadra's journey from her family's home in Indiana to her ancestral home in Syria shows how her journey to leave home ultimately led inward, to herself, and to learning about her own culture rather than accepting the version of it given to her by her parents in America. When Nidali runs away, she goes to her teenaged friend Dimi's house. Dimi is a U.S. Latina, and such details in this novel offer

moments of solidarity among daughters of different U.S. minorities. Nidali hides when her mother comes to the door searching for her. Hiding under the bed of this friend, who is herself dependent on parents, is not a position that can be maintained for long, and Nidali knows it: "In the morning, I'd be going home. I had to stick up for myself so that when I went away to school I wouldn't be running. Just going" (284).

Nidali is touched by her mother's search; even her friend, Dimi, is touched by it, saying, "Ay, Dolly, this is sad. She looked crazed. Her hair was all wild" (284). Nidali goes on to say, "Mama was Demeter, come to bring me back home," giving the action a mythic or heroic quality (284). Nidali learns that Fairuza—who suffered the loss of her own mother at the start of the novel—screamed and made a scene searching at all of Nidali's favorite places in town, using the full extent of her dramatic personality to find her. When the runaway Nidali does approach the family's trailer to return home, she has to reacquaint herself with her mother, who has had a physical breakdown as a result of her daughter going missing for ten days, and looks different:

I thought I was still in a dream because a woman was standing a few yards away from me on the patio, her hands on her hips. She looked like Mama, except she had a lot of white hair. I looked at her some more and decided it was Mama. She nodded and said, "*Shayebteeni, ya kelba*" . . . "You've made me go gray, you bitch." (285)

Fairuza, the dramatic mother, is still dramatic but her vibrancy is diminished, and Nidali is bewildered at the change. It is partly love for her mother that causes Nidali to decide to return, although it is mostly Nidali's determination to make her parents accept her leaving the next time she needs to do so (for college). Nidali believes that she will be able to do this, it seems, because she recognizes her parents' love for her as genuine and meaningful. In this way, there is some similarity between Khadra from *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* and Nidali in regards to the need for some reconciliation between each protagonist and her parents. Nidali, however, is fearless. Her act of leaving at such a young age is radical, not as hedged and cautious as Khadra's departure at a later stage in her own life.

Is Fairuza acting as an agent of patriarchy by bringing her daughter back to the parental home? She, who has defended her daughter's right to free-

dom against the father numerous times, knows realistically that Nidali, as a legal minor, still needs the support of the parental home, financially and psychologically. Fairuza believes that she is acting in her daughter's best interest. Fairuza's own mother was shunned by her Greek Orthodox family for marrying an Egyptian Muslim. If the immigrant mother typically looks to memories of her own mother when in the new land, as Tummala-Narra suggests (170), then Fairuza may have psychologically inherited caution against early detachment through awareness of her mother's story. Like Ebtehaj in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, who does not know whether to sob in relief and grief or scream in anger at her children (and does both), Fairuza upon Nidali's return experiences a similar spectrum of fierce maternal emotions, as described in the text of *A Map of Home*. In this way, these complex mothers in novels by emerging Arab American authors add to the stories not of prescriptive motherhood, but of experiential motherhood with multiple pressures and realistic inner conflicts (see Rich 2).

Coping with racism in the adopted country is part of the pressure on immigrant parents. Not only do they have to cope with racism themselves but they also have to cope with the fact that immigration has exposed their children to this hostile environment. We see this in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. This pressure to cope with prejudices and stereotypes intertwines with the kind of fear Ebtehaj has about losing her children either literally or through a loss of cultural identity in the adopted country. Ebtehaj's friend, who loses her daughter Zuhura, experiences this loss in its worst, most literal form, for her daughter is murdered in the adopted country. This dual pressure, fear of the effect of U.S. racism and fear of loss of their children to the wider American society, has a gendered impact on the daughters' mobility and freedom. In *A Map of Home*, the father equates letting his daughter live outside or leave home past curfew to letting loose her sexuality, losing the heritage values about sexuality he brings with him as an Arab immigrant parent. The same gendered parenting view is present in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, although it is given a rather benign face and the protagonist is largely compliant with it.¹

The mother's friends, who share immigrant status in the adopted country, help both the mother and the daughter cope with these different types of fear. In *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, Ebtehaj is religiously oriented so her community centers around the common experience of being a Muslim rather than on her specific ethnicity. Khadra does not achieve an understanding of

1 Similar parental fears and restrictions are presented, in a much harsher light, in Laila Halaby's *West of the Jordan* through the resentful points of view by the teenaged narrators in that novel.

her mother's complex fears through a direct interaction with her, but through a conversation with her mother's friend, Ayesha, mother of the murdered girl, Zuhura. As an adult woman in her twenties, Khadra meets Ayesha at Zuhura's grave. The moment begins negatively with Khadra's discomfort around Aunt Ayesha, but soon Ayesha opens up and provides to Khadra a deep insight about her mother, Ebtelahaj:

She always felt nervous around Aunt Ayesha. "My mother"—she stops there.

Her mother's old friend is quiet for a moment. After a while she says, "We put a lot of weight on your shoulders, didn't we?"

Khadra is caught off guard by the gentleness of her tone.

"Not just you—all our children." She glances toward the headstone. "But especially you girls. You had a lot to measure up to."

She's right, Khadra thinks. It was a lot. It was. (404)

This text points to the gendered pressure girls experience in the community. As critic Nadine Naber comments on the overlapping, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Arab American community she grew up in, "Our immigrant parents' generation disproportionately pressured girls to uphold idealized demands of Arab culture. Girls' behavior seemed to symbolize the respectability of our fathers and our families, as well as no less than the continuation of Arab culture in America" (79). This points to the fear of loss of one's heritage identity, be it Arab in Naber's terms or Arabo-Muslim in the terms most important to Ebtelahaj from *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*. What *Tangerine Scarf* earlier calls "the auntie crew" (26) of Khadra's community reinforces those pressures, as much as the "uncles" do, serving as surrogate extended families in the absence of the immigrant parent's biological extended family. Ayesha continues with an apology and a defense of the parental pressures on the daughters, pointing to the fear they felt in their culturally dislocated status:

"We were so young when we came, you must know that," Aunt Ayesha says slowly. Khadra realizes with a start that her parents had been younger than she is now when they moved to Indiana. "Young in a strange land, your mother was, like me. We were both a little jumpy. Afraid of losing something precious. Not

only like that,” she says, nodding in the direction of the grave. “although that is a terrible part of it. Of being swallowed up by this land, reduced to nothing.” (404-405)

Here, Ayesha, who is an immigrant from Kenya, puts into words the fears that Khadra’s own mother, Ebtehaj, seems too nervous to express directly. Then, a key moment follows:

“Forgive us,” Aunt Ayesha says abruptly, and then suddenly a sob catches in Khadra’s throat—Aunt Ayesha is not the auntie she would have picked to cry in front of, but she can’t help it—and now her cheeks are wet. Because she feels like something hard and leaden has just been lifted from her. Because her own mother would never have said that to her. (405)

Significantly, Ayesha then lets go of cleanliness issues and allows Khadra to cry on Ayesha’s Islamic garb, which she calls her “*jilbab*,” a word out of the Quran. Ayesha tells Khadra not to worry when Khadra says, “I’m going to get your *jilbab* all dirty,” as she sniffles and Ayesha takes her into her arms. “And she doesn’t even fumble for a tissue out of her pocket to clean where Khadra sniffled on her shoulder.” Ayesha’s reply is in Swahili, “*Usiwe na wasi-wasi*,” a phrase which means “don’t worry,” which Ayesha translates as, “Never mind all that. It’s all right” (405). This is at last a healing reversal of the mother’s insistence on cleanliness—which was really a way to express her own frightened anger—in the childhood bathing scene. Perhaps this is the moment of parental “letting go,” or as close as one gets to it in this novel.

Perhaps Ayesha is the one able to explain the complexity of the immigrant mother’s fears to Khadra because it is she whose worst fear has materialized in the murder of her daughter. It seems that, years later, she has come to terms with different feelings about that loss. We are not told Ayesha’s inner thoughts in the novel, but it is possible to infer that she has come to prioritize her personal experience of motherhood over the institutional motherhood which is determined and defined from the outside (see Rich 2).

It is Ayesha’s loss, and the fears it seems to justify in Ebtehaj and the Muslim American community, that Khadra must come to terms with if she is to go on with her own journey to autonomy. The loss of Zuhura haunts Khadra’s journey through her young adulthood. Even after this healing scene with

Ayesha, Khadra still has to go into the ditch where Zuhura may have died, to crawl in the mud on her hands and knees just as she once as a child crawled in the mud, forgetting all fear in the "Lewis and Clark" moment. There, in Zuhura's ditch, she finally has to heal herself from that immigrants' complex of overlapping fears. It is one of the final scenes of the novel. Khadra's younger brother, Jihad, arrives at the scene in the middle of it, and "she takes his arm and pulls him down into the mud with her and gives a piercing wail" (428). The passage continues:

She has never cried for Zuhura before . . . and all the hate and hardness that killed her, and the beating against it that can make you hard too, and the hate and hurt inside that eats us. The men who are hard and the women who are hard, and the waves of hard news that come over the airwaves all the time all the time and now takes the shape of white men in hoods and cops who beat what they call nonhumans and now takes the shape of Muslims who murder not for justice in the end, no matter their claims, but for rage and revenge and despair. There is no Oneness in all that hard separation. *Zuhura, I don't care what you really did or didn't do, who you were or were trying to be. I'm past holding you to task for anything* [emphasis in original]. (428-9)

Finally, Khadra ends this reflection in the ditch with the same phrase Ayesha used with her at Zuhura's graveside: "It's all right. Usiwe na wasi-wasi" (429). This highlights, in retrospect, the emotional importance of the words Ayesha shared with Khadra by the side of Zuhura's grave.

In the ditch scene, Khadra considers both stories told about the unsolved murder of Zuhura as possible, and neither one as conclusive. Khadra finds both interpretations of Zuhura's murder to be products of fear, different kinds of fear held by different people, whether it is fear generated by sexism, racism, anti-immigrant racism, or religious or traditional forms of misogyny that lead to acts of violence. The passage emphasizes gender as a category, listing "men who are hard and women who are hard" with each gender mentioned in a separate phrase, alluding to the gendered narrative about the murder of Zuhura. Echoed here in Khadra's language is the Quranic verse which lists men and women separately for emphasis on the verse's equal applicability across two genders:

Verily for all men and women who have surrendered themselves unto God, and all believing men and believing women, and all truly devout men and truly devout women, and all men and women who are true to their word, and all men and women who are patient in adversity, and all men and women who humble themselves, and all men and women who give in charity, and all self-denying men and self-denying women, and all men and women who are mindful of their chastity, and all men and women, all men and women who remember God unceasingly, for all of them God has readied forgiveness of sins and a mighty reward. (Asad 33:35)

Khadra has had Quranic training, so the Quranic verse is a meaningful sub-text, although it is not mentioned in the text. The verse also alludes to the sexual purity required of believing Muslims; however, it does so in a way that neither affirms a double standard nor permits honor killing—note that one of the two possible versions of why Zuhura was killed hints at an honor killing. Therefore, one might say that Khadra is echoing the Quran in support of Zuhura and against gender oppressive stories. She is responding to the dual pressures on immigrants with resources that are specifically suited to allay religious Muslim immigrant fears regarding a child's loss of identity. Khadra ends by affirming her support for Zuhura regardless of which story about the events leading to her death may be right; no matter what Zuhura had done in her personal life, or in her academic life, Khadra had known Zuhura as a person and knows she did not deserve to be raped and murdered and deprived of her journey to autonomy. This realization is a healing moment for Khadra because she, too, is on her journey, and faces both sexism and double standards within her family and her Muslim American community, as well as discrimination, sexism, and stereotypes from outside her family and community. Khadra realizes that she has her own truth that has been obscured by a community so insistent on protecting her from the violence of the world that it has silenced her while doing so. This scene, therefore, may be considered the climax of the novel *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf*, with the lone remaining chapter as the post-climax denouement. The scene reveals something not only to Khadra about herself but also to the reader about the multiple pressures, psychological and structural, that strain the immigrant parent-child and especially the immigrant mother-daughter relationships. While Nidali, the protagonist of Jarrar's *A Map of Home*, has the advantage

of her strong mother, Fairuza, to say "Enough," "*Khalas*," and to facilitate the daughter's separation from home, Khadra's separation is not as concrete and quick. She leaves home by finding help from other women—especially Teta and Ayesha.

Randa Jarrar's *A Map of Home* and Mohja Kahf's *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* offer multi-layered insights about parent-daughter relationships. In these novels of the Bildungsroman type, there is dual pressure on the parent-daughter relationship as each protagonist comes of age. Firstly, fear of racism is present simultaneously with fear of loss of their children to whatever the parents think of as "American" values, and secondly, the parents' own personal histories of trauma come into play, with those traumas in turn affected by geopolitics of imperialism. Fathers in both novels contribute to the artistic and intellectual development of their respective daughters, even while trying to control them. While the mother in *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* remains bewildered by the notion that she must let go of her adult daughter, as does the father in *A Map of Home*, the mother in *A Map of Home* accepts this transition, telling the father "*Khalas*, let her go." These themes do not revolve around immigration issues alone. However, the effects of immigration and cultural dislocation cannot be separated from the psychological histories of the parents as they cope with raising their children in the adopted country—and the anxious prospect, for any parent, of "letting go" as children transition to adulthood. Not only do the parents have to "let go" of their daughters but the daughters also have to "let go" of family narratives they have internalized in order to find a way forward into adulthood. This process leads to a creative and vocational turning point in the daughters' lives, as these novels draw toward endings which satisfy the expectations of the Bildungsroman genre—the discovery of vocation by each protagonist. Khadra follows her dreams to become a photographer, and we learn that Nidali is probably going to set off to become a writer. For mothers and fathers of daughters in these novels, this transition to letting go of their adult daughters, conducted in their lives as immigrants in the U.S., is interconnected with gendered considerations, geopolitics of imperialism, and personal psychological developments. Blended as much with humor and pathos as with cultural politics, the novels *A Map of Home* and *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* do not maintain one category of oppression over others, but offer multiple layers of meaning and interpretation instead.

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RODITELJI I KĆERI U DVAMA ROMANIMA ARAPSKO-AMERIČKIH AUTORICA: „KHALAS, PUSTITE JU”

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Brojni se problemi prelamaju kroz prikaz odnosa imigrantskih roditelja i djece, posebice odnosa useljeničkih majki i kćeri, u romanima *A Map of Home* Rande Jarrar i *The Girl in the Tangerine Scarf* Mohje Kahf. Svaki od tih romana slijedi fabulu *Bildungsromana* čiji je protagonist umjetnik u usponu. Dok se kćeri koje odrastaju bore za autonomiju, što izaziva reakciju njihovih roditelja, pritisnutih brojnim nedaćama, čitatelj često na humorističan način stječe uvid u niz međusobno povezanih strukturalnih i psiholoških čimbenika međugeneracijske dinamike prikazanih u tim romanima. Osobna psihološka povijest roditelja, kao i njihova dislokacija uslijed imigracije, uz antiarapski rasizam u njihovim američkim sredinama te rodne implikacije navedenog, određuju odnose roditelja i njihovih kćeri. Pomnim čitanjem na tragu postkolonijalnih i psiholoških pristupa, ovaj članak argumentira da navedeni romani ne prikazuju samo jednu kategoriju represije, već otvaraju višeslojne mogućnosti kritičkog čitanja.

Ključne riječi: Randa Jarrar, Mohja Kahf, arapsko-američki romani, rod, međugeneracijska obiteljska dinamika, odnosi roditelji-dijete, *Bildungsroman*, odgoj djece u iseljeništvu