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THE REPRESENTATION OF FATHERHOOD BY THE ARAB DIASPORA IN THE UNITED STATES

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This article¹ analyzes three debut novels –Alicia Erian’s *Towelhead* (2005), Laila Halaby’s *West of the Jordan* (2003), and Diana Abu-Jaber’s *Arabian Jazz* (1993)– in order to explore the representation of fatherhood by the Arab diaspora in the United States.

To do so, it will draw on Ralph La Rossa’s notion of “new father”, and on Julie Peteet’s and Daniel Monterescu’s ideas about Arab masculinity. It will then analyze the main father figures in the novels under the light of these concepts. It will finally conclude that the different existing models of Arab fatherhood move from traditionalism to liberalism, and that allows the possibility of “new fatherhoods” to emerge.

KEY WORDS: fatherhood, Arab American literature.

Gender studies about the Middle East have traditionally focused on femininity, and only lately have studies about Arab masculinity started to appear and still, this has been rare². Even rarer has been the reference to fatherhood in these studies, which have focused more on religion, power and sexuality. Arab American Studies are also starting to develop as a new field of research, focusing on the culture and literature of the Arab diaspora in the

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² The only studies I have come across so far are: Mai Ghousseub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (2006), *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*, Saqi Books; Mai Ghousseub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (2000), *Imagined Masculinities: Changing Patterns of Identity for Middle Eastern Men*, Saqi Books; Lahoucine Ouzgane (2006), *Islamic Masculinities (Global Masculinities)*, Zed Books Ltd.; and Louise Archer (2003), *Race, Masculinity and Schooling: Muslim Boys and Education (Educating Boys, Learning Gender)*, Open University Press.

United States. Arabs began to migrate to the United States in the late 19th century, and have been going to America in two main waves of immigration (the first from the 1880s to the 1940s, and the second from the 1940s until nowadays). The attempt of this article is to put together these two recently started disciplines –the study of Arab fatherhood and Arab American Studies– and consider the representations of fatherhood in the literature produced by the Arab diaspora in the United States. To do so, this article will focus on three debut novels written by Arab American women –Alicia Erian's *Towelhead* (2005), Laila Halaby's *West of the Jordan* (2003), and Diana Abu-Jaber's *Arabian Jazz* (1993)– and will examine the main father figures in these novels and try to establish some patterns about the representation of fatherhood by the Arab diaspora in the United States.

In the last decades of the twentieth and first years of the twenty-first centuries, there has been a tilting in the West towards the image of fathers as nurturers, leaving behind the traditional idea of fathers as providers (Atkinson&Blackwelder, 1993). This is what Ralph LaRossa (1988) calls "new fathers". In order to define this concept, LaRossa draws on E. Anthony Rotundo's notion of "Androgynous Fatherhood", that is, a new style of American fatherhood that started to emerge in the 1970s and that considers that "[a] good father is an active participant in the details of day-to-day child care. He involves himself in a more expressive and intimate way with his children, and he plays a larger part in the socialization process" (Rotundo, 1985: 17). This "new fatherhood" develops in the West. In the case of Arab American fathers, they are informed by both this new cultural current and their Arab background. What is remarkable is that both are very similar, since Arab culture has traditionally given an enormous importance to fatherhood.

Julie Peteet, in an article published in the *American Ethnologist* (1994), claims that Arab masculinity is much related to fatherhood; she says, "[m]anliness is [...] closely intertwined with [...] paternity, and with paternity's attendant sacrifices" (34). Fatherhood, thus, is central in Arab conceptions of masculinity. She also explains that Arab masculinity is acquired and verified by expressions of fearlessness and assertiveness, and that it is attained by constant vigilance and willingness to defend one's honor and that of the kin and community. In this case, then, the figure of the father is central in Arab culture as a means to preserve the honor of the family. Moreover, according to Peteet, becoming a man means acquiring reason, *Aql*, which is the faculty of understanding, and is characterized by rationality, judiciousness, prudence and wisdom. A father, then, must be wise, prudent, and understanding, according to Arab ideals.

The construction of Arab masculinity influences Arab men as fathers. Daniel Monterescu explores the situational nature of Arab masculinity in "Stranger Masculinities: Gender and Politics in a Palestinian-Israeli 'Third Space'" (2006), and talks about Arab masculinity and its relation to both Islamic masculinity and liberal-secular masculinity in the Arab world. He states that "[b]etween the **Islamic** pious masculinity and the "modern" **liberal** model, men practice a masculinity which defines itself as first and foremost

Arab, as opposed to the two previous models” (142, bold in the original text). Arab masculinity is thus said to be an especially hybrid and contradictory type of masculinity. For example, Monterescu explains, Arab masculinity returns to traditional patriarchal values while, at the same time, it allows liberal practices that contradict those traditional discourses. Monterescu claims that, as a consequence of those ambivalences, Arab masculinity is a “situational masculinity”, which is a consequence of a mixture of discourses and so it is in a liminal position. He talks about Arab masculinity as a location which lies between Islamic masculinity (characterized by its conservatism) and the liberal-secular masculinity that is also developing in the Arab world (characterized by its tendencies toward modernity and Westernism). Arab masculinity –or, what is the same, the actual practices performed by Arab men–, is situated ambiguously between those other two masculinities. Arab American fathers, having had Arab paternal models themselves, draw on these ideas in order to construct themselves as fathers.

Thus, this ambiguity and all these tendencies aforementioned will be seen in the fictional texts that will be explored in this article. In Alicia Erian’s novel *Towelhead*, the Arab father that appears in the text is a single father³ who has gained custody of his adolescent daughter. The relationship between father and daughter is problematic given the strict nature of the father, whose masculinity is informed by the Arab importance of honor, and the rebelliousness of the daughter, influenced by American modes of conduct. In Laila Halaby’s *West of the Jordan* there is a varied account of fathers, from strict and abusive, through careless, to a father that starts being traditional but learns to open his mind. Diana Abu-Jaber’s *Arabian Jazz* encapsulates this learning, because the main character, Matussem Ramoud, takes up the preeminence of Arab fatherhood but also the nurturing aspect of the “new father”, and displays an egalitarian performance of fatherhood inscribing no gender restrictions to his daughters. As a single father, he has to be both the provider and nurturer of his daughters, and is able to do so resorting on the Arab importance of fatherhood.

***Towelhead*: the Consequences of Traditionalism**

Alicia Erian’s first novel *Towelhead* was published in 2005 and was soon after made into a feature film, directed by Alan Ball, which premiered in 2007 under the title *Nothing is Private*. Erian was born in Syracuse, New York, daughter of an Egyptian father and an American mother. She received her B.A. in English from SUNY Binghamton and her M.F.A. in writing from Vermont College. She is also the author of a book of short stories entitled *The Brutal Language of Love* (2002).

³ I would like to thank here Dr. Rodrigo Andrés for pointing out to the importance of single fatherhood in the contemporary world in his contribution to the round table “Gender, Race and Class: Ethnic Masculinities in Contemporary American Literature Written by Women (II)” in the 30th International AEDEAN Conference.

Towelhead tells the story of Jasira, a 13-year-old Arab American girl who is sent by her American mother to live with her Lebanese father, Rifat, after the mother's boyfriend shows interest in her. The relationship established between father and daughter is complicated by the daughter's sexual awakening as an adolescent, and the father's traditionalism and strictness.

The working title of the novel (later changed to *Towelhead* upon the editor's request for a new title) was *Welcome to the Moral Universe* (Kachka: 2). This title puts to the fore the centrality that the figure of the father has in this novel since this "moral universe" stands for the paternal figure, with his strict moral principles, and his immovable ideas about life and about what his daughter should and should not do. As Erian puts it, "[h]e has specific ideas; he does a very bad job of implementing his plan for his daughter, and how she should grow up" (Wiehardt: 17). For example, he enacts violence towards his daughter for her to obey him (she is slapped in several instances –for example, on pages 3 and 91), leaving marks on her (Erian, 2005: 216), and even a black eye (180). As the character of Jasira very well sums up, "[h]e wanted everything done in a certain way only he knew about. I was afraid to move half the time" (1). However, the character of Rifat is not flat, but despite this "bad job" that he does with his daughter, he also shows care for her, and sometimes tries to help her. As Erian puts it, "at the same time, I think he has some sympathy for her and he has moments of pain, and he defends her at times" (Wiehardt: 17). For instance, he helps her when she is being fired as a babysitter by Mr. Vuoso, the neighbor; and he is also supportive when he finds out about the rape that the same neighbor, Mr. Vuoso, inflicted on her. As Ginny Wiehardt states, "her father's parenting methods [...] consist of abusive scrutiny and neglect" (2) and, as a consequence, Jasira feels isolated, confused, and lost, and has difficulties in discerning between right and wrong and so gets into trouble.

It could be said that Rifat, the father in the story, seems to reinforce some Arab male stereotypes as bad fathers. Ginny Wiehardt, in an interview to Erian, precisely asks her "I didn't find the father to be a flat character or a stereotypical character, but he does demonstrate some Arab male stereotypes. Were you concerned about creating a character who might reinforce negative ideas about Arab men?" (15). Answering this question, Alicia Erian says,

[...] certain parts look stereotypical. But all I could think was, "I'm writing my experience. I apologize if my experience is stereotypical". Everyone says there's a reason why stereotypes exist. They're real sometimes. And I'll tell you that a lot of Arab women have approached me or written and said, "[t]his is my family. This is how my father acts". (15)

Precisely, she had a similar experience in relation to her father. Her mother was having difficulties and sent her to Texas to live with her Egyptian father. However, he was overwhelmed by that, and would repeatedly hit her. She soon went back to live with her mother, but wondered what could have happened if she had stayed, and from that thought she started to write the novel. Nevertheless, she acknowledges that this kind of behavior related to Arab fathers is not the norm, but just something experienced by some. As Erian puts it, “[a] lot of women don't have fathers like that. Arabs are very, very warm people. They're very emotional; I love them. I love my family. My father is different from his family, and sometimes their attitude is, ‘we don't know where he came from’” (15). Furthermore, she justifies her father's behavior through his condition as immigrant and his experience of racism.

In relation to the novel, Erian also justifies the father's behavior pointing to his uneasiness towards his daughter's sexuality as a reason for his bad parenting methods. As she puts it, “[h]e doesn't know what to do. I wanted to come up with a character who looks at a young girl's sexuality and says, ‘I don't know what to do. This is just not something I know anything about. And it makes me very uncomfortable’” (17). This is present in the novel, for example, when she gets her first period, when he takes her to buy underwear, or when he finds a *Playboy* under her bed, fact which makes her end up living with the caring neighbors Melina and Gil (Erian, 2005: 15, 42, 286). This discomfort could be easily considered to be related to the father's Arab background and the patriarchy surrounding that world, which leaves the care of the children to the mothers. However, it is not so much a cultural issue but a gender issue. Empirical research has concluded that “single-parent fathers [in general, have] difficulty in being able to cope with their adolescent daughters' emerging sexuality. Many of the fathers lack the knowledge or fear dealing with the issue of their daughters' sexuality” (Smith&Smith, 1981: 413). This discomfort with the daughter's sexuality is pervasive in single fathers, no matter their background.

This father's relation with his daughter takes up traditional Arab notions of family honor which are translated into strictness and which, combined with the general fathers' uneasiness towards a daughter's sexuality, turn into the neglect of the Jasira's needs as an adolescent. This father has an ambivalent relationship with his daughter because his identity is placed in a “situational” position, as Monterescu would put it. He is placed between traditionalism (epitomized in the text through his ideas of honor) and more liberal ideas (for example, he leaves his daughter alone in order to spend the night with his girlfriend, and this fact results in her daughter's rape). His ambivalent position ends up resulting in a certain disregard towards his daughter. That is a little resolved in the end when, having been made aware of his daughter's rape, he shows her support, although she is left to live with the neighbors, the only ones that really care for her and love her.

West of the Jordan: the Situational Position of Arab Fatherhood

Laila Halaby's first novel is *West of the Jordan* (2003). Halaby is the daughter of a Jordanian father and an American mother. She was born in Lebanon and went to live to the United States as a baby in the late 1960s. She holds a master's in Arabic literature and won a Fulbright scholarship to study the folklore in Jordan. She currently lives in Tucson, Arizona, and has been recently recognized as 'Great New Author' by Barnes and Noble. She also won the PEN Beyond Margins Award for *West of the Jordan*, and she has also published *Once in a Promised Land* (2007).

West of the Jordan recounts the story of four cousins (young women) who live either in the United States, Palestine or Jordan, and try to make sense of their identities. Those are: Mawal, Khadija, Soraya and Hala. In relation to them, very different father figures appear in the novel, covering a wide range of potential attitudes that Arab fathers (or fathers of Arab descent) might have.

Mawal's father is not very present in the text, but in the few instances where he appears, he seems a caring father. Mawal lives in Palestine with her family, and she is very attached to them and their traditions, and so there are no important conflicts between them. Mawal wants to become a teacher in Palestine if her parents allow her to. She seems secure in her traditional life, and her father and family are understanding to her.

In the United States, Khadija's story is totally different. She also leads a traditional life, but she is scarred by a strict abusive father. Khadija's father is a mechanic. He migrated to the United States full of dreams, but they did not come true. As Halaby puts it,

[my] father has many dreams that have been filled with sand. That's what he tells me: "This country has taken my dreams that used to float like those giant balloons, and filled them with sand. Now they don't float, and you can't even see what they are anymore". (37)

That frustration makes him drink and be unkind to his family. He is not a flat character, but is described as being in an ambivalent position, where he can be both good and bad. As Khadija says,

[s]ometimes my father loves my mother –and the rest of us– so much that he becomes a kissing and hugging machine. Sometimes, though, he is an angry machine that sees suspicious moves in every breath. But most of the time he is sad, his thoughts somewhere I cannot visit. (37)

His behavior is justified in the text through his sadness, his uprootedness and his nostalgia of the Arab world. Khadija explains: “[m]y ache comes from losing my home’, my father tells us a lot” (39), or “[t]hat evening my father started talking about the sand that filled his dreams again. ‘How could you not be a little crazy when you have watched your dreams be buried the way I have?’” (192). Khadija’s father is a very traditional man, with very rooted ideas of family honor. It is said in the text that, “[Khadija’s father] thinks that his daughter’s reputation is the most important thing in the world” (30), and does not even allow her to talk to boys. However, his behavior is not accepted by other members of the family, fact from which derives the idea that this very traditional patriarchal behavior is not the norm and is not considered acceptable in the Arab world. In the novel, it is said, “Esmeralda cursed Khadija’s father in Arabic and said he was an old shoe with a hole in his head as well as one in his ass” (34). Moreover, this unacceptability of Khadija’s father behavior is also justified in the story by means of making reference to the importance of fatherhood, that is, it is said that he is not a good father because he did not respect his own father: “Baba might be crazy because of all the things he did, especially because he didn’t respect his father properly” (192). The story also takes up this unacceptability of behavior, and at the end, when he is hitting his family, Kadija calls the police, and they end up picking him up (208).

The third cousin, Soraya, could be considered to be the opposite of Khadija. She lives in Los Angeles, and is a very independent girl, outspoken, and very aware of her sexuality. Her father, though, appears as a disempowered man, who does not take responsibility for his family and whose only strength comes from money. As it is put in the novel,

[m]y mother is the strong one in our house and people would probably make fun of my father if it weren’t for all the money he has. Money is his favourite thing, like somewhere along the way he decided he could only focus on one thing and he thought better money than family, less headaches. So men respect him because of his success. (26)

Soraya’s father has changed traditional Arab ideals for traditional American ideals. He has moved away from the traditional importance of fatherhood that is pervasive in the Arab world, in order to fulfill the American economic dream of success. In doing so, he has eluded his responsibilities as a father.

Finally, Hala is a student in Tucson who tries to make sense of her Arab American identity during her visit to Jordan for her mother’s funeral, where she reencounters her father. At that point, her father does not want her to go back to the United States and continue studying there. Besides, Hala’s father, having become a single father, is determined to make all decisions

about his daughter's life by himself. As it is put in the novel, "[w]hile she [Hala's mother] was alive, my father respected her wishes, but not even two days into my mourning her death, he made it clear that he was going to be the one to make the decisions about my life from then on" (45). He decides then that she has to finish studying in Jordan and "put [her] roots here as a woman" (45). As Hala phrases it, "I was to replace my mother with a husband. I was to stay in Jordan forever. Marry [...]. Have children. Be someone else's burden" (45), that is, follow the traditional Arab modes of feminine behavior. However, she refuses to do that and goes back to the United States without talking to her father.

Nonetheless, she goes back to Jordan after her grandmother's death, and by then her father knows that he must negotiate his decisions about his daughter with her, because otherwise he will lose her. As she puts it, "my father must know by now that he will lose me forever if he pushes too hard" (83). Some signs of change in her father start to appear when Hala is in Jordan and she wants to go visit people by herself, and her father accepts her wishes: "My father does not seem surprised, doesn't try to dissuade me, and even offers to drive me there" (153). Moreover, before, Hala's father wanted her to marry in Jordan and stay there, but at the end of the story he tells her that she should wait to get married and she should go back to the United States to finish her schooling there, and finish university before getting married.

Hala's father undergoes an enormous change as the story develops, from being a traditional father only worried about his family's honor and not her daughter's wishes, to being a "new father", more open-minded, more caring and nurturing, a father that accepts his daughter's wishes and is proud of her. At the end of the story, when she is going back to the United States, Hala has learnt about the importance of her origins, and decides to wear a *roza*, a typical Jordanian dress, while her father has learnt about opening to other cultures and tells her that she should wear jeans (203).

Steven Salaita states that "[o]ne really interesting thing about [*West of the Jordan*] is the way nothing, human or geographical, ever descends into a tidy stereotype" (Salaita: 3). This statement is particularly interesting in relation to the Arab fathers that appear in this novel, whose behaviors are justified in the text by their circumstances.

A wide variety of fathers appear in this novel, making clear the situational position of Arab fatherhood and masculinity: Arab fathers move between traditionalism and liberalism. Some tilt more towards one (i.e., traditionalism, in the case of Khadija's father) or the other (i.e., liberalism in the case of Soraya's), and others change their mind throughout their life (as is the case of Hala's father) making clear that evolution is possible.

Arabian Jazz: the "new father"

Arabian Jazz (1993) is Diana Abu-Jaber's first novel. She was born in 1960 in Syracuse, New York, to a Jordanian father and an American mother of

Irish descent. She lived in Jordan between 1967 and 1968, and has lived between the United States and Jordan since then. She got a PhD in Creative Writing from SUNY Binghamton. Her first novel *Arabian Jazz* won the Oregon Book Award, and was finalist for the National PEN / Hemingway Award. She is also the writer of *Crescent* (2003), *The Language of Baklava, a memoir* (2005), and *Origin* (2007).

Arabian Jazz tells the story of the family Ramoud, focusing on Matussem Ramoud and his relationship with his two Arab American daughters Jemorah and Melvina. Matussem is the main character of the novel. His favorite activity, playing what he calls “Arabian jazz”, gives the novel its title. Matussem was born in Jordan, the youngest of seven female siblings, and migrated to the United States in 1959 because he fell in love with an American woman of Irish descent called Nora, who died a few years later on a visit to Jordan. With her, Matussem had two daughters, Jemorah and Melvina, and so after his wife’s death, he became a single father. He works in a hospital’s maintenance office, but his passion is drumming. Through his music, he is able to make sense of his life in-between the Arab world and the United States. It is said in the novel that “his displacement was a feature of his personality” (Abu-Jaber, 1993: 98), but the United States gave him the possibility to have the family he wanted, a fluid notion of family based on love. As it is described in the novel:

America was the place where his world began, away from the webs of family. In the new, wild western country, family flew into particles, relatives moved, changed courses, sifted around each other like the snow, the amazing interwoven flakes sweeping off the belly of Ontario that meteorologists called “lake-effect”. [...] It was dangerous to create a new kind of family, to be so vulnerable to the elements. This was the kind of living he had come to want for himself, the choice to live together, to love. (Abu-Jaber, 1993: 264)

Within this family, what he considers more important is his figure as a father. As Julie Peteet (1994) pointed out, Arab masculinity has always been very much related to fatherhood. In the character of Matussem, fatherhood is central. For example, in a concert, he introduces himself as:

I am Père, Abu, Fader, Señor, Senior. Call me Pappy, Pappa, Padre, Paw Paw, Sir!... Call me Big Daddy! I’ve got a car and two daughters, I’m free! Is my life’s work, is the work of the world, is nice work if you can get. My greatest work, a father! Now for fathers out there in fatherland, a little song we’re making up as we go, I call “Big Daddy”! (148-9)

Matussem's work is being a father, he cares a lot about his daughters and did so when Nora was alive as well as afterwards. For instance, when Jemorah and Melvina were little, he would tell them what he called "instructional stories" from Jordan: "He populated America with figures from his childhood's stories; Jem thought it sharpened his focus on the world" (98). His daughters also perceive the importance of his in-betweenness and his uprootedness in his parenting, and Jem thinks that,

He wouldn't have been the same father, she knew, if he had stayed in Jordan and raised them there. His removal was part of that soft grieving light behind his eyes and part of the recklessness in his laugh. His eyes were so steady at times Jem thought they were taking in the whole of the world and all its expanse of loneliness. (98)

He also remembers his own father with affection. His memories of him are related to generosity and justice (important traits of Arab tradition): "Though the family had struggled with poverty, their father was generous to visitors with food and shelter, respected by all the village for his insight and sense of justice" (263). He also conceives his music as his "only way back to his father's voice" (263).

Furthermore, when he was growing up, Matussem perceived the sexism that existed in the Arab world. He remembers his sisters' sufferings that Salwa Essayah Chérif summarizes very well when she says:

Matussem's memories of Jordan consist in having been spared his sisters' hardships. As the only son in an Arab family of daughters, Matussem "knew, watching and overhearing his sisters at night, that it was a bitter thing to be a woman" (187). He remembers being fondled in his mother's arms, when he has outgrown her lap, while her voice poured insults at his sisters around them. His memory of home consists of "so many lonely sisters" and of "social restrictions that kept them home" (233) until they were married off, as Matussem also remembers, "to men they had never seen before in their lives" (237). (2003: 212-213)

Maybe it is because of this perception that he inscribes no gender restrictions to his daughters. Matussem had to negotiate his concept of family, including patriarchy and his masculinity, in relation to his experiences in Jordan and his new life in the United States. He had first to face a change in his life when he moved to the United States with his wife Nora. There he had to conciliate that new life with the type of masculinity that he had learned in Jordan, with its value of fatherhood, which later, when his wife died, be-

came central to the new family that he had to take care of. Having to raise his two daughters by himself, he had to negotiate his masculinity as primary nurturer in the family, and he managed to do so resorting to the Arab notion of preeminence of fatherhood, but without falling into the negative aspects of the most traditionally patriarchal tenets about the submission of women. On the contrary, Matussem gives a lot of freedom to his daughters, only worrying about their well-being, but not constricting them. His in-betweenness has allowed him to question, if probably not fully challenge, assumptions of domination of women that circulated in his old world. Therefore, Matussem questions Arab traditions when he considers that “[h]e would never throw [his daughters] away into unwanted marriage” (187), but he is located in-between his two cultures and is ambivalent about what is best, since he wonders “[b]ut what was right for them? How could he ever know?” (187).

His masculinity, and therefore also his fatherhood, is situational, that is, it moves between traditional and liberal ideas (as Monterescu pointed out). However, Matussem, in having this ambivalent identity, is able to create a new model of fatherhood (an “androgynous fatherhood”, as Rotundo would say) that takes up both the preeminence of fatherhood of the Arab world and the image of the nurturing father proposed by the West.

Conclusion

It has been seen that there is a wide array of fatherhoods proposed by Arab American writers. Given the situational position of Arab masculinity (as Daniel Monterescu conceives it), the fathers that appear in the texts produced by the Arab diaspora in the United States move within the range of ideas that exist between extreme traditionalism and extreme liberalism, and construct their masculinity according to that. In *Towelhead* and *West of the Jordan*, some fathers are depicted as very traditional, although their behavior is mostly justified by means of their status as immigrants or their uneasiness towards raising a daughter (especially in relation to her sexuality). Other fathers are more ambivalent and could be placed in the middle of these two points –traditionalism and liberalism– because they really move from tradition to openness. Finally, there are also those that are at the more liberal end of the range, those who are able to take up what has been called “the new father” by Ralph LaRossa, inscribing no gender restrictions to their daughters and being caring and nurturing to them.

Arab and Arab American fathers as portrayed in these late-twentieth / early-twenty-first century novels are placed in the ambiguous or situational position that Monterescu talked about, between traditional and more liberal models of masculinity, and this results in different performances of their role as fathers. All of them are possible and existing models of Arab fatherhood. These novels advocate the possibility for new Arab fatherhoods to emerge.

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