

Cross-Cultural Conflict and Pursuit of Identity in Ameen Rihani's *The Book of Khalid*

Abdulaziz Ahmed Mohammed Ahmed

A Lecturer in the Department of English,

University of Albaidha - Yemen

PhD Research Scholar

The Department of English and Modern European Languages

University of Lucknow, Lucknow

Email: azizrefai2018@gmail.com

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Abstract

Multiculturalism is an outcome of developing global culture emanating from ceaseless flow of people between nations and intercultural interactions. Crossing the borders results in psychological transformation of the immigrants as their ethnic identity shaped by social, religious, historical and political forces over decades is in continual flux. Though different kinds of responses to the situation of cultural multiplicity may be diagnosed, the fact remains that there are no simplistic ways of dealing with or responding to multiculturalism. The immigrants face cultural clash and find difficulties in acculturating. When the immigrants come to install in another country, they are accosted with a new culture, a new statute and a reserved group of people who do not mix so very easily. Everyone does not have the capacity to adjust their feelings and mind. They form a community of diaspora who are always reminded of their roots in an alien land. The impact of diasporic experiences on immigrants' psyche depends on their level of belonging in an alien land. Ameen Rihani's odyssey from Lebanon to United States gives him a cutting edge over his contemporaries to be established as most revered author of Arabs diaspora abroad. Rihani, molded and transformed by the cultures of his countries of origin, movement and settlement, has been earnestly engaged in re-conceptualizing the idea of diaspora as a profitable affair as opposed to the popular beliefs that render immigration and displacement as a condition of loss. His novels are bulging with different protagonists of staunch spirit and calibrating credence who win the tussle with cultural conflict and in the process evolve and finally lost. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate how Rihani's protagonist Khalid in his novel of the same name evolves with cultural changes, endeavors for pursuit of identity in both origin and adopted worlds and finally takes control of his destiny.

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Keywords- Immigrants, Multiculturalism, Reconciliation, Cross-Cultural Conflict, Pursuit of Identity, Assimilation, Roots, Tussle

Introduction

Ameen Rihani, (born in 1876 in what is today Lebanon), is a Lebanese Arab American writer, intellectual and political activist. He was a major figure in the Mahjar literary movement developed by Arab emigrants in North America, and an early theorist of Arab nationalism. He first became familiar with Arab and other Eastern poets in 1897. He began writing in English, becoming the first Arab to publish in English without at the same time renouncing his own language. Thus, he began his extensive literary career, bridging two worlds. Rihani, who was influenced by the American poet Walt Whitman, introduced free verse to Arab poetry. His new style of poetry was introduced as early as 1905. This new concept flourished in the Arab world and continued to lead modern Arab poetry after Rihani's death in 1940 and throughout the second half of the 20th century. During his stay in Lebanon, *The Book of Khalid* was written and was later published in 1911 after he returned to New York. The illustrations for this book, which was the first English novel ever written by Arabic writer, were provided by Kahlil Gibran. During the period between 1910 and 1922 Rihani became remarkably involved in the literary life while continuing to pursue productive political engagements. On the literary level, he continued writing and publishing in English and Arabic. Rihani is considered by some scholars as a major figure in the intellectual development of Arab nationalism and the real father of Immigrants literature. In his writings on multicultural studies and other issues, he emphasized upon the importance of a secular state and a secular education pointing that there must be no minorities or majorities, but only equal citizens. During that time, he also published another four books in Arabic, and delivered numerous speeches in Lebanon, the Arab world, the East and West Coasts of the United States, and in Canada ranging in topics from social reform to politics, Pan-Arabism, East and West cohesion, poetry and philosophy. Ameen Rihani died at age 64 on September 13, 1940, in his hometown of Freike, Lebanon.

The literary opus of Rihani is immersed with Multiculturalism, Immigrants, Cross Cultural Conflicts and Pursuit of Identity. *The Book of Khalid* is pivotal to his world fiction. His characters from disparate ethnic backgrounds and national origins cross borders in hope of attractive and more fitting life. On their arrival in an alien land they undergo cultural shock and have to devise ways and means of belonging and becoming in America. Rihani elucidates that the pursuit of identity by diasporas as unhousement immigrants is the breaking away from the culture into which one was born, and in which one's place in society was assured. Rehousement is the re-rooting of oneself in a new culture. This

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requires transformations of the self. We find that *Khalid*, the protagonist of the novel has been moved to New York with Shakib, uncertain of what the future will bring but nevertheless confident in his decision to leave. Alsubai quotes “it’s not quality of goods and utility that matter, but movement, not where you are or what you have but where you come from, where you are going, and the rate at which you are getting there” (*Nostalgia and Beyond*, 92). The sense of movement further reinforces the notion that his identity is forever evolving, he cannot remain in a stable life because disruption and change are the means of his survival. The surrounding environments influence his formation of his identities and he navigates between temporal and spatial locations, his perception of himself changes, thereby resulting in a multiplicity of consciousness. These create a tension within him and he feels the need to reconcile these conflicting perceptions so that they do not wage a psychological war inside him. Thereby we see him blundering in his identity completely. From a passive, traditional object of fate *Khalid* transforms into an active, modern, cross-cultural shaper of his future. His arduous odyssey from the rural conservative patriarchal society of Frieke in Lebanon to the advanced society of Manhattan in U.S.A, leads to many transformations of mind, body and soul and making of a strong identity that always could not consume or accommodate as an eastern preservative person and has an incessant desire to always move forward. From the beginning, *Khalid* rebels against his cultural inscriptions and in America, he also rejected the materialism rules which finally lead to a state of demotivation and he decided to get back home. This prove the chaos and state of mind, cross- cultural conflict he lives in and finally manifests the lost of his soul and quest for real identity. *The Book of Khalid, 1911*, a novel composed during a sojourn in the mountains of Lebanon, is considered to be the first novel by an Arab-American writer in English. His contemporary, Khalil Gibran, illustrated the work, and the story is often seen as an influence on Gibran's own well-known *The Prophet*. The novel is presented as a found manuscript, a mechanism that recurs in other Arab American fictional works. The novel is divided into three books, dedicated in order *to Man, to Nature, and to God*. Each section begins with an illustration by Gibran and a philosophical statement attributed to the protagonist, Khalid. The narrator speaks directly to the Reader, elaborating the story's progression from the different sources available to him. The novel is highly descriptive and poetical in style, and the central characters are thoroughly developed. Rihani deploys numerous italicized Arabic words, and the work has been perceived as linking Western and Eastern literary forms. There are constant references to Western and Middle Eastern philosophers, writers, and intellectuals. Poetry, often attributed to the characters, is interspersed throughout the novel. There is also a wry and satirical humor deployed throughout the work, and Rihani's personal perspective on the merits of the protagonist's expressions can be difficult to ascertain at times. The novel, which is intensely autobiographical as Rihani himself had immigrated as a child, tells the story of two boys, named *Khalid and Shakib*, from Baalbek in Lebanon

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who migrated together to the United States, coming by ship through Ellis Island and enduring the classic of an immigrant. Khalid, the hero of the novel, descends from Baalbek, from the roots of the Cedars in Lebanon and migrates all the way to New York where he faces all the contradictions of his Oriental soft background and the harshness of the Occidental severe reality. He dreams of the virtual Great City, thinks of the ideal Empire, and looks for the Superman who combines within himself the spirituality of the East, the art of Europe, and the Science of America. According to several scholars, such as Suhail Bushrui, “*The Book of Khalid* is the foundation of a new literary trend towards wisdom and prophecy that seeks to reconcile matter and soul, reason and faith, together with the Orient and the Occident in an attempt to explicate the unity of religions and represent the unity of the universe” (Bushrui, 56). They move into a wet cellar in the Little Syria community of Lower Manhattan near Battery Park and begin to peddle counterfeit Holy Land trinkets and religious items throughout the city, a typical Arab endeavor in America. While Shakib, although himself a poet, is focused and accumulates savings through peddling, Khalid becomes distracted and turns away from commercial activity toward frantically consuming Western literature and participating in the New York City intellectual and bohemian scene. At one point, he burns his peddling box, decrying the dishonesty of their sales. After exhaustion from reckless bohemian pursuits, Khalid shifts towards party politics when he is offered the position of a functionary and ward for the Arab community in the machine politics of the city. However, Khalid insists on moral purity in his political work, causing conflict with his Boss. As a result, he is jailed for a brief time of ten days, Shakib helps secure his release under the charge of misapplying public funds. The two decide to return to Lebanon before long, and Khalid then shifts back to intense peddling for a time, paying off his accumulated debts and earning funds for return passage. Khalid soon engages in a series of actions that anger Maronite clerics in his home city. He refuses to attend church services and spreads pamphlets and ideas seen as heretical. Moreover, he presses his wish to marry Najma, a young cousin, but Church leaders refuse to grant consent. As result of the growing conflict, Khalid is excommunicated; Najma is forced to marry another man and Khalid moves to the mountain forests and starts to live as a hermit. During this period of exile, he contemplates nature and integrates lessons learned in America with his views on the cultural and political dilemmas of the Arab world. He evolves into a self identified voice for the Arabs, and chooses to return to spread his views on liberation from the Ottoman Empire and on the importance of religious unity and scientific progress. Khalid travels to different cities engaging in political and spiritual speech, periodically writing letters to Shakib. During his travels, Khalid meets an American Baha’i woman named Mrs. Gotfry with whom he discursively engages on questions of love and religion. He travels to Damascus where he speaks in the Great Mosque about his views of the West and of religious tradition, producing a riot and prompting the Ottoman authorities to pursue his arrest. He

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flees with Mrs. Gotfry to Baalbek, where he meets Shakib and learns that Najma, along with her young son, is abandoned and now ill. All together (Khalid, Mrs. Gotfry, Najma, her son, and Shakib), they flee to the Egyptian desert to escape the Ottoman authorities. After an idyllic period in the desert of several months, Mrs. Gotfry and Shakib leave. Najma's son, Najid, dies suddenly of an unexpected illness, and Najma relapses and follows him in death in her grief. Khalid disappears and does not contact Shakib; his whereabouts are unknown.

The central theme of the novel is the attempt to reconcile the culture and values of "the West" and "the East," a universal concern's in Rihani's work, and, indeed, entire approach of life. Another theme in the novel is the quest for identity and cross-cultural conflict. Here, Rihani elucidates in the character of Khalid the cross cultural conflicts of all immigrants in America during the first half of the 20th century. Khalid ruminates constantly on the merits and future destiny of America, which he connects to the Arab world in their own struggles with the Ottoman yoke and with religious intolerance and conflict. Like Rihani himself, who synthesized two distinct cultures perhaps more than almost any other writer of the time, Khalid, having experienced America and considered its strength and weaknesses, during his stay of several years, returns and develops a philosophy that engages the Arab public directly. He is continually frustrated with America's materialism and inconsistent pursuit of its stated ideals, but he still believes that America represents a powerful force in the world's future evolution and that the Arab world can learn from its political ideals, relative respect for religion, and embrace of science and progress. Although these expressions result in his own persecution, he emerges as a modern prophet with a combined political, cultural, and spiritual message. The novel reflects Rihani's philosophical thought and his spiritual and sentimental tendencies. He also portrays the cross-cultural conflict and pursuit for identity in both worlds. Though written in English, it is predominately Arab in its themes and concerns in addition to the fact that it borrowed many words and expressions from the Arabic language. Critics view *The Book of Khalid* 1911 as a book of ideas. Dunnavent, for example, notices that story becomes a vehicle for introducing the ideas (Dunnavent, 155). The book is an account of the immigrant experience and of the liberated Arab mind in its quest of identity, spirituality, reconciliation of East and West, and of reform. The plot is divided into three parts, each one called a "book" and each representing a different stage of Khalid's spiritual quest. *Book the First: In the Exchange* tells the story of Khalid from his boyhood in Lebanon to his tiredness from materialism in America as well as his intellectual, emotional, and spiritual confrontations, his readings, his realization of the existence of the soul or his inner divinity. Khalid's hope that America is the Promised Land where the spirituality of the East and the prosperity of the West coexist ends in disappointment. He understands the need for America and the old World to build a cultural bridge and decides to go back and do something for his home country. *Book the Second: In the*

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Temple tells the story of his return to Lebanon and his experience of spiritual rebirth in the woods. Khalid retreats from the world after being excommunicated due to his problems with the church. *Book the Third: In Kulmakan*, covers Khalid's life from his one-year hermetic life in the hills of Lebanon to his flight to Egypt and his eventual disappearance. After his return to society, Khalid decides to be reformer and founder of an Arab empire that would blend the best of both East and West, the soul of the East and the mind of the West. He was, however, chased by authorities and forced to flee. A final tragedy, the death of his lover Najma and her baby, stops Khalid's dream and causes his disappearance. *The Book of Khalid* is thought to be semi-autobio-graphical. Many critics relate Khalid to Rihani's personal growth in the U.S and his post-immigration experience in his homeland. The book, however, has universal dimensions as well in the sense that it expresses universal thoughts. It was actually dedicated; it must be emphasized, to "my Brother Man, my Mother Nature and my Maker God". In New York, Khalid realizes his prophethood and talks about the spiritual values of the East. He considers himself as his country's "chosen voice." He says: "For our country is just beginning to speak, and I am her chosen voice. I feel that if I do not come to her, she will be dumb forever" (*The Book of Khalid*, p.128).

Khalid believes in the power and potential of the soul. In order for spirituality to become fuller, the soul has to be free from social order and restrictions. He says: "There is an infinite possibility of soul-power in every one of us, if it can be developed freely, spontaneously, without discipline or restraint. During his transcendentalist retreat to the woods, he rejoices in the beauty of nature, which he sees as a projection of the spiritual and the invisible. He hears "the voice of the dawn, the dawn of a new life, of a better, purer, healthier, higher spiritual kingdom" (*The Book of Khalid*, 1911). The story of immigration is a tale of wonderful success, the compounded biography of thousands of humble people who through their own efforts brought themselves across great distances to plant their roots and to thrive in alien soil. Its only parallel is the story of the United States which began in the huddled settlements at the edge of the wilderness and pulled itself upward to immense material and spiritual power. From this statement we come to realize some important facts about the multicultural experience in the United States. First, the term immigration applies only to the act of leaving a homeland to join a tradition of immigration with total free will and resolve. And even when this experience happens under pressure, some of the immigrants leave their homelands under either economic or political pressure; it is an experience of success. Furthermore, the immigrants plan to plant their roots and to thrive in alien soil. Needless to say, some immigrants met with antagonism against their existence in America, especially those who were not of a western European stock. However, the general idea was that the nation should work actively to mix the new immigrants into the "melting pot". Immigrants themselves have understood this experience differently and multicultural writers have expressed their attitudes in their writings.

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Rihan's work brilliantly portray the trauma of all immigrants in general and particularly Arab Immigrants to the United States especially immigrants psyche in all its natural colors and minutes details in the process of cultural transformation or transfiguration .When the immigrant protagonists are violently immersed into a mix of diverse and unrelated cultures, working in mini crafts as peddling, they experience a sense of awe, confusion, nostalgia, rootless and identity crises. Because of his faithful portrayal of an extremely complex experience of the process of immigrations and the life and the Arab immigrants in particular, the works of Rihani are considered today as one of the authentic international chronicle of contemporary immigrants' life in America. His sensational works originate from his own intense autobiographical experiences and concern themselves with the genuine cause of Arab immigrants in America during the first half of the 20th century. That is why many critics consider his books including his novel *The Book of Khalid* as a reference for all multicultural studies.

The Novel revolved around the life of Khalid; an immigrant protagonist from Lebanon who travels to the U S during the 19th and the early 20th century and after a long downtown journey reaches the land of liberty "New York". Rihani wrote his novel after he got back to Lebanon from America. During his stay in his village Frieka in the mountain of Lebanon in 1910, he took a soliloquy and starts writing his masterpiece *The Book of Khalid*. In the novel, Khalid gets back to his village after a year in U.S., he comes to Lebanon only to witness poverty and political chaos cause by Ottoman regime. This dispirts his culturally elevated, transfigured but homesick heart. The ill treatment in the promise land "America" has shocked him. The old meaning of his home land now has stark contrasts with his stern present and creates a perplexing inner distress and lost for identity. He is unable to feel a sense of belonging in Lebanon and in America. Khalid feels rootless; consequently his identity also suffers serious crises.

The geographical dislocation creates a cultural duality and stratifies his subjective reality qualitatively. This is the reason why he is unable to feel himself at home as well in the adopted land. For him the promise land "America" as he called it makes cultural integration through acculturation difficult for him, through its cultural plurality. Khalid, the Lebanon born boy with deeply embedded Arabic or Eastern culture and values, finds Americanism to be an inevitable nightmare. He feels uprooted from his native culture with loss for real native identity and own sense of belongings, especially after he is rejected from his house in his village Freike by his own people and family. So, he lives a life of hermit who belongs no more to any cultures. In Khalid's case, we can prove that his real native identity is only imaginative and only reminiscence in his mind. In spite of his aching inner wounds, he left his village and started the adventure life which finally he gets lost in the Egyptian desert.

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Recently scholars have found *The Book of Khalid* essential to understanding the characteristics of blossoming Arab American literature. Some studies have underestimated the work while some consider it important. Humoud Al Subaie, in his study of “Ameen Rihani’s *The Book of Khalid: A Forerunner of Arab-American Literature*” emphasizes this work’s importance when he stated that it was Rihani’s first and the most successful novel. The main theme of the novel, according to Al Subaie, is to “revive the Arab Empire and condemn religious fanaticism and multiculturalism” (45). Al Subaie maintains that the work attracted critical attention during its first two years of publication. However, later the novel received relatively little attention. The reason, according to him, lies in the publication of other Arab American novels. However, the reason appears to me to be the philosophical, multicultural, nostalgic, social, and reformative nature of the novel. The direction of the novel is Oriental. One of the major preconceptions upon which Al Subaie depends is the assumption that *The Book of Khalid* includes “a great deal of autobiographical elements”. The major study that deals with Ameen Rihani and his English writings is Walter Dunnavent’s *Ameen Rihani in America: Transcendentalism in an Arab-American Writer*. Here, I find it important to discuss some of the points Dunnavent presents in his study. Most importantly, the study is rich with an examination of major reviews of the work in scholarly studies and in the magazines of the day. However, Nadeem Naimy takes a different view as he believes that the novel does not synthesize the spiritual and the material. According to Naimy, Khalid’s claim of having united the material and the spiritual in him “remains only verbal” (Naimy, p.75). According to Dunnavent, Naimy agrees that the novel is basically a book of ideas but they disagree on whether the ideas are synthesized or not. Another review of the novel considers that Khalid represents immigrants who come to America “beginning at the bottom and working upward” (Dunnavent, p.64). Therefore, it represents how America appears to immigrants, or gives the view point of the other. Another approach focuses on the strange and the exotic. The Brooklyn Daily Eagle considers the book to be thoroughly Oriental in thought and language. Another review focuses on the East-West theme like cultural conflict of such immigrants from the first day they arrived and the immigrant’s quest for identity. He discussed the issues of immigrants in the exile land, pointing out the suffering phases of the first immigrant’s generation and trying to make suggestions for the coming generations to easily get reconciled and clearly assimilate. Gibran believes that Khalid is a citizen neither of the Occident nor of the Orient “but is a poet singing to the universe and to the Superman”, Nation, additionally, observes that Rihani in *The Book of Khalid* has developed a genre “where the East and the West, Arabic and English, can almost touch, but they do not quite touch, and that is the pity”, which means that immigrants have been lost their identity within two cultures (Gibran,p.23). My reading of the text, however, takes a new approach. It attempts to read the text as a cultural-conflicts text and see if the novel represents ethnic complexity in a similar situation. Most importantly, the reading examines the

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treatment of the ethnic past in the novel. The genre in which the work fits has been subject to many arguments. Some critics believe that it is an autobiography disguised as fiction. However, some critics have distinguished between Ameen Rihani and Khalid, the major character. Rihani, as Mhiri states, had the desire to be taken seriously as “a cultural mediator and social reformer, not merely a fiction-writer”. This anxiety has to do with Rihani’s ethnicity and the social acceptance of an ethnic voice. This indicates that Ameen Rihani in *The Book of Khalid* placed a minor focus on the role of ethnic representation, putting more emphasis on cosmopolitan perspective. Therefore, I will avoid the assumption that *The Book of Khalid* is an autobiography because “there is no definitive clue in the body of the text indicating that the narrator is Rihani himself”, (Mhiri, p.205).

The Book of Khalid is not only concerned mainly with Arab American ethnicity. Rihani ignored to some extent, the burden of representation borne by ethnic literature. As Rihani put it, it was written “to convey accurately to the English reader the life, thought and behavior of the Middle Eastern peoples” (Rihani, *Khalid*, 11). It represents an aspect of lifestyle in the Middle East. It considers not only the complexity of Arab Americans in their new world, but also how difficult to adjust to their home after coming back from America. However, reading the novel carefully shows that the direction of the novel is Oriental and it adds also too much to the understanding of America from an ethnic point of view. On the level of the story, the novel traces the experience of Khalid-Arab immigrants to the US. Khalid, the protagonist, establishes himself as a peddler in New York. Eventually, he revolts against the materialism of America. During his stay in the US, Khalid “undergoes a spiritual rebirth” (Dunnavent, p.55). This spiritual rebirth, however, does not prove concrete as he cannot assimilate into his new environment. He believes he has been called to his native land to “struggle for freedom from the Turks”. Khalid, returning home, finds that even there he does not find himself a place and finally chooses to compromise with his native past in which he finds solace, relief, and answers for all the diseases of the age. What *The Book of Khalid* reveals as a development in Khalid’s character remains verbal and what I find interesting is his failure in both worlds to find himself a place. Contrary to his words, he does not belong to either of his two worlds. In America, he fails as an ethnic Arab American; he does not understand the essence of multi-ethnicity of the U.S. He prefers to remain nostalgic, dreaming of an Arab Empire to be built somewhere in the Orient. As he comes back to his native land, he is faced with real social upheaval and he ends up also dreaming of a future in which his dreams will be fulfilled. In short, he fails as American because he does not recognize the necessity of materialism as the core of American civilization. And fails as an Arab because he does not understand the need for gradual reformation and the risk of coming up with ideas with no popular support. Finally, he believes that all diseases can be cured by going back to ancient Arab history and reviving the glorious days of the Arabs.

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The Book of Khalid, as the first statements make clear, works on how things should be and not how they are. The prophet-like voice dominates the story. This is a characteristic style of the first Arab American literature, as Gibran states. Enforcing the style of this prophet-like narrator, the novel opens with a severe attack on the plebeian, or the man-in-the-street, who “cannot see and understand the significance of the hidden seed of things”. Additionally, the narrator begins relating the story of the mysterious disappearance of the Master. There is also this kind of instructing of the reader as the poet enforces the importance of belief in Khalid. There is another feature that points eastward. Khalid emphasizes that the Orient is the land of the Prophets. This was one of the techniques some of the first Christian Arab Americans used to enforce their assimilation into American society but, in Khalid’s case, it is used to intensify the strangeness of the material society compared to the spiritual one. Thus, this attachment to the land of prophets is manifested to ensure the preeminence of the Orient over the Occident. This technique is repeated again as the narrator describes the city of Baalbek, Khalid’s home -town. He makes sure that “nothing is duller, more stupid, and more prosaic than a modern absolute as compared with an ancient one”. It is worth mentioning here that some Arab Americans have gone further in this regard and tried to prove that the relation with the new world is ancient and can be traced to the age of the Phoenicians .The novel, however, is not limited to Khalid’s philosophical speculations. It turns, sometimes, to reality and is concerned with real people and events. The narrator faces the native community. Among the natives of Baalbek, we find a man who, failing as peddler or merchant in America, returns to his native town, and, utilizing the chips of English he picked up in the streets of the New-York cities, becomes an interpreter and guide to English and American tourists. The novel touches upon one example of cultural conflicts in the experience of Arab immigrants in their adopted land.

Rihani was perhaps the first modern Arab intellectual to deal critically with the Arab past, with the aim of rejecting its negative influences, and learning from its positive aspects. He believed that human beings must live free anywhere, belonging to the same world and the barriers which have been created exist no more in his fictional world and his point of view as well. He always calls for human unity and assimilations of all cultures in one. In his writings, he insists that there is only one civilization in the world and he strongly rejects the idea of inferiority and superiority, east and west, but emphasize on one great universe. Such view was the basis of his idea of progress as an essential condition to achieve Arab unity which led to assimilation with other cultures and nations. Progress required shaking off the way of thinking which had shackled the Arabs to their past, but not complete rejection of this past. He always asserted his pride in the Arab contribution to world civilization, and he stressed that the Arabs were entitled to their share of the glory of this civilization just as the Europeans and Americans do. But he believes that nations today should be able to achieve progress with today’s science, and only by combining the positive values

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of their cultural heritage, with the positive values of Western civilization could the Arabs advance. The two processes of borrowing and seeking inspiration from the past are inter-related in a dynamic relationship, which would create a new society, a nation capable of keeping up with other modern nations and of playing an effective role on the world stage.

Because of pride in his heritage and cultural values to what he has found in the adopted land, Rihani tried to bring about enlightenment to his society. So we find that in Rihani's masterpiece *The Book of Khalid*, especially in his protagonist Khalid who carries all the principles and tries hard to depict all of them with his people, but he failed at the end. Society in Lebanon rejects all the ideas of Khalid. They found that behavior as a kind of western invasion changes their own purity and religion. This also increases the self culture conflict of Khalid and he is finally excommunicated when he criticizes the bad habits. So the lost of identity is very clear on him and he told his friend *Shakib* that he must leave the village and he must live a life of hermit away from his people and America. The conflict is on the climax when the church and the society refuse to marry him to his cousin *Nejma* and he discovers that he is neither American nor Lebanese. Rihani expected the Arab Nation to borrow certain Western values (but not to blindly imitate the West). In return, he expected it to give the West certain values of the East. With modernization, the Arab nation would survive; keep up with world progress and counterbalance western expansionism. At the international level, Rihani insists, the Arab nation would have a positive relationship with both Eastern and Western nations, a relationship between equals without any superiority or inferiority complexes. In a world sliding towards division and misunderstanding, with a West in conflict with its moral values, and an Arab world in turmoil, searching for freedom and justice where does, Rihani's vision fit nowadays; As he always did, he would look optimistically to "a day when all nationalities disappear or become incorporated in one nationality: the nationality of humanity, the nationality of the World." He would nevertheless realize that "no matter how much we let ourselves go in the absolute love of Humanity, we cannot forget ... the love of our own country." It is in this light that we can understand his declaration with which I have started this presentation: "I am a Lebanese, volunteering in the service of the Arab homeland, and we all belong to it. I am an Arab volunteering in the service of humanity, and we all belong to it." In this respect, Rihani's dream was not to bring the West to the East, but above all, to bridge West and East in order to realize his "humanist" vision (Hajjar, 87).

To conclude, the narrative is based on the review conducted by writer. The novel has two main themes. The major theme is about Khalid's life as an immigrant in America and the minor one is about life struggle and cross-cultural conflict of the Eastern in the West. Aside of this strong theme, the other strengths of this novel are the use of powerful and detailed characters that support the flow of the story and the unique writing style whether in Arabic and English that makes this novel different from other novels. In

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addition, the use of the first point of view helps the readers understand the story easily. *The Book of Khalid* is a narrative that embodies an involved and descending consciousness that is able to discriminate, select, synthesize and value. All the plots and themes of the novel are perfectly well represented Orientals and Immigrants and Occidentals excess supposedly displaying the quintessential characteristics of the mystical East and decadent West. That is why Rihani tried his best in this novel to create a good environment to make a possible reconciliation between both cultures from one side, and to make a harmony between immigrants and their own origin from the other side. So, critics pointed out that the real problem in the novel is the Loss of identity for immigrants in both East and West. There are some moral messages conveyed in the novel that the readers can learn along the plot. The writer concludes that this novel is highly recommended to be read.

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