"Sometimes a Shift Makes Me Remember" : Displacement, Identity, and Religion in Leila Aboulela’s Minaret

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Anglo-American Studies

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Candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled "sometimes a shift makes me remember ": Displacement, identity, and religion in Leila Aboulela’s Minaret, in partial fulfillment of MA Degree in Anglo-American Studies is my own original work, and it has not previously, in its entirety or in part, been submitted at any university.

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Signature of the candidate
Dedication:

To my Parents, my sisters, my brothers;

To all my family members and friends;

To Saden Djanet Arahman;

And especially, to Zeinab’s memory.
Acknowledgements:

My absolute and deepest gratitude is to Allah’s help and generosity.

I would like to thank my parents for their pray and support.

I would like also to thank Miss Zerrouki, Miss Haddad, Miss Stiti, Mr. Aaid, and Mr. Bouri for their support and consistent help.

And by leaving the best for the last, my absolute appreciation will go to my supervisor Miss Achiri Samya for her consistent patience and faithful commitment to supervising.
Abstract

Literature of Migration is a continuous chain of vivid literary representations of migrant’s day-to-day life. It speaks up the minorities voices. Captivatingly, Muslim contributions to this field cannot be denied or excluded. This dissertation, accordingly, attempts to analyze Leila Aboulela’s Minaret (2005) in a way that evokes culture, identity, and religion for the sake of finding migrants’ lost identity after being a subject to displacement effects. The objective of this study, thus, is to question the reality behind the process of the cultural change expressed in the novel and its outcomes on Muslim migrants. It investigates the role of an ‘exotic’ cultural setting in defining migrants’ identity and religion. At this level, culture, society, economy, and politics would be approached comparatively between Migrants’ place of departure and place of arrival. To get to this point, this research will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter highlights ‘Migration Literature’, under which Minaret is perfectly located, in relation to Arab Muslim cultural settlement in the West. The second extracts the different instances of displacement and its two-ways of influence on Muslim communities. It also tries to approach Minaret from a Cultural Materialist view to understand the process of change. The last tackles the religious identity under the examination of (dis)placement and migration. This will throw light on the beneficial integration that Muslim migrants may embrace to achieve what they lacked in their homelands. Finally, Reading Aboulela’s Minaret in the context of this research suggests a more comforting, reliable, and practical solution for grasping the good effects of (dis)placement and opens the way for other researches on this positivist tendency in predicting the future of Islam and Muslims in Europe.

Key Words: British Arab Muslims, displacement, identity, religion.
Résumé

La littérature d’immigration est considérée comme une chaine de la réalité de vie quotidienne de l’immigrant. Ce style de littérature représente la voix de la minorité dans la société. Heureusement, la participation des musulmans dans ce domaine est remarquable et on ne peut pas la négliger. Alors, cette thèse c’est comme un essai d’étude et d’analyse du *Minaret* de Leila Aboulela. Dans le cadre coopératif complémentariste entre la religion et la culture afin de chercher l’identité perdue après qu’elle deviendrait bouleversée par un entourage étrange pour eux. Ce travail est pour mettre l’accent sur le rôle que l’immigration jouait pour préciser l’identité religieuse des immigrants, donc en basant sur ça les élément qui forment chaque identité sont: la culture la société la politique et l’économie vont toucher la différence des formation des sociétés avant et après l’immigration alors en arrivant sur ce point ce travail va se diviser en trois chapitres : Le premier chapitre va contenir la littérature des immigrants en tant qu’un domaine qui relate et représente la voix culturelle dans la vie des arabo–musulmanes dans l’étranger. Le deuxième chapitre va extraire les différents exemples d’immigration par deux façons contradictoires pour les minorités musulmanes à l’aide de la théorie littéraire matérialisme culturelle. Concernant le dernier chapitre est destiné vers le bon traitement juste et médius du religion dans un endroit qui ne l’appartient pas D’après le roman. Pour conclure la lecture du roman Leila Abou Leila a trouvé un grand écho dans la vision de l’avenir de l’islam et les musulmans dans l’occident d’une manière immédiate et non contestée qui a donné la naissance à une coexistence pacifique entre le musulman et l’endroit où il immigre.
ملخص

بعد أدب الهجرة سلسلة متواصلة من تجسيدات الحياة اليومية للمهاجر. هذا النوع من الأدب يمثل أصوات الأقليات في المجتمع. من حسن الحظ أن مساهمات المسلمين في هذا المجال لا يمكن تكرارها أو استبعادها. هاته الأطروحة هي عبارة عن محاولة لدراسة وتحليل رواية الممانعة للكاتبة ليلي أبو العلي في حوار بين الثقافة والدين لمحاولة إيجاد الهوية الشائعة للمهاجرين. لمعرضة وبأطرافهم عن موطنهم الأصلي. إن هذا البحث يهدف إلى إسقاط الضوء على الدور الذي تلعب الهجرة في تحديد الهوية الدينية للمهاجرين. بناءً على هذا فإن المكونات الثلاثة لأي مجتمع: الثقافة، الإقتصاد، والسياسة ستسهم إختلافاً في تكوين الهويات المهاجرة قبل وبعد الهجرة. وصولاً إلى هذا الحد فإن هذا البحث سيقسم إلى ثلاثة فصول: الفصل الأول سيشمل أدب الهجرة كمجال تنبيل داخل رواية الممانعة التي تمثل السياق الثقافي لحياة العرب المسلمين المتواجدين في الخارج. أما الفصل الثاني فسوف يستخرج الأمثلة المختلفة للهجرة بوجهين منفصلين للأقليات المسلمة بمساعدة النظرية الأدبية المادية الثقافية. وبالنسبة للفصل الأخير، فهو يختص بالمعالجة الفريدة للإقبال الصحيح للدين في مكان لا يعد له بصلة. في الأخير، يمكننا القول أن قراءة رواية الممانعة لليلى أبو العلي صدي كبير في رؤية مستقبل الإسلام والمسلمين في الغرب بطريقة وسطية وغيرمتقصبة تنتج تعابير سلمي بين المهاجر المسلم والمكان المهاجري إليه.
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**Introduction:**

The field of literature is heavily intense with many studies added to it consistently. Many writers just write to amaze their readers with their imagination capacities, others with their creative use of a variety of literary techniques, diction, and styles, and many are more concerned with accomplishing the responsibility that ‘writing’ gives them. These last produce not only works but mirrors of their societies and cultures. Migration, multiculturalism, fight between civilizations, assimilation or integration, fitting in or fitting out, losing one’s identity or keeping it are some of the main themes that are brought up in most works of the twenty first century. Holding such a social and ethical responsibility of making unheard voices speak is strongly appreciated and supported in the field of literature.

Migration literature is a blossoming field of study where writers feel free to express their opinions and views towards this phenomenon differently. It had, conventionally, boosted in the Twentieth century and it is accelerating more and more within these passing years of the twenty first century. The Arab world is a very important participant in migrations because of its common tendency to live abroad, either for a need or for pleasure. Also, some of the countries’ post-colonial relations with the West made this last their perfect door to freedom, liberty, and financial independence. And writing about such themes seems more interesting and always open to modifications and updates. For this sake, the topic of this research is chosen.

The negative perception of displaced realities was all what attracted most Migration literary pens. This extremist tendency of writing about stereotypes, xenophobia, and the bad treatment of non-Muslims to Muslim residents in the Western countries helped in itself
ensuring the bad impressions that Westerners always have had towards Arabs and Muslims in particular.

This research aspires to defend the idea that displacement of Arab-Muslims, exactly, in Britain affects their cultural identity through which the religious stability is surprisingly manifested as a positive result to the decline of the political, social, and economic norms in their homeland. And with this purpose in mind, the dissertation will try to take a different way from what other researches took that mostly call for Feminist and Postcolonial analysis for Minaret, the case study.

Therefore, the dissertation seeks to interrogate the possibility of creating a different way of literary presentation and perception. The reality of the clash between different cultures and mentalities cannot be questioned. This is a normal outcome for a mixture of chemically different entities. Yet, the negative way writers usually depict the situation between Muslims and Westerners will not change to a better way if their depiction wont overpass their tragic sufferance. There should be brightness within that depicted darkness. Only few attempts, if compared to the majority of these literatures, were in favor of Muslim’s tolerated existence abroad. The positive depiction that these attempts highlight may take the Muslim-Western relations to another level of real co-existence.

Minaret (2005) by the Muslim-Sudanese writer Leila Aboulela presents thoroughly the positive spirit of Islam’s survival competency in any foreign cultural setting. It proves that the identity can never be lost in the inner self; it can be shadowed or fogged but not deprived. In such a situation, only true faith can make this negativity fades away. The inevitability of cultural changes can lead to different conclusions. Sometimes the defect that may touch any of the social, political, or economic structures gives birth to other structures to bloom as religion. If deprived of all the social, political, and economic
barriers, one can pave the way for other values to appear and control. This, in reality, is the novel’s case, starred by its protagonist Najwa.

In order to achieve the already outlined goals, the dissertation will be divided into three chapters. The first chapter is entitled 'Migration Literature: a question of fictitious Borders'. This chapter is the background of this research body. It turns around the area of migration and its manifestation in literature. It investigates briefly the reasons behind the emergence of this genre in literature and mentions some of the most important participations to this field. It also gives credit specifically to Arab Muslims who either lived or made the migration literary repertoire.

The essence of the second chapter revolves around its main theme ‘displacement.’ In this chapter, displacement is considered as a result before being a cause. It is a result of the change that happened to society and the print that makes is no longer the same. The change expands to many levels: Politics, economy, and society itself. Cultural Materialism has defined and crystallized this change to be continuous. This theory explores the power of the causes and effects that lead society to change. According to the case study of this dissertation, the change first happens in Politics, then, it expands to touch the economy, social structures and religion. Thus, the continuous change of the basic systems of societies would make a social reform, either negative, or positive. The way society changes is ultimate but the question is to which direction this change goes? and what it costs?

‘Religion, Identity, and Displacement in Leila Aboulela’s Minaret’ is the second part of the dissertation’s title. This part, therefore, is what is left to be discussed in the third chapter. Aboulela exhibits two different experiences of (dis)placement which are performed by twin characters that had the same beginning and background but the opposite ending. The author’s interesting raise for the positive experience of displacement will be
backed up by the ideas of Tariq Ramadan’s views and ideologies concerning the life of Muslims in the West.

Correspondingly, this research’s humble attempt will try to lighten up some vague points in the preceding researches and studies and hopefully opening the way for other researchers to contribute in this thriving field of literature that can never be outdated because of the consistent waves of migration that accompanies human beings and their literatures.
Chapter One:

Migration Literature: A Question of Fictitious Borders

Literary studies have an immense variety of topics of discussion. Conventionally, literature reflects society’s concerns and interests in every aspect of life. The 20th and 21st centuries, for instance, share a link of ‘migration’ that is originated long time ago in history, activated more in the 20th century, and boosted intensely within the 21st century.

This research studies the different backgrounds and outcomes of migration in literature. Within the first chapter, three main sections will be developed. The initial one forms a general background of the so called Migration Literature and its relation to the topic discussed in this research. In this section, Migration Literature is used to denote all the literatures that are written under the umbrella of migration.

According to Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 8th edition, migration is "the movement of large numbers of people, birds or animals from one place to another". Counting on this definition, the verbs ‘to migration’ and ‘to emigrate’ are used to describe the action of people’s shift from one part of the world to another, specifically, from their homeland to another land for various and different reasons. In comparison to what Oxford suggested as a definition to migration, immigration is "the process of coming to live permanently in a country that is not your own" (Oxford). In the long run, migration and immigration differ in their exact meaning according to the perspective from which they are targeted, yet they will be used in this study, both, to mean the same whole process of leaving one place to live in another meeting a completely different cultural scene. The
second section of which this chapter is composed of is about Arab-Muslim migrations to Britain. A historical account will be provided at this level to discuss some of the main reasons and aims behind the displacement of the Muslim minorities to Britain. Within this chapter, a more specific focus will be about Arab-Muslims who found their aspirations in Britain. The first chapter will end up with a complementary section that deals with the conceptual side of British Cultural studies in Literature in which Migration Literature is a crucial part within its studies.

1. Migration Literature:

Migration literature is a very common used expression that refers to novels, short stories, or any work of fiction that treats problems and issues resulted from migration or highlights factors that caused it. Soren Frank’s *Migration and Literature* is a source book that is taken as a compass to guide researchers in the field of literatures of Migration. Frank states that "the main protagonist in the twentieth century turned out to be the migrant. No longer to be looked upon as anomalous, migration has actually become the norm and has resulted in a profound renegotiation of the concepts of identity, belonging, and home"². Through this statement, Frank attempts to praise this trend of literature that started mainly in the 20th century with the different waves of immigrants all over the world. In these lines, he underlines the new shift in the world’s interest with the coming of migrants who reshaped the conventional concepts of human relations.

In fact, this kind of literature started to emerge due to many factors. This writer believes that wars, mainly, the two world wars along with the decolonizing practices, all in a world full of technological and globalized temptations draw a new borderless limits for our planet (Frank 1-2). This change, Soren Frank asserts, is reflected as in many fields as
in literature to reveal everything about migration (2). Building on Erich Auerbach’s idea, Frank believes that migration literature’s importance overcame its historical context and roots to reach a more prominent position in the literary studies. It is more than a question of time (9,10). This position, in fact, was crowned in the literary field by those believing that all the literatures of the world are grouped under the umbrella of the world literature; all of them are considered as migration literatures (14).

This view that Frank Soren shares with lots of writers, in fact, is a one influential reason behind the growing focus on migration literature in the world’s literary contemporary studies. The term ‘World’ Literature as it denotes, gathers all the Literatures of the World. This privilege of having an access to all the literatures in the world seemed to be impossible in the past till the coming of globalization and its effects (Frank 12). This explains its spread and worldwide attention from writers, scholars, and critics.

There are many features that may categorize a certain work as a literature of migration. The characters’ experience and its relation to their creator, the plot that surrounds them, and the different themes they display are what most works of this category share to classify this kind of literature (Frank 15). All these elements together may tell if the work is considered to be a migrant literary work or not. In an attempt to set common characteristics for the works in order to or not to be classified as migration literature, Frank proposed eight types; five of which thematic and three stylistic (16-17). The thematic ones are relationship between the author’s life and the story’s characters; the second is the adjustment of displacement for both the author and his work’s characters; the third is the challenge of nationalism in displacement settings; the fourth is the problematic conception of the word "Europeanness" and its cultural dimensions; and the fifth and the last is the issue of globalization in relation with migration (18-19).
As far as the stylistic features are concerned, the writer proposed three categories: "enunciation", "composition of narrative form", and "language" (Frank 21). The first deals with the plurality of perspectives in the novel. Soren Frank argues that "the novels are often narrated through a migrant perspective that is characterized by an ‘unstable equilibrium’ of familiarity and foreignness as it is positioned between cultures" (19). The second is related to interplay between the plot’s timeline and other themes. The third one is about the diversity and mixture of many languages to mimic the migratory conditions (19-20). In fact, Migration and Literature’s writer, admitted the possibility of misunderstanding the slight confusing difference between the theme and the style, yet he believes that the thematic characteristics deal with the reality of migration and its social context while the style carries out the responsibility of making a certain work vivant and interesting (17). This classification is a crucial step for every willing researcher who tends to analyze a work in the context of migration.

2. Arab-Muslim Migrations to Britain in the 21st Century:

The Twenty first century knew a unique shift in migrations from the Arab countries to the European ones due to many factors. This process led to different encounters between Muslims and non-Muslims in a foreign land. Some of these contacts were positive but most of them were electrical. Chris Allen explored one of the prominent resulting themes of these contacts in a book named Islamophobia. He investigates the origin of this term, finding out that its beginning was in "the Runnymede Report"4. This report’s title was "Islamophobia: a challenge for us all" (Allen 3). The main effect this report left to the public is the increasing fear of Islam that was a dangerous phenomenon that must be banned and fought in Europe. The 9/11 bombs drew a radical change in the life of Muslims
living in Europe (3). This is a very logical reaction that some extremist parties against Islam made to explain their hatred to a religion that seems to be dominating one of the most important European cities which is London by the coming of 2025 (4). Allen claims "there exist those who claim that Muslims intend to establish an Islamic republic in London by 2025 – citing the ‘super-mosque’ being built in East London as evidence of this – duly followed by the eventual overthrow of Christian Europe" (4). Apparently, a claim like this is able to shake the whole society and make its fears from Islam be more aggressive. The intention of some people whose interest does not much the call of Islam would be surely to plant more fears in the society in order to end up with two conflicting and inharmonious groups living within the same borders. Consequently, minarets, Hijeb, face-veils are some examples of the feared features of Islam that formed quickly a bridge for Muslims disabling them from integrating in the foreign societies (4). Allen affirms that Islamophobia’s increase was due to some "Bi-polar extremes" who wanted to exaggerate and dramatize the scene of future Europe with the Islamic presence (2). The same source backs up Khaleda Khan’s assertion of the nature of the Muslim presence in Britain. She states that the 1980’s witnessed the first emerging Islamophobic feeling towards Muslims that was in London Borough in Brent (7).

Arabs form a great part of Muslims migrating to Britain. Britain’s First Muslims is a book written by Fred Halliday that tries to investigate historically the First Muslim and Arab existence in Britain. Halliday finds out that Muslims migrating to Britain at first were recognized by the place they came from as Pakistani, Hindi, and Middle-Easterners. Labelling them according to their religious tendencies came later in the 1990’s, when terms like, The Muslim Community, British Muslims, and Islam in Britain came to life. Throughout this book, the author tries to prove in a very logical and historical way that the first Muslims ever existed in Britain were from a Yemeni origin (x). "The Yemenis were
also the first Muslims in Britain, later to be joined by an estimated million and a half others, mainly from the Asian sub-continent” (x). Halliday believes that this fact is rarely known by the British themselves since the Yemeni groups were not directly referred to as such (x).

The Arab migration to Britain is not a recent phenomenon; rather it had its origins long time ago. During the Middle Ages and within a time when crusades and successful Islamic expansion coincided, Britain and the Islamic world’s encounters and interactions speeded up. 300 years ago, some Muslim sailors were hired by the British India Company. Later in 1869, other waves headed to Britain exactly where port cities are located like London, Cardiff, and Liverpool. This last became a significant place that Muslims thought of as a center for their activities. Working as well had a great significance for Muslims in Britain especially when it was chosen to be the place where the first Mosque in Britain will be built in 1889. The year 1928 witnessed the most crucial step for the Muslim foundation in Britain when The Central London Mosque was in the plan to be constructed by the coming of 1977. Another event was crowned by King George VI which was the establishment of the Islamic Cultural Center in 1944. These Two last events, according to the report, opened the gates for an extraordinary shift of the Muslim communities to Britain (Halliday xiv).

According to Halliday, the 1970’s and 1980’s marked a pick for Arab migrants who were about half a million people (1). This increase, in fact, explains a necessity and an increasing need in the immigrants’ homelands. Europe at that time was the only opened gate for the ex-colonized countries. At this point, Halliday mentioned the Egyptian and the Iraqi revolutions respectively in 1952 and 1958 which were a model for the involvement of the Arab activists from both countries in Britain (2). Accordingly, the relationship between
the colonized and the colonizer nations are formed not only on the colonized land but also on the colonizer’s one especially within the post-colonial period. Most of the political refugees from the Arab world found their escape in London. It was their minaret in Europe that assures protection and liberation to act independently from the persecution they met in their mother countries. This view is expressed in Halliday’s words as, "London has been a heaven for refugees from all over the world since the early nineteenth century and few of the upheavals in the Arab world can have failed to contribute to the number of political refugees in Britain" (2). In addition to this category of Arab migrants, "Britain does not have a moral duty to accept immigration". This is one of the starting statements written by Anthony Browne in his book *Do we need mass immigration?* Just before this, Browne claimed that his intention is not to write an anti-immigration report yet his book cannot deny the opposite.

Despite all the shortcomings that mass-immigration may bring to the host country, one cannot disregard the advantages and the benefits that legal and organized immigrants may add to a country that is not their original one. This good side can easily overwhelm the negative one. What proves this view is simply the same stable positions of both countries: the migrated from and the migrated to countries. Immigrants mostly leave their place of origin because of the luck of opportunities, poverty, and improper life conditions, and logically this makes their homeland on the bottom of the developing pyramid. Regardless to the immigrants’ effective or ineffective integration in the exotic societies, being on the top of the pyramid had never changed for those leading Western countries.

What is interesting about the British politics is that it is open to people who may agree or disagree in all the debatable issues that matters the country. In Browne’s report, the *Financial Times* along with *Time magazine*, immigration to Britain seems very
welcomed and fruitful to Britain. "The Financial Times declares that ‘Europe needs immigrants—skilled and unskilled’. Time Magazine informs its readers that large-scale immigration to Europe is ‘inevitable’, that Europe cannot survive without it’ (Browne 1). Despite Browne’s real intention behind including these two claims, it is true that Britain needed immigration to give it a huge work force and to fill its needs in Science, Technology, Industry and other fields. Immigrants can do any type of work without complaining because of their massive need. For that, Britain used them to fill all the ‘unwanted’ job positions that the British themselves looked down at.

All in all, there is a reciprocal exchange for both, the British Government and the migrants residing in Britain. The migrants are known by waves and classified by phases. The same source of this report believes that migrating Muslim communities in Britain came in four stages. The last of which include the newest migrant wave of those originally born in Britain. This generation was preceded by the migration of the weakest classes in any society: women and children. Before them, a wave of what the report named "chain migration" that formed the inexpert labor of migrant’s community. These three phases came after the first Muslim migrants who were the forerunners of the whole present Muslim migration community.

Despite the anti-sentiments against Muslims in UK, quite influencing voices called for cleansing people’s negative ideas about Islam. This helped in a spread of a more maturity and consciousness whenever Islam or Muslims are the subject. This awareness came due to the efforts done by Muslims there when defending their faith in various ways. The British side as well shared a huge part in passing much legislation that assured safety and protection to all the discriminated ethnic groups in UK not only Muslims (Allen 4).
This positive wave, in fact, drew a more optimistic and hopefully peaceful Muslim presence in UK (10).

3. Cultural Studies: Cultural Materialism

Globalization had made the world a small city where people are no more xenophobic towards each other. "For the first time in history, across much of the world, to be foreign is a perfectly normal condition". The actual and real borders that form the land limits of any country in the world had gone and disappeared forever thanks to the opened windows of Technology that made different people and cultures in touch with each other. This revolutionary step in the human history created a homogeneous multi-ethnical and multi-cultural society. This equation of homogeneity within plurality to create a better reality is expressed also in literature where some theories helped in valorising this concept as it is the case with Cultural Studies.

The massively increasing rates and effects of migration and globalization are forcibly calling for an intercultural communication (Samovar et.al 4). With future estimations for the continuing growth of human interactions from different parts of the world, an urgent need is called for learning the intercultural communication skills; otherwise, a huge gap will be left between cultures (4). This may be called an advanced-awareness in the sense that it needs more than a usual consciousness and understanding of the pluralistic societies or the cross-cultural dimensions that draw the human relations in order to reach a more than expected positive results.

In fact there are many scholars that were significant in establishing and developing different ideologies within Cultural Studies. E. P. Thompson, Richard Hoggart, and
Raymond Williams pioneered the field of Cultural Studies. Thompson focused on historiography; Hoggart raised the question of the impact of media on the working class culture in addition to his establishment of a center of Cultural Studies that Williams contributed a lot in its development. Mathew Arnold, also, is one of the major figures that had a say in Cultural Studies. Actually, His views in this field of literature were attacked by later critics. He was accused of his less determined and limited use of the word culture. In fact, this is not a weakness in his views rather but his theory proves the power of the word Culture. It is a very general and broad concept so how it would be limited in theory?

Raymond Williams is a key figure in Cultural studies. He is considered the leading "British socialist thinker, intellectual, and cultural activist" (Higgins 117). His works on Cultural Studies are seen not only as a contribution to the field but a whole invention. One reason for this is his deep treatment of the word ‘Culture’ and his exploration of the difference between the big C –culture and the small-c culture. Williams could substitute the big C ‘Culture’ with art and small c ‘culture’ with life in its real sense, but he could not give more exact synonyms instead due to his fidelity to his work.

In an article written on Raymond’s Cultural Studies, Catherine Gallagher believes that the key role that society plays in targeting literature cannot be denied. She assumes that "literature was in social practices, was itself a social practice, yielding representations of other social phenomena, and could be analyzed as the worldview of a class, an ethnic group, a nation, or a gender at a particular historical moment". This means that the social background is always there in any piece of literature because it is society which provides the row materials for literature to be discussed. Ultimately, society can never be restricted to one aspect, but it is a range of components like class, gender, and religion. These
different components of society are, in a way or in another, the subject of literature and, literature in return represents and reflects society (307).

According to Gallagher’s analysis, Cultural Studies differ from any other approach or theory in the sense that it studies literature without formal and methodological restrictions (308), ‘Cultural’ is a vague word that means lots of things. Studying the cultural side of something means studying it from different angles such as its society, economics, politics, nationality, history, religion, and linguistics (308). In an attempt for Williams to define the cultural theory, he says "I would then define the theory of culture as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life" (Higgins 47). This last expression, "in a whole way of life", denotes a lot in the sense that the so-called elements are what form the existence and the unique identities of human beings. These elements have been already mentioned as society and religion. Supposing this study is built on a specific ethnic group like ‘Arab Muslims’ that has a specific religious affiliation with a specific political and economic views along with a totally different historical and cultural background from the others, in this case, these elements cooperate together to form a unique entity and a ‘way of life’ for this group that cannot be mixed with others.

Since Cultural Studies’ essence is ‘culture’ and they are cultural by origin, then they cannot be generalized under one concept and it is hard to be referred to as one entity. In fact, there are plenty of Cultural Studies: the British, the American and even the Arab Cultural Studies. Chris Barker claims that if critics depend only on the British Cultural Studies, then what can be found as results will not suit all the other studies under this umbrella. For this, he says "Cultural Studies does not speak with one voice" (4).

In reality, Cultural Studies are very difficult to be tackled from one point of view as it was already mentioned. For that purpose, Barker in his book Cultural Studies: Theory
**and Practice** proposed Bennet’s view to this field because it suits the analytical object of this attempted study (Barker 6). Bennet sees Cultural Studies as being:

An interdisciplinary field in which perspectives from different disciplines can be selectively drawn on to examine the relations of culture and power...Cultural Studies is concerned with all those practices, institutions and systems of classification through which there are inculcated in a population particular values, beliefs, competencies, routines of life and habitual forms of conduct. (7)

This definition gives a general overview on this concept. The inclusion of many sub-disciplines and areas of study in relation to culture is what characterizes this wide discipline. According to Bennet, Cultural Studies can be applied as a discipline in the Academic field by determining the involved fields of study that may interact with the concept of culture as well as the power relations as Bennett already stated (7). Such a study will call into investigation many institutions and bodies of a certain cultural group. This will involve mostly language, traditions, political and economic systems, religions, and social structures (7).

Barker pointed out the importance of ‘representation’ in Cultural Studies. This idea sheds light on the way societies are formed and how their "Cultural representations" make sense in real life (Barker 8). The question of portraying a certain human cultural aspect has to endure a meaning through which this portrayal or representation is produced in a specific context (8).

Having all these variant and different ideas within Cultural Studies, Cultural Materialism does not seem an odd contribution for this field. Chris Barker explained this in the following "cultural studies has developed a form of cultural materialism that is
concerned with exploring how and why meanings are inscribed at the moment of production" (9). Because of the necessity to adapt with the modern life changes, Cultural Studies have developed a sub branch that can easily represent the current cultural scene. Industrialization, Materialism, and Capitalism are some of the features of modern life (9).

Marvin Harris’s view to Cultural Materialism can never be denied when Cultural studies are the subject of discussion. For him, Cultural Materialism is meant to be the investigator of different and common features that define diverse societies\(^{13}\). Harris asserts four main classifications for human beings that determine their socio-psychological standing. First, he states that people’s need for satisfaction comes within the illusion of making specific diets that instead gain them more weight. Second, the laziness in doing any action exists by giving it lesser care. Third, accomplishing the inner desires with an interest in sex. Fourth, the need for an emotional support that boosts and increases people’s self-esteem (13).

According to Marvin Harris, Cultural Materialism is, as quoted in Moore’s book, "’based on the simple premise that human social life is a response to the practical problems of earthy existence’”\(^{14}\). This means that Harris’ contribution to the field of literary theories was by inventing the concept itself but by giving it its ‘materialistic’ features, Moore believes (204).

In Moore’s anthropological theories, Marvin Harris’ main ideas concerning cultural Materialism are explained clearly. Moore states that Harris differentiates Cultural Materialism among many other theories by specifying it by a number of features that makes its utility unique and different. Harris points out key terms: mental, behavioural, emic, and, etic (Moore 208). These terms are coined to understand the relationship between humans, cultures and societies. The behavioural meaning encloses all the human being
signals and motions while "Mental events", on the other hand, "are all the thoughts and feelings that we humans experience within our minds" (208). The etic and emic, however, are concerned with the concept of perception. The emic is related to the personal interpretation of the concerned person but the etic is about the others’ opinions (209). According to Moore, this kind of differentiation that Harris made between the four concepts will make the study of "human actions and thoughts" much easier (209).

Harris settled main definite concepts within the study of human actions and reactions according to a cultural background: Infrastructure, Structure, and Superstructure. For Harris, the infrastructure is what guides the changes and transformations within the other concepts. His Infrastructure contains two approaches: one of "production", the other of "reproduction" (Ellis 16). "The mode of production", as Barker explained, is the arena of "subsistence needs" (207). All what is needed for humans to have economic and technological requirements is under the mode of production that forms the first facet of the etic behavioural Infrastructure (207). Concerning the second facet of this category, the mode of reproduction depends on "demography; mating patterns; fertility, natality, morality; nurturance of infants; medical control of demographic patterns; contraception, abortion, infanticide" (16). All these components will guarantee the maintenance of societies. The "Etic Behavioural Structure" that Harris explained next within this process is also a coin of two faces. One is "domestic economy"; the other is "Political economy" (16). The first one is concerned with all what is related to social and domestic affairs; the second one, however, has a political tendency in dealing with the other issues that govern life, to name few, "political organization, factions, clubs, associations, corporations; division of labor, taxation, tribute…" (16). Later, the Etic Behavioural Superstructure which Harris categorized fourth contains all the supplementary needs of life as art, literature, religion, and other practices of entertainment (16).
Harris, in addition to this formation of etic and behavioural pyramidal structure, states an emic mental superstructure to cover all what is related to scientific studies about different fields as zoology, philosophy, botany, and superstitions (Ellis 16). Barker, in his book *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice*, explained the relationship between these components of the cultural materialist model of Cultural system set by Marvin Harris. He states:

‘Infrastructure’, Harris wrote, ‘is the principal interface between culture and nature, the boundary across which the ecological, chemical, and physical restraints to which human action is subject interact with the principal sociocultural practices aimed at overcoming or modifying those restraints’.

(209)

Cultural Materialism in that way shows that any change within infrastructure level will pass its shift and modification to the other levels of structure and superstructure. The infrastructure in Harris’ words, has a "strategic priority", as Barker pointed (209). One reason for considering it a priority is that any improvement or novelty at the level of infrastructure would make a revolutionary transformation on the Structure and superstructure levels. "Innovations in infrastructure tend to produce greater systemic changes since their reverberations are felt in the other arenas of structure, superstructure and mental/emic superstructure" (Barker 210). Moore also agrees when saying, "There is a simply greater probability that innovations in infrastructure will cause changes in other realms…” (214).

In order to simplify the typology that Marvin Harris set for cultural relationships with Humans and societies, the features of infrastructure must be recognized very well to be able of foreseeing and knowing the resulted consequences of any mutation that may restructure the Structure and Superstructure (Barker 210).
After discussing Harris’ view of Cultural Materialism, one must redraw what migration literature has to do with Cultural Materialism for the sake of exploring the theme of culture in literatures of Migration. According to Frank Soren’s book, Günter Grass, Milan Kundera, Salman Rushdie, and Jan Kjærstad are the finest modern examples of migration literary men. Each of them had his own way in targeting the essentials of this topic that, in a way or in another, they had a relationship with. These writers, in fact, are considered the pioneers of the Twentieth century migration literature. The contribution of the Polish Grass was appreciated heavily by the following writers, especially by Rushdie who admitted, "Grass was one of the principle exponents of a so-called literature of migration" (Frank 8). Aside from his appreciation to Grass, the Indian writer Salman Rushdie went so far in claiming that literature of migration needs not only the character’s migration experiences but both the character’s and the writer’s involvements in migration (8). Although Rushdie’s work the *Satanic Verses* (1988), met a huge controversy and condemnation in the literary grounds, it is still considered a revolutionary piece of migration.

Coming to the Twenty-first century, literatures of migration continued a noticeable development and spread within the readers’ community. Among the Arab Muslim writers in this field, the Sudanese writer Leila Aboulela who is one of the main late literary presenters who depicts variant migration themes and spotlights the case of Arab-Muslims living outside their mother land in almost all her works. *Minaret* (2005) is a novel written by Aboulela to manifest perfectly what any literature needs to be called migrant throughout its sequence of events and explored themes. The analysis of these last will be the subject matter of this dissertation with the help of British cultural studies.
What Cultural Materialism offers for this work, is that it provides a suitable background to the work to be analyzed. As it is mentioned before, both of them rely on the idea that culture can be studied in relation to other elements. These elements form the cultural identity of any cultural group. This simple idea can be applied on any literary piece by extracting the cultural elements and how they interact with and influence each other.
Notes and References:


5 Khaleda Khan is a theorist and a detector of the first anti-Muslim sentiments in London. (*Islamophobia*): 4.


Chapter Two:
The Concrete Reflections of Displaced Identities

Migration has a great effect on time and history. It forms it; it creates it; and it defines which way it takes. Salman Rushdie describes history in a chain of moves, "[t]his is the dance of history in our age: slow, slow, quick, quick, slow, back and forth and from side to side, we step across these fixed and shifting lines". While discussing the issue of mass migration and displacement, Salman Rushdie came up with a formula for this process in the modern era. He assumes that time is not linear; rather it follows an unconventional wavy and movable way where nothing is assured to be unchangeable. If this is the case with time and history, so it is the same with people living in the same time and making the same history. This means that people can be displaced not because they want to but because this is the way it is arranged to. This makes this abnormal phenomenon decades ago, a very normal one nowadays. Displacement, therefore, became a natural phenomenon. In this context, it is not related to post-colonial relations specifically but to the whole process of heading towards a new different life in a new different place. The understanding of displacement as a theme in fiction comes in its best way when it is offered by a migrant whose life and personal experiences are part of this fiction. For this, the concern of this chapter is to try to project the different dimensions of displacement in a way that makes it a subject to Cultural Materialist analysis.

Russell, Connell, and White believe that digging deep into different literatures of migration helps in giving a sense of reality to certain themes like "place perception, landscape symbolism, senses of displacement and transformation, communities lost and
created a new, exploitation, nostalgia, attitudes towards return, family relationships, self-denial and self-discovery, and many more\textsuperscript{2}. Counting migrant narratives that are full of vivant themes is more credible than any other historical account.

Cultural Studies’ focus is, undoubtedly, culture. Cultural Materialism, in particular, has a unique view to the place of culture in a materialistic context. Marvin Harris’ Cultural Materialism, as theorized in the previous chapter, can be practically extracted from Leila Aboulela’s \textit{Minaret}.

A common logic says that in any society, human actions and thoughts play a great role in the progress or failure that this community may meet. The interaction between the three core etic and behavioural components of the cultural pyramid set by Harris helps in determining this fact.

For Harris, the infrastructure, structure and superstructure are what define human behaviours and mentality\textsuperscript{3}. The infrastructure of Najwa’s original society, in general and family in particular, is damaged very deeply to the point that the other levels of structure and superstructure follow this change. In this novel, the three components that Harris talked about are related toughly. The infrastructure that forms the basic need changes after the collapse of the protagonist family. This family is in a continuous changing scale that touches the political life with the fall of the government that is followed later by an immediate escape and fear of other falls.

The Sudanese society, of this novel, was challenging a very serious period that knew political divisions between who supported the government and who opposed it. Anwar is an example of a radical opponent for Najwa’s father’s government\textsuperscript{4}. The social relations were no better than the political circumstances in Sudan. The structure of the family that appeared in many instances, shaking and unstable, in Najwa’s family and her
friend’s too where parents have no serious responsibility towards their children in a time they focus all their attention to social charity. The many Western-like parties and traditions that colour the Sudanese society are another break in the infrastructural and structural levels that Harris alerted in his Cultural Materialism.

In fact, Harris highlighted the importance of fulfilling the needs of society at the first and most crucial level⁵. The apparent divisions within the Sudanese society between different slices of people are very prominent in Minaret. The difference between the poor and the rich, the educated and the uneducated, the English formed and the local, the devoted Muslims and the moderate ones, the girls wearing Hijab and the ones do not. This heterogeneous pattern in Najwa’s home land makes her lost in herself. She was passively active in this novel when everything was turning around these conflicts and divergence. Corruption made life worse in an already weak infrastructural composition. Anwar’s pointing out over and over the fact that Najwa’s father was a corrupt political man could not leave Najwa peaceful. He told her,“[h]e’s embezzling money. This life you're living - your new car, your new house. Your family's getting richer by the day ... Can't you see, it's corrupt?” (Minaret 69).

The economic level, in accordance with the social one, changed to make this family going through an emergency case that ended up with the trial of the father, the death of the mother; the homeless case of twins in a foreign place with one became a maid and the other a slave to drugs and addiction. The economic situation paves the way for displacement and migration and helps in the spread of globalization aspects and expectancies. "Money did that. Money gave us rights. ‘I wanted to stay here the whole year’" (Minaret 145).
These changes on the infrastructure and structure leads to other changes on the superstructure. As it is mentioned before, the influence is obligatory on the superstructural level when the other two have already changed (Moore 7). In this case the change is portrayed in two ways, one with a negative spirit and the other with a positive one.

(Dis)placement, in fact, cannot not always be taken as a negative aspect. It can drive different outcomes. This term can be referred to as one of the mobile social phenomenon. Aboulela develops two-edged experiences of a British-Arab-Muslim family through which she could juxtapose twin characters in a context of placement and displacement caused by migration. In Frank’s book:

Voltaire, on the other hand, chose exile instead of imprisonment, as he considered the displacement liberating for his intellectual development. With James Joyce we normally speak of a voluntary exile, a self-chosen physical as well as spiritual distancing that was very much a premise for his artistic success.⁶

The story starts with the peak of change that happened to the main character ‘Najwa’, her first presentation to the readers denotes not a regular maid suffering girl but a person who would never be in this situation in ordinary life. Right from the beginning, a whole story was born: "I’ve come down in the world. I've slid to a place where the ceiling is low and there isn't much room to move" (Minaret 7). Here where the change is expressed in the beginning of the novel. Najwa, the Sudanese Bourgeois, is now, a Londoner maid.

At the beginning of the novel, Aboulela expresses an interesting impression whereby she gave the season of spring a gloomy and pessimistic tone. She says, "… and in spring, the season of birth, there is always disappointment. Now it is at its best, now it is poised like a mature woman whose beauty is no longer fresh but still surprisingly potent"
Spring symbolizes disappointment in this migrant author’s eyes. Unsurprisingly, this is not the only case where authors relate spring to negative aspects of life, but for Aboulela, this may be taken as a good base for introducing the exclusive feeling of facing a new environment where migrants find it difficult to cope with.

(Dis)placement in this novel takes two forms. The one through which, the writer exposes the logical outcome of being dislocated somewhere and the other that she manifests in its perfect way. Omar and Najwa are twins who the writer uses to contrast two different realities. For Najwa, being displaced in place and in social class is not an excuse to stop her life or ruin it as her brother Omar does. She becomes more mature and wise in her considerations and life perception. At one instance, she says "Something in her voice makes me guess that her brother is younger than her, rather than older. I wonder if he is the youth I met in the lobby" (Minaret 103).

The social position of this family is obviously on a changing scale. The father is a hard worker since his childhood. After he meets the to-be ‘mama’, a dramatic change happens to his life whereby he founds, counting on her aristocratic origins, a bourgeoisie family that lives under the best life conditions in Khartoum. "think of your father, kids. I started out with nothing, not a father, not a good education, nothing. Now I’m going to have my own jet " (80). This shift from a poor to a wealthy man did not last for a long time. The government, which this father is one of its icons, is accused of corruption and many other serious charges. This leads to a total transformation in the way life is perceived by the whole family. The mentality of social class prejudice is prominent in the society that Najwa and Omar were part of. Charity is the interest of any bourgeois family. Najwa’s mother is no exception with the interest in helping and funding in need organizations as Chechire house and the orphanage (32).
The displacement that first happened in this novel is in mind, where Omar, Najwa’s twin, distress the idea that Sudan is all right without the British colonialism. He and his friends are a symbol for a careless and thoughtless generation. This appears in Najwa’s words: "Omar believed we had been better off under the British and it was a shame that they left" (*Minaret* 21).

The theme of displacement in the novel is very prominent whenever the story progresses, Aboulela cannot miss to mention a displacement instance where one of the characters moves from one place to another. Samir, Najwa’s cousin, was the one who holds the first candle of leaving and studying abroad "Atlantic College in Wales" (29). He enlightens the idea for Omar, the one who can never cope within his own culture and wants to cut the ties with Sudan (28-29-42). Randa, another prominent and influencing character in the first phase of Najwa’s life, also goes through the shifting process (42). Like Samir, Randa seeks education in Britain. In fact, she fails in her studies but her (dis)placement to Edinburg assures her a qualified doctor job and career (360). Her case, along with Samir’s, approves a good outcome of a serious unquestionable success in a different cultural setting. Doctora Zeinab and her daughter Lamia, the Najwa’s employers, reinforce the educational success (311).

Homesickness is one of the immediate reflections of displacement. As Aboulela’s opinion suggests, this feeling appears in lots of the daily activities that displaced people do. Najwa’s work as a maid does not stop her from feeling home. The physical and actual meaning of home, in this novel, is not very important or apparent. Najwa can feel that in a country and a culture that she does not belong to. Being with a family and feeling that she is a part of it makes her happy and satisfied with the who she became, this appears in her confession, "It still takes me by surprise how natural I am in this servant role" (*Minaret* 21).
And in another example, Aboulela states, "Baglau'a and basboosa, jars of green olives, tins of foul, even frozen stuffed vine leaves and moulokhia" (311). These are what Najwa’s employer’s mother, ‘Doctora Zeinab’, brought from Egypt (311).

The variety of places that are opened to Arab-Muslims and many migrants is explored as well in the novel. Besides Britain, Canada-exactly Ontario-is another destination for Arab Muslim migrants like Sudanese. Najwa’s uncle ‘Salah’ founds an entirely independent life in Canada with his family. For Najwa, Ontario was an optional destination to take when her life fell apart (Minaret 191). Different nationalities and countries that are mentioned in Minaret expose the reader to the reality of a multicultural world community. Ethiopians, Sudanese, Egyptians, English, Scottish, are some of the identities mentioned in the novel.

The flashbacks that are used in this novel are quite suitable to the flow of the story’s events. In other words, this simple technique helped in showing rather than telling the reality of difference between the characters’ past and presence. The first impression that this novel leaves for its readers is the structure of its plot. In fact, it is composed of six parts each one has a certain number of chapters. These chapters are not chronologically ordered but they present a kind of flashbacks. The story starts with Najwa saying "I’ve come down in the world" (Minaret 1). This claim takes the reader directly to the climax where things edged to a peak of a complete awkwardness. Najwa thinks of her past life with her brother, and she recognizes well the value of the fortune they are no longer living in.

Globalization is another face through which displacement appears. Apparently, the migration process will be viewed with a more materialistic zoom. The economic state of migrants is like a chain that brings them from a finite position to another. "I dreamt dreams
shaped by pop songs and American films" (*Minaret* 57). This saying may serve the whole essence of globalization. In *Minaret*, Aboulela made a very keen link of what the migrant family was like and became after leaving their homeland ‘Khartoum’.

It is obvious that the family from which the twins came out to the world had a questionable economic and social state. Investigating the origin of this family in the novel was a bitter truth that the Protagonist found it hard to believe or even cope with, especially when things started to be clearer about her father’s work. She says "[h]e had married above himself, to better himself. His life story was of how he moved from a humble background to become manager of the President's office via marriage into an old wealthy family. I didn't like him to tell it, it confused me. I was too much like my mother" (16). This confession of Najwa about what she knows about her father makes her neither proud of her origins nor comfortable with the fancy life she lives in.

The duplicity in Anwar’s personality is one of the globalization effects. While Najwa considers London as her second home, Anwar, her ex-boyfriend sees is impressive. At this level, he shows a contradiction in his opinion. He is against going outside his country and enjoying holidays abroad, against Western music and traditions main while, and he is very pragmatic and non-religious man. "I tried to see London as he would see it, not like my second home. 'The West is very impressive.'" (*Minaret* 228). Meanwhile, Anwar hates everything from the West and he is always criticizing Najwa for her Westernized life. He loves his country and wants to protect it from corruption that people like Najwa’s father may commit, at the same time, he feels angry with everything. He thinks that the Arabs have ‘double standards’ (272) and hypocritical while he is displaying this through all his actions and unsure affiliations. This fact about Anwar shows the greedy
character that may do anything to get to his goal and this in itself a Western-capitalist and materialist thinking that is brought to his society by globalization.

In fact, Sudan, unlike most of the European countries, benefits from a suitable infrastructure to be in a better economic state. According to a report stating demographic data about the Muslim countries, Sudan is a young-aged populated country. This criterion of a country led by a young generation would logically overstep the ordinary expectations to boost the national economy. This report states many facts and statistics about the Arab World’s countries performance at the demographic level in relation to other sectors like Economy. But unfortunately, this workforce of youth either did not meet many chances and opportunities for getting a job, or having the governmental support (39). "[t]he youth unemployment challenge in the region, therefore, is enormous: the Arab states are characterized by one of the highest regional growth rates in working-age population and extreme volatility in economic growth and decline" (39).

Globalization is a decisive ingredient in making a colourful atmosphere around the world. Conventionally, it omits the distances and makes new ties between different parts of the world.

With the increasing globalization process one might argue that we are moving towards a multicultural society with a greater cross-cultural understanding. People migrate and travel as never before, which result in a mix of the world’s population. Other cultures influence us and we thereby learn about each other. Globalization is a form of distance displacement "the party at the American club was in full swing when Omar and I arrived. We walked into the tease of red and blue disco lights and the Gap Band's 'SayOops Upside Your Head'" (38). Coca-cola t-shirt, the disco
culture, Boney M's songs, Pepsi, Paco Rabanne perfumes (Minaret 83-72-257) are some examples of globalization in the novel.

Interestingly, till the eighth chapter within the first part, the writer decides to introduce how the family gets to London escaping from the scandal that the twins’ father caused them. At this level, the difference between the main characters of the novel in absorbing the whole situation is not the same. While Najwa cares about her father’s fate after his detention and the vague future that her family will face, her brother seems from the first day in London as a Londoner. "We can't go to a disco because of Baba,' I said to Omar. 'What do you want people to say? The man's on trial for his life and his children are dancing in London.'" (92). Omar sarcastically rejects her words especially after she said that if they were in their homeland in such circumstances they would not dare to have fun in public (91). This superficial thinking, as Omar would agree with, is original; it is not something new so as to Omar’s reaction. This means that the way both work things out in their minds is different despite their one and same ground that they come from as twins (91). Even after all what happens to Omar, he has not changed. None of the problems he meets in his life could bring him on the right track. When Najwa describes Tamer for him as the Perfect guy, Omar does not like that, as if Najwa is offending him by listing all the opposite characteristics of his personality. Omar calls Tamer a wimp "'What a wimp!'" (143). Tamer presents the good side of displacement regardless to its reason "I tell him about Doctora Zeinab, Mai and Lamya. 'Her brother,' I say, 'is only nineteen and is so devout and good. No cigarettes, no girlfriend, no clubbing, no drinking. He has a beard and goes to the mosque every day.'" (143).

One of the things that this novel in its publication time must discuss is Islamophobic practices against Muslims in Britain after 9/11 events but in this novel,
readers can hardly touch this feeling. The fact that some Muslims cannot integrate in Britain and elsewhere in the West may be prevented by some of the stereotypical and Islamophobic practices. In *Minaret*, two examples may be deprived to illustrate one explicit non-Muslim hatred action and another mentioning of a Muslim extremism possibility in the novel. The first is the incident that happens with Najwa in a bus:

Laughter from behind me... I hear footsteps come up behind me, see a blur of denim. He says, You Muslim scum', then the shock of cool liquid on my head and face. I gasp and taste it, Tizer. He goes back to his friends - they are laughing. My chest hurts and I wipe my eyes. (126)

The other example was in the park when Najwa and Tamer, her employer’s brother, were walking his niece Mai, "I sense the slight unease he inspires in the people around us. I turn and look at him through their eyes. Tall, young, Arab-looking, dark eyes and the heard, just like a terrorist" (*Minaret* 155). This is how Arab Muslims are stereotyped in the West. Yet, Aboulela clearly states that she does not want this novel to be on the grounds of Politics but readers should take it as it is. This is stated whenever Aboulela is asked to talk about her *Minaret* in a BBC talk show, Leila Aboulela claimes that weak intention to raise negativity after she breaks the rules of Islam depiction in the West (interview).

Politically, Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret* is a valid portrayal of the real situation that the Sudanese government faced in that period of time. The cause of the displacement at the first stage is due to the collapse of the father’s government that is obviously a corrupt one. Meanwhile, Sudan was in an ambivalent scale in which it faced radical governmental issues from time to time. This political instability carried within it unceasing changes that touched all the building structures in Sudan. "All political parties were banned after the
1989 coup until 1999\textsuperscript{10}. This step in the Sudanese politics came logically because of the continuous conflicts and struggles that touched the whole process.

Sudan is a multicultural society. Being within different races, nationalities and is not strange for the nature of Sudanese. Migration, therefore, is a common reality there. According to the same source, \textit{Sudan: A Country Study}:

Sudan is divided between its Arab heritage, identified with the North, and its African heritage in the South. The two groups are divided along linguistic, religious, racial, and economic lines, and the cleavage has generated ethnic tensions, clashes, and civil war. (5)

This multiculturalism and diversity within the Sudanese society has been projected in \textit{Minaret} through the first phase of the characters living in Sudan. Najwa’s family had maids from different nationalities. Importing maids, who are close of being slaves among the aristocratic families, is common at that time. This leaves many class differentials among the other social entities that are far away from being wealthy or even middle class citizens. Ethiopian maids and nannies are a normal advantage for the wealthy individuals in any society. They spread in Sudan like in the case of Najwa (129) and her friend Randa’s family and they are taken abroad too whenever the families get displaced as in the case of Najwa’s Aunty Eva (\textit{Minaret} 218). Interestingly, an Arabic country like Sudan was suffering of many social inequities. Berry’s book states:

Moreover, the South’s geographical isolation has hindered that region’s political, economic, and social development. Imperial Britain acknowledged the North–South division by establishing separate administrations for the two regions. Independent Sudan further reinforced this cleavage by treating African Southerners as a minority group. (3)
In a case where any of the most important components of any society collapse or change, all the other branches and sectors will follow this change one after another. This is one idea of what Cultural Materialism and common logic proposes. Historically, Sudan, as it is already mentioned, has gone through lots of conflicts and wars. In addition to these political tensions, the nature of that hybrid society in terms of its different nationalities and origins makes it less stable according to what is mentioned in the book edited by LaVerle Berry:

Lastly, the civil war in the South has shaped Sudan’s post independence history. This conflict has retarded the country’s social and economic development, encouraged political instability, and led to an endless cycle of weak and ineffective military and civilian governments. The conflict continued to affect Sudan’s people and institutions into the early twenty-first century. (3)

Another crucial life event in the story that is exposed slightly is when Najwa, the maid, sees back her life from beneath. She reveals lately that her twin is in jail and her mother died in a near hospital to the family’s flat she is working for. "I used to take them for granted. I didn't know a lot about them - our succession of Ethiopian maids, houseboys, our gardener - but I must have been close to them, absorbing their ways, so that now, years later and in another continent, I am one of them" (Minaret 129). This feeling of revising her life and figuring out the gaps left between the past and the present makes her more mature to cope quickly with the current changes. This acceptance and satisfaction to displacement is what differentiates her from her twin. For this, displacement, in Najwa’s case, is placement and reinforcement and in the case of Omar, it is displacement with all its negative aspects.
The standards of Najwa have been changed dramatically, her concerns after this trauma, raises to fit the awakened identity she found within herself. Catching the sessions of Tajweed and sticking to prayer exact times replaces her concerns of looking pretty and having fun. Another point is that Najwa, while she was in Khartoum, she got used of the follower position. She does not have a real charismatic personality or a unique attitude. In fact, this represents a crucial category in the Arab society, that of women. Najwa keeps this mentality even when she is living in London. "I never know which point of view I support. I find myself agreeing with whoever is speaking or with the one I like best. And I become anxious that someone's feelings will get hurt, or worse take serious offence, as sometimes happens, and stop coming to the mosque" (123). This case stays with her for a long time because it is rooted in her personality since her childhood. In comparison to Najwa, the British-born Muslims find it better to be clearly expressive and honest and charismatic.

Muslim residents in any European or a non-Muslim country may face the risk of eating a non-halal food. This hardship in being always aware of what to eat and what to drink is the price that Muslims must pay for living abroad.

My children grew up in Oman where we always had maids. They're very spoilt and can't look after themselves. Tamer can't even make himself a cup of tea! I wouldn't mind if he ate out, McDonald's or at his college, but none of that is halal here and he's always been strict. He will only eat halal meat. I don't know where he got his religiousness from, none of us is as observant as him'. (131)

The globalized and the still-colonized mind that Omar makes it sure that his identity and personality are possessed and not valid, "[f]or my brother, anything Western was unmistakably and unquestionably better than anything Sudanese" (203).
Being a Muslim, and adjusting quickly and perfectly to an exotic society without losing any standard is really hard. Najwa could survive at last but not that easy. She suffers a lot and pays a huge price before she can get back to normal. "I wanted to pray in the same way that I wanted to sprout wings and fly. There was no point in yearning, was there? No point in stretching out. In my own way, in my own style, I was sliding. First my brother, and now it was my turn to come down in the world " (277).

Soren Frank’s analysis of the themes and styles that characterize any migration literary text is very applicant on this novel. If taking the five themes that he sets, Aboulela, first, includes a great part of her life in this work in composing the character of Najwa (Aboulela ). This is about the experience of migration that Leila Aboulela went through in her real life and in Minaret. As quoted in Frank’s book from Rebecca Walkowitz, "the biography of the writer may influence the way that books are written and received” (qtd. in Frank 17). Another criterion is also evident whereby the author and the protagonist share a good sense and perception of displacement. Also, the question of "nation and nationalism" is extremely present with the development of the character of Anwar and Omar, both shares a kind of ambivalence in recognizing the concept of nationalism. Then, the definition of the west and Europe is shown in the novel as a struggle to choose one point of view towards anything European by acceptance or rejection. Fifth, the concept of globalization, in Minaret makes a dominant atmosphere for all the characters. Concerning the stylistic features, Aboulela did not miss the "multi perspectivism" (Frank 19). As the point of view, she chose for this work Minaret. Everything is around Najwa’s perception. Another point Soren talked about is the composition of the narrative form that makes this novel’s characters, plot, and characters interacting together. The chronology of the work was disordered by the use of flashbacks. This has a relation to the main theme discussed that of displacement. Not to forget the last stylistic feature, Aboulela’s unique use of language through which she could combine the English with some Arabic words like "Ya habibi ya Ahmed" (Minaret 116), "baglau'a and basboosa" (311). This adds a cultural value to the language.
(Dis)placement, in this chapter, takes two forms. It proves to be a provoker of a messy and unfixed life for some, and an excellent exchange for others. The analysis of *Minaret*, therefore, depends on the analysis of the characters in a help of Frank Soren ideas and surely Harris Marvin’s views. Through the social, political, economic, and cultural changes that mastered the scene of Najwa’s life, interacted all to revive a character’s identity and destroys another’s.

Accordingly, the process of change occurs not only on an individual level but on the whole surrounding scene; it is a determinism in the continuation and progression of societies. This change, interestingly, may bring different outcomes to the same society either positive or negative; Either placement or displacement. This variation is explained very well in the book of Farank Soren: Migration and Literature, despite the fact that he devotes his book’s main chapters to highlight other authors’ contributions in this field. It is of a great source to form the background for analyzing ant literary text of this kind.
Notes and References:


Chapter Three:

"Go…you will return": Religion as a Remedy for Displaced Identities

Muslims’ core subject of discussion in migration circumstances is doubtlessly their religious identity. Displacement in general, is expected logically to bring lots of changes at all levels of the displaced lives. Ironically, the majority of Muslim writers try to depict only the dark side of Muslim lives in the West without giving any credit to the positive conditions that only few of writers could transmit. Leila Aboulela is one of the Muslim writers of the modern era who tries throughout her work, Minaret, to take another direction of exploring how life can be better anywhere if only the Muslim does not lose his or her own identity within a coloured pot full of different identities and cultures. Tariq Ramadan is one of the influential Muslim figures. He tries, through his many works, to give revised and reread versions of what Muslim migrants need in order to live in more proper conditions. He has successfully presented a middle solution for Muslims to be far away from radical extremism and full assimilation in Western countries. This view is literally the best that can be suggested for both-sided integration: The integration of Muslims in the Western cultures and the acception of Westerners to Muslims without prejudments of Islam as terrorism and extremism.

Minaret is one of the novels that gives birth to this view in literature through the development of its protagonist ‘Najwa’. Najwa, in simple words, symbolizes the kind of a Muslim, male is or female, who finds his or her identity through religion after struggling very much in a non-linear line of a different life, in a different place, and with different
people and ideologies. The journey for finding the Muslim migrant identity is the journey for finding God. This idea is also tackled in Nesrin Koç’s research. She says "Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret* portrays how faith can be used as a power that eases the trauma of migration, and in fact provides the individual with the sense of belonging and rootedness in the host country, and hence facilitating integration".¹

For most of the interviews made with Leila Aboulela about *Minaret*, religion is the main reference. Due to her raising conditions like any Arab Muslim living the migration symptoms, Aboulela finds in distracted religious ties and homesickness a sensitive subject that can be only exposed through writing. She claims that she discovers writing just when she is in need of something through which she can express her homesickness and unique history.² In fact, this works as a kind of psychological treatment and relief. In the already mentioned book about *Migration and literature*, Frank says "I do believe that the Author, to some extent, colours his or her work" (15). This line fits perfectly the case of the case study’s writer, Leila Aboulela. This Sudanese author is a Muslim migrant who herself experiences lots of incidents in her life that find place between the lines of *Minaret*. Leila and Najwa have different raising conditions. Leila has a Muslim family which supports and encourages her to know more about her religion. Her mother and grandmother create in her the passion of seeking for a happy life under Islam.³

Unlike Leila, Najwa’s family provides her with everything except an instinct religious awareness. Despite that both have many things in common. While answering one of the BBC World Club audience’s questions, the writer confesses that her works cannot be deprived from her actual life because of the so many similarities in both. For *Minaret*, she says that her twenties are the period in which she experiences shifting and displacement from Sudan to Britain, and the same happens to Najwa (Interview).
In the arena of International Migration and Ethnic Relations, the converted Swedish writer Anne Sophie Roald sees the contemporary relations between the West and the Islamic nations in a more understanding way. Through her book *Women in Islam: The Western Experience*, Roald states that the cultural happenstances between Muslims and Westerners boosted the kind of relationship both had in the past. She believes that recently there is a progress in elucidating Islam. Through this book, she tries to hypothesize the situation. "The Islamic presence in Europe", Roald states "is perceived as a homogenous mass"4. This contradiction between "homogeneity" and "mass" holds a deep meaning that simply summarizes the nature of the effect left by the mixture between Islam with all its variations and the other religions in the West. Despite the clash that may happen in such situations, there is always a way for a compromise (3). Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret* is the best evidence of this kind of relationship because it delivers a good spirit of finding inner peace in exile (Koç 1). Aboulela is described in Koç’s work as a "faith-driven" fictionist because of the religious tendency that she most of the time explores as a crucial theme (4).

For some Muslims, the consciousness of their religious identity does not appear till they contradict themselves to the Westerners (Roald 5). This process of identification by contradiction is one of the postcolonial processes in the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer. This idea takes different ways in the novel. But more deeply, feeling the faith itself and understand it needs more than a contradiction by name and generalities. In an interview set by the BBC Channel with *Minaret’s* writer, a very important observation noted by Harriet Gilbert, the Channel’s interviewer, says "Muslim women friends try to persuade her to take shelter in her religion. A religion from which so far she has been semi-detached" (Interview). The protagonist’s decision to follow the steps of the Muslim community in London is a choice that she unconsciously feels right about. Aboulela guides her to find refuge in her religion. Indeed, the environment that is prepared for Najwa to
take off from where her sadness and sufferance left her is motivating. All these women, who seem for Najwa extremely happy by having everything they may dream of, support her to follow their steps to get by the end what they got. Religion is the solution that this writer suggests as a cure for her most traumatized character in this novel. Najwa finds rescue and comfort in her understanding to her religion while her brother do not because his denial to the existence of such a miracle of a faith to do. Aboulela does not miss commenting on one of the questions that proposes another substitute to cure Najwa rather than religion. She says:

At the end, she relies on God and on her faith. That's how my logic went. And I thought that if this were a secular feminist novel, then at the end she would rely on her career and maybe her friends after her disappointment with men. In Minaret, on the other hand, I wanted it to be that at the end she's relying on her faith rather than a career. (Chambers).

Throughout the novel, the author gives both characters of Najwa and Omar equal accessibility to a free choice that is set along with many other possibilities. Attractively, the same background of Najwa and Omar ends totally in a different way. "The book shows that she does change, she does move and that instead of self-destruction or something, she does actually survive this trauma" (Interview). The way her life goes is different from her twin who ends up in prison, detained of drugs.

Interestingly, Minaret is full of such examples of this kind of identification. The whole story is a kind of a journey for searching Najwa’s identity. This journey holds other minor journeys that similarly aim at discovering the self but result in dramatically, losing it. Omar is mainly the one-to-one opposition to Najwa.
Anne Roald believes that "[r]eligious and ethnic identity cannot be isolated from other social influences" (9). In applying this case on Muslim migrants in Britain, the social influences are positive to the character of Najwa from the Muslim community that she interacts with regularly, that is why she can gain a positive view to religion and by this embracing its identity whereas, her counterpart character, Omar, the negative social influences drive him to no sense of religion.

The family structure in Minaret is not strong even when all the members are all right. In one of the instances Najwa mentions her father as a careless and not quite responsible for the whole family. She says "[i]t always surprised me how Baba deliberately forgot my mother's schedule, how his eyes behind his glasses looked cautious and vague when he spoke of her" (16).

As mentioned in Majed Hasan’s study, Waïl Hassan⁵ considers Aboulela’s novel as a picture through which readers may see a crucial turning point in the future of Sudan. "The failure of secularism and re-emergence of Islam in the Arab world is … the background to the achievement of Aboulela’s fiction"⁶.

Aboulela could effectively break the negative rhythm that came out as a result of Rushdie’s the Satanic Verses. Majed believes that the Fatwa altered by Khomeini⁷ after the revolution against the way Salman Rushdie’s debatable work helps in forming very judgmental opinions towards Islam as being the string that holds Muslims’ freedom (Majed 196). "writers have seemed free enough to image British Muslims as victims to a religion which cannot match with Western values" (197).

Regardless to the controversy around The Satanic Verses, the Rushdie case⁸ has been used with manipulative intentions to uncover the vein of the British Muslims. In one hand, some writers who find in The Satanic Verses a source for their depictions share a huge part and responsibility of producing nonsense generalizations. Amine Maalouf is no
exception after he released his _Samarkand_. In the other hand some others stick to the line and keep their eyes focused on the bright side of the displaced identities in their literary works like Leila Aboulela.

Anwar, the black point in Najwa’s memory, represents a kind of a person who uses his mind to control the others’ views even if his ideas or beliefs are wrong. _Minaret_, figuratively presents the literary grounds of a concrete reality. There are different kinds of fictitious characters and real writers who mainly split up to two categories. The ones who act positively and effectively in any society they live in and the others who just cannot determine which attitude to take.

The history of Sudan has a lot to do with religion. The coming of Islam to Sudan marks a huge shift in the way it was taking. Meanwhile, its presence makes the country split up to those who are eager to raise it and make the whole government a subject to. According to Berry:

> During the fourteenth century, Islam was introduced from Egypt. Together with migrations from the north, Islam gradually changed the nature of Sudanese society. Islam facilitated the division of the country into northern and southern halves, one Arab and Muslim, the other African and animist, a division that persists today.¹⁰

1956 is the year when the British comes out of Sudan leaving it struggling between the people and the government fight for power (xxvii). In 1963, Sudan engaged in a continuous range of conflicts and civil wars. "The attempt to impose Islam and Sharia on the South aroused Southerners to rebel against the central government "(xxvii). In 2005, the year when the novel was published, Sudan gained an inner armistice after 22 years of instability and clashes especially for Southerners. One of the major events in the history of
Sudan is the civil war in Darfur that took place in 2003. This war results massively in the country’s falling apart due to the bloody effects. "Darfur became mired in violence in 2003, when the government of Sudan launched a brutal crackdown on a rebellion in the region" (De Waal ). Meanwhile, the novel’s setting in the same era reflects a kind of a fall down for the Sudanese in general. Aboulela’s main character Najwa’s profession is being a maid. Despite the fact that Minaret’s 2003 is set in London, the reflection of the turning out is very evident. The year 2011 witnesses a full independence of the southern part of Sudan from its Northern one (Berry xxvii).

Theologically, Sudan is a country with many religions, adherences and diversions. Islam is not the only religion there but it constitutes a great deal of Sudan’s population. As it is defined in this book Sudan: a study country:

Islam, Christianity, and traditional African religions are all found in Sudan. Perhaps three-fourths of Sudan’s population is Muslim. Sudanese are uniformly Sunni, although many are adherents of Sudan’s Sufi brotherhoods—Ansar, Khatmiyyah, and Qadiriyyah. Most live in the North, East, West, and Center, where they constitute more than 90 percent of the population. (xxviii)

The case of education in Sudan was not appropriate, since the civil wars and the inner conflicts the country had, affected heavily almost every aspect and education was no exception. People living in the North had more access to be better educated than the South (Berry xxix). This for sure, ends up in drawing more serious borders than the already settled between the North and South of Sudan. These borders are of classes and different kinds of disparities.

Tariq Ramadan is one of the most important thinkers and defendants of Islam in the West. He wrote so many books through which, through which he tries to make Islam in its
simplest way to Muslims and Westerns to understand from where they stand. In his book *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam* he says:

Death, life, experiences, ordeals, pain, solitude, as well as joy and happiness, are so many lessons along the road to reconciliation. Wounds, separation, tears, as well as smiles, "say" something: if you live in unawareness, they touch you; with God, they guide and lead you. Where to? Where to then? Toward Him, toward you, close to him in you. Such is the most beautiful and the most difficult lesson of Islam: you find God only by rediscovering your own nature…ordeals drive you not to your limits but to your origin, where "the need for Him" has its roots. Ordeals will lead you back, whether you like it or not, to what you are, to the essence from which He has formed you. Exile will take you home.12

This coming back to where once born and belongs is what brings you in front of a new purification and self-understanding that can never be at its best in good circumstances. Problematic situations and dilemmas that any person is open to at anytime is what brings the real identity of this person. Conventionally, it is known that only hardships and adversities enable the self to recognize and discover itself through knowing the essence of its creation. Knowing God equals knowing the self (viii). Tariq Ramadan’s words express the whole essence of this chapter that is finding the comfort if not the healing in one’s religion and God.

The origin of creation of all mankind is brittleness, dependence, need, breakability and after all innocence. Keeping or finding out the virgin identity that is already created pure and very "fragile" is the compass for arriving to self-consciousness and inner peace. The acceptance of that fragility is an important part within the process of finding the self. At the end of the novel, Najwa says "I am not surprised. It is a natural decay and I accept
it” (Minaret 421). This kind of peace with the self and the world and inner satisfaction do not happen right after the problems and tragedies she has because her identity is crowned with maturity, faith and social support. Minaret, the novel, is intended to be called Innocent Again.

In the already mentioned BBC interview, Leila Aboulela talks about the choice of the title. As an answer for Harriet Gilbert’s question about ‘Minaret’ as a title, Aboulela says "[w]hen I was writing the book, my working title was ‘Innocent Again’" (Interview). But due to publication issues, she was asked to change it. Aboulela once again came up with "The Minaret in the Park" as a denoting title for the novel’s essence. Finally, both of the writer and the publisher compromise to come up with only "Minaret" as the final title for the novel (Interview). The author’s first intuition to call it "Innocent Again" is a result of the impression this novel left on the readers as well as the writer. This is illustrated through Najwa’s words, "I had given in to him but he had been wrong, the guilt never ever went away. Now I wanted a wash, a purge, a restoration of innocence. I yearned to go back to being safe with God. I yearned to see my parents again, be with them again like in my dreams" (367).

Coming back to the novel, if we try to take off Najwa from the paper borders, she is born, as any other human being, an innocent child, then with the various experiences she lives in her life, the pure and innocent side in her got fogged, at the end the fog is revealed only by coming back to where she belongs ‘God’. Tariq Ramada formulates this state as having to admit modestly the passiveness of the human’s willing in order to get to know God, therefore, the self (Ramadan viiii).

"Go…you will return" (qtd. In Ramadan viiii), this is a very common sentence that Muslims still use to denote the inevitability of returning to God’s will. Najwa, by the end
of the novel says something which is very important. "No matter what, I will return. This is my base and goal; everything else is variable" (Minaret 421). While Najwa is praying with Shahinaz, another character, in Najwa’s house, she alters these words. They convey a very deep meaning if coined with Rabaa Adawiya’s statement (qtd. In Ramadan viii). As if they are a comment or a response to what Adawiya says. Aboulela, either consciously or unconsciously, proves the unavoidable ending through Najwa’s experience in the novel.

Muslims of the world are the same whatever their nationality or culture is. They are on the same track, believing in the same God, looking for the same aim, defending the same set of principles and values, and having the same identity (Ramadan 9). Muslim communities form an inseparable part of any society in the world. Living together or sharing their religious and day-to-day interests makes life easier for them especially in a foreign country that is culturally different from theirs. For instance, the novel presents a very good example of Muslim communities living together in Britain where the identification first and most important is Islam. "[t]his one looks Indian, as if the hijab had made me forget she was Indian and now she is reminding me - in the sari with her flowing hair and jewellery, she is relaxed, traditional" (282). The scarf and the respect of Islam to women made Najwa not racist to other’s nationalities as if the scarf makes them all alike under one identical identity.

In the novel, the fate that Najwa and Omar have at last is due to the different decisions each made. While Omar rebelles against everything and without any awareness, he wants to assimilate directly in the British society, Najwa finds it wiser to seek for the help of the other Muslim Communities living in London. ‘Wafaa’ is the first who offers her help to Najwa after she lost her mother. This Character of Wafaa in the novel, in fact, is very impressive. She is the one who washes her mother’s dead body before her funeral.
She teaches Najwa what she has to do in such circumstances. She offers her another kind of help when she invites her to attend some religious classes in the Mosque (Minaret 207).

Tariq Ramadan discusses the two extremist views. He says that there are Muslims living in the West but rejecting totally any of the Western productions or features. Others do heavily count on the Western side losing meanwhile their Muslim origins. These two extremes are not preferred by many as by the most effective thinker of the twenty first century, Tariq Ramadan. Through Western Muslims and the Future of Islam, he proposes holding the stick from the middle; neither from the too far right nor from the too far left (32-33). This enables those Muslims of benefitting from the West and keeping their own religion safe from the external variables.

British Muslim’s most problematic issue is convincing the British government to pay the state financial backing for their schools as it is the case for other minorities’ schools in Britain14. This problem, according to Fetzer and Soper, increases more after the terrorist attacks all over the Western countries. Politically, the aftermath of 9/11 bombings complicates the case of Muslim migrants even more because of the questioning of the accessibility of these terrorists’ training secretly and surreptitiously within the targeted society (4). Believing this excuse or not will not change the reality of threat that some extremist or manipulator groups put Britain and the whole Europe under. The establishment of Islam in is strong regardless to the different attempts of the usual Western anti-Islamic sentiments. The preliminary education for Muslims, is quite different from any other ethnic group, for this British Muslims have the chance to study in a suitable circumstances. This progress is tackled also by Tahir Abbas in his book Muslim Communities under Pressure in Britain: "It is worth mentioning that there are at present over eighty Muslim independent schools in Britain”15.
Despite all these confrontations, Britain could achieve some progression concerning Muslim minorities living there. The whole process of giving more rights to Muslims is slow in its efficiency. This point, however, is taken as a shortage in the British policy making towards minority communities (Abbas 4). Taking into consideration, Britain’s politics is unique with its ‘Slowly but Surely’ policy. This means that the time policies take to be on the practical ground does not matter if they lastly do happen. According to the same source, "Britain embraced multiculturalism in state-supported schools in the 1970s; the curriculum in required religious-education classes includes an extensive treatment of not only Christianity, but also Judaism, Islam, and Sikhism" (4).

Apparently, Islam, along with other religions, finds a place in the new multicultural British arena since 1970s and paves the way for some important modifications that suit only Muslims who are taken into consideration. Concerning this point, Fetzer and Soper stated that wearing the headscarf in state schools is allowed in condition it fits the colour of the school uniform (4). The year 1998 also witnesses one of the crucial amendments concerning the relationship with Muslim minorities. Two schools are given the state authorization to be fully funded by the state (5). Concerning the issue of Multiculturalism policies, Britain os inspired by the American model to try to put the country in a diversity mood for the benefit of migrants because of its consederable experience with cultural diversity.16.

In earlier times, Britain had a good impression about Muslims in general. Fetzer and his friend mentioned that arguing that the colonial history that gathers the British with Muslims leads to a more acceptance of the coexistence between them. "Jørgen Nielsen (2001) notes that 'the British inherited a positive image of Islam because of their experiences in Muslim parts of the Empire.'" (Fetzer and Spore 26). The first generation of Muslims in Britain is marked by observable attempts to hide their Islamic identity so
hardly in order not to be excluded from the British society (31). However, this case do not last with the coming of the following generations where some maturity sense has been thrown in the British atmosphere. Aboulela’s literary attempt shows a great part of this by raising the exciting experience that her protagonist had.

Islam, for Croth and Sousa-Posa, has many meanings. It steps up its religious value to transcend to all the forming structures of life. It makes individuals’ lives; it governs and protects their families; and it builds the societies they live in. Following the principals of Islam and its holly book Quran in the way it should be, will form a healthy society that nothing can break it down\textsuperscript{17}. This is a very important rule in Islam. Whenever it is fulfilled neither Displacement nor discrimination, nor marginalization will have effect on Muslims. Displacement, therefore, will have less or even no echo on the Muslim migrants’ personality or identity by keeping this unchangeable religious mentality that goes not to the extremes but to the place where the Islamic identity cannot be touched or negatively influenced in a time they may live free and happy.

Muslims, actually, must update their lives consistently in order to purify themselves from sins and mistakes. This kind of inner reform is clear with Najwa when saying "This was the scrub I needed. Exfoliation, clarifying, deep-pore cleanse - words I knew from the beauty pages of magazines and the counters of Selfridges. Now they were for my soul not my skin" (\textit{Minaret 377}). This is the cleansing process that shows more maturity and self-discovery that Tariq Ramadan already talked about. In case this process does not happen, an emptiness and gloominess would come instead. Najwa, the Sudanese princess and the British maid, is lonely and empty inside when she gets everything, but becomes satisfied and friendly when she lost what she does not mostly need. Najwa lacked the feeling of being important within her family members and boyfriend. She seems unconfident and socially unprepared to face the others and argue, especially with Anwar,
the one she fell for. In one of the instances of superficiality that she has while living in her homeland, Najwa says "I had an admirer who kept riding his bicycle past the front of our house. Sometimes he came past three or four times a day. He had hopeful eyes and I despised him. But, like now, when the road was empty, I felt disappointed" (17), this shows the spiritual emptiness though she has everything that any girl in her age and place dreams of, she keeps looking for other things that may satisfy her inner desires and this proves the hollowness that she and her brother are living in.

Islamophobia is one of the negative features of the Western societies that emerges as a reaction against Muslim presence within their communities. Despite its huge impact on Muslims writings, this theme is not the core of Aboulela’s attention in her works, especially Minaret where she shadowes this theme. Nesrin Koç’s in her research states some of the most important cases through which Islamophobia is expressed in Literature. She believes that after the controversy caused by Salman Rushdie’s The Satanic Verses, the fear and hatred of Islam raises more and more within the non-Muslim societies.

Moving to other levels where Islamophobia is detected, Koç mentioned, "the Gulf War, 9/11 and 7/7 London bombings" these, according to her, "initiated a chain of ‘failure to integrate’ discourse" (13).

According to the statistics stated in this book, Muslims living in Britain are of a sizeable amount. In 2001, there is a census asking about the British citizens about their religion. It locates 1.5 million Muslims living in Britain (Waters and Zukerman 16). This amount increases with time to form now a very important component of the British society.

Aboulela says in the interview with Harriet Gilbert that there is a common thing in the Arab countries like Sudan that the most religious category of society is the elders, and the youth live far away from their religious borders (Interview). This, in fact, is just a
generalization and there are always exceptions, but still, the novel addresses a kind of what
she claims. In an instance where Najwa is in a disco hanging out with her friends and
Omar, she is dancing with a boy and this does not seem to bother her brother, this shows
the disappearing of the Islamic values among the young Muslims living in a Muslim
society.

Readers of Minaret may trace this feeling of desperate youth in the character of
Omar from the beginning of the novel till the end but not with Najwa. Najwa after all had
an awakened conscience. She has always a feeling of guilt that makes it easy for her to
know the right way by the end. In a conversation between Najwa and her best friend Randa
about praying and fasting, they appear as knowing nothing about the instinct principals of
Islam as already tackled by Tariq Ramadan; yet, one sentence that Najwa says in this
conversation makes her in a better situation because of her feeling of guilt. She says,
"'What do we know? We don't even pray.' Sometimes I was struck with guilt" (47). This
is like a first phase in her life which is a princess in Sudan. The second phase makes her a
lower class citizen but more knowledgeable about her religious identity. She starts to pray
and fast and more than this thinking of making a pilgrimage to Mecca, not for personal
interest as she was before: "I had prayed during Ramadan, during which I fasted mostly in
order to lose weight and because it was fun. I prayed during school exams to boost my
grades" (246).

Religion perception is so different between both twins. It is evident and still even
after Omar is jailed. Najwa attempts many times to show him the right exit for his
problems counting on God, but he is aggressively against such topics about religion and
faith. She tries for twelve years to change him but she could not because unlike her, he
could not confess his subjectivity and fragility that God creates him with. Najwa, in this
context, says "'If Baba and Mama had prayed,' I say, `if you and I had prayed, all of this wouldn't have happened to us. We would have stayed a normal family" (Minaret 148).

Najwa starts to feel the beauty in her religion in every step she makes towards God. When she put the head scarf, she felt gentle and "invisible" to the other’s negative critical eyes that used to bother her when she was without it (Minaret 377). The word "invisible" as its meaning to the text suggests and as Aboulela’s claim, is used positively to mean protection from outside (Interview). She tastes the feeling of praying and reciting the Quran (Minaret 144).

While rejecting the Western culture then adopting its values, Anwar, Najwa’s boyfriend, stands in an unclear and doubtful place. This character presents duplicity in thinking and behaving. He speaks about Islam but he does not practice its pillars, he speaks about nationalism, but he is impressed with the West, he hates aristocrats but he wants their money. For that, Najwa describes him as, "[h]e smoked every day but drank occasionally. He smoked only cigarettes and didn't pray. He never fasted in Ramadan; he did not see the point of it" (Minaret 57). Anwar in this novel symbolizes the double-faced figures that use reason to manipulate and deceive people. Although, he causes more injury to Najwa, she could get rid of his manipulating and wrong views by the end. Aboulela through Anwar, tries to highlight the negative perception of Arabs to themselves. She writes:

'Arab society is hypocritical,' he would say, 'with double standards for men and women.' I remembered how Omar was allowed to smoke and drink beer and I was not. The seedy parties he went to without taking me. I had taken these things for granted, not questioned them. Anwar told me that most of
the guys in university used to visit brothels. Then they would heat up their
sister if they so much as saw her talking to a boy. (272)

The ‘minaret’ is a symbol in itself that shows the right path Najwa, the protagonist, took in her life. She says "We never get lost because we can see the minaret of the mosque and head home towards it" (Minaret 319). The sentence explains the whole essence of this chapter. Minaret, therefore, symbolizes the light that brought the migrant of this case study to the right path after she lost it in Sudan. London too may be seen as the ice that turned to be the eraser of her mistakes and sins, literally and figuratively. "Wash my sins with ice" (223). Through all this, one may believe that this moderation of religious adoption of Muslim migrants helps, definitively in healing their cultural differences struggles and having back their lost identity. Interestingly, what Tariq Ramadan suggests as theory of the best integration, Aboulela put it in a literary form and she succeeds in doing so.
Notes and References:

1 Nesrin Koç, "Representation of British Muslim Identities in Leila Aboulela’s *Minaret* and Nadeem Aslan’s Maps For Lost Lovers." Diss, (Graduate School of Social Sciences, 2014): 14.


3 Leila Aboulela, Interview by Claire Chambers, "Contemporary Women’s Writing." 15 June 2009, n.pag.


5 Wail Hassan is a literary critic who is known of his tendency to write about the effect of post-colonial relations on Islam in relation with time (*Islam and Muslim Identities in Four Contemporary British Novels*): 6.

6 Hassan Majed, "Islam and Muslim Identities in Four Contemporary British Novels." Diss, (Sunderland U, 2012): 2.

7 Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini is an Iranian ruler who announced a 'Fatwa' aiming at killing Salman Rushdie and banning his work in Iran.

8 Rushdie’ case is the controversy caused by Ahmed Salman Rushdie’s release of *The Satanic Verses* (1989) which exposed Muslims in a negative way. This led people accuse Rushdie of profanity (*Islam and Muslim Identities in Four Contemporary British Novels*): 45.
9 "Maalouf’s ‘samarkand’ investigated by Turkish education board” (Istanbul: Dogan News agency), Daily news.com.


13 Rabaa Adawiya is a "female Muslim mystic and poet". She is an icon to all Muslims because of her strong faith and brave calling for freedom of slavery. (Accessed: 17 March. 2016, Alarabia English.com)


Conclusion:

History is full of many incidents and events that are reflected in literature. That is why literature seems to be the best mirror for societies. Migration processes propose a real challenge for normal stability and fixity. When this subject of migration was brought to literature, lots of variant and vivant themes appeared. Displacement, identity crisis, alienation, hybridity, stereotypes and the like were brought to light since then.

*Minaret* seems to many critics and readers no more than a feminist or a post-colonial novel, yet the cultural aspects in this novel have been outlined in many attempts. This very modest study has taken culture and religion as two faces for the same coin of *Minaret*. In theory and practice, culture, religion, and identity when added to displacement conditions of migrants produce different flavors. This means that the analysis of the second and third chapters have proved more than one case of displacement and migration effect. The way characters cope with this reality differs so that their identity parts differ.

Displacement and placement are two terms that describe the consequences of migration. They can be reasons as well as consequences for social reforms. Cultural Studies help in developing this kind of researches that is questioning the position of culture within a multicultural society. With Cultural Materialism, *Minaret* could take a different shape from the way it has been always portrayed. The structures that form society are open to change. This change happens on the infrastructural level where the most important organisms for the continuing of existence operate. The whole society will be affected and changed in case these pillars change. When the social, political, and economic levels are the ground of change that is based on the infrastructure, the structure and the superstructure in parallel would change as well. Displacement, religion, identity, and culture are the key
words around which this research turns. They work all together to form one’s reality of existence. They cannot be separated from one another; however, this research tended to explore them in a more detailed analysis. Therefore, the third chapter had tackled displacement and religion in a way that seems less concret but more atouched to the inner side and identity of human beings.

Cultural Materialism is chosen first to highlight the process of change in society while investigating this novel and second to make the link between this kind of change and its impact on identity in the presence of a hard climate for minorities to fit in the Western societies. The field of Cultural studies is very large and vague to be applied on literature. Choosing what to include and what not from the different Cultural theories was not the easiest in continuing this research.

After going through the details of this dissertation, it had appeared that the variations that migration literature is open to, are limitless. In other words, this kind of fictional representation varies from one perspective to another in relation to the literary and analytical works that are discussed. It must be said that migration literature cannot stop at any point of time. It develops and updated its themes and topics consistently with different ways of presenting displaced Muslim realities in non-Muslim environments. The brave tendency of depicting the positivity of Muslims (dis)placement in the West, is not created by Leila Aboulela, yet this writer gives an optimistic tone to cultural (dis)placement.

This depiction, is crowned by its applicability to Cultural Materialism in analyzing the process of change and displacement in order to expose the materialistic side of displacement and its bad effects, meanwhile, it had been seen that the case study’s protagonist is guided to survive from this trauma because of her reliance on and refuge to God and to her religion at last.
All in all, despite the common focus on the constant struggle of Arab-Muslims located in the West especially with the increasing fear of Islam, there is still hope drawn by literature that gives Muslim migrants a better cultural settings exchange.

Experiences may teach more than words, even if they are fictional. Theoretical discussions for giving or finding solutions to certain issues in society are not enough for making a radical change while the impact may be stronger if it is delivered by literature. *Minaret*, according to this study, teaches more than it entertains and shows more than it tells. It offers a moderate understanding and a better way of integration for migrant Muslims’ issues in the West.

The conclusion of this dissertation will be around the importance of migration literature in shedding light on the real experiences of Muslim migrants in the West. It draws other possibilities for integration and adjustments from a new angle. also, it tries to flexibility of migration literature to be applicable to more literary theories that are different. Moreover, it tends to be specific to Muslim's case and their different ways of integratnong in Western societies.

This dissertation can be a starting point for other researches in terms of the questions it still raise about the innovations that may be discovered in the literatures of migration. Investigating the progression and development of the portrayal of female characters in Leila Aboulela's novels till *Minaret* will pave the way for a new journey to Aboulela's readers to see whether there is a change or not.
Works Cited:

I- Primary Sources:


II- Secondary Sources:


