
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 Declaration Form

I, SILEM Nachida

Candidate of Master at the Department of English, Larbi Ben M’hidi University, do hereby declare that the dissertation entitled The Struggle for Identity: A Psychoanalytical Reading of Suzan Abulhawa’s Mornings in Jenin, in partial fulfilment 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.

Date: 07/05/2017
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Signature of the candidate
Dedication

To the memory of my father
Acknowledgements

I praise Allah, the most glorious, for giving me the strength and patience to accomplish this humble work.

I would like to express my warmest gratitude to my mother for her constant support.

To my brothers Riadh and Oussama, and

To my dearest friends and sisters Lamis, Mouchira and the Palestinian Nedaa for their psychological assistance.

I would like also to thank my examiner and teacher Miss Zerrouki Zina.

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Abstract

The Arab American literature is mainly concerned about issues and concepts of the Arab World such as Identity dislocation, trauma and belonging. This dissertation, therefore, attempts to examine an interesting work of the same literary genre that is Suzan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin*. This novel is explored in the light of its representation of diasporic identity and trauma. Thus, this study sheds light on the role of trauma and displacement in shaping the character’s personal and national identity. The research is also interested in determining to what extent the Palestinian culture and identity were well depicted throughout the novel. In doing so, psychoanalysis and post-colonialism are the two main approaches that are applied in order to analyse the characters’ psyche. Additionally, this study will bring into light the Palestinian-American literature and perceive identity from a new perspective. Therefore, trauma and diaspora are key concepts in the formation of the Palestinian identity and *Mornings in Jenin* is a pure representation of the Palestinian identity in the light of suffering and dispersal.
Résumé

La littérature arabo-américaine est préoccupée par les problèmes et les concepts du monde arabe tels que la dislocation d’identité, les traumatismes et l’appartenance. Cette thèse tente donc d’examiner un travail intéressant du même genre littéraire Ce sont les matins de Jénine par Suzan Abulhawa. Ce roman est exploré à la lumière de sa représentation de l’identité et du traumatisme diasporique. Ainsi, l’objectif de cette étude est de mettre en lumière le rôle des traumatismes et des déplacements dans l’identification de l’identité personnelle et nationale du personnage. La recherche est également intéressée à déterminer dans quelle mesure la culture et l’identité palestiniennes ont été bien représentées dans le roman. Ce faisant, la psychanalyse et le post-colonialisme sont les deux approches principales qui sont appliquées afin d’analyser l’identité des personnages. En outre, cette étude mettra en lumière la littérature palestinienne-américaine et perçoit l’identité sous une nouvelle perspective. Par conséquent, le traumatisme et la diaspora sont des concepts clés dans la formation de l’identité palestinienne et les matins de Jénine sont une représentation pure de l’identité palestinienne de souffrance et de dispersion.
ملخص

إن الأدب العربيアメリカي يعني بقضايا وفافه العالم العربي ولذلك فإن هذه الأطروحة تعني لدراسة عمل مثير
للاهتمام من نفس النوع الأدبي، إنها رواية وفافهات في جنين لسوزان أبو الهوى وأي تتم دراستها على ضوء تمثيلها
للهوية، الشتات والصدمة النفسية ولذلك فإن تركز هذه الدراسة هو تسيط الضوء على دور الصدمة والشتات في
تشكيل الهوية وفافهات شخصيات الرواية. كما يتم البحث بتحديد إلى أي مدى تم تجسيد الثقافة والهوية الفلسطينية
من طرف كاتبة الرواية. من أجل القيام بذلك التحليل النفسى وما بعد الاستعمارية هما النظرتان اللتان يتم تطبيقهما من
أجل تحليل الشخصيات. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، سوف تسلط هذه الدراسة الضوء على الأدب الفلسطيني الأمريكي وتدرس
الهوية من منظور جديد ونتائج لذلك، فإن الصدمة والشتات مفاهيم أساسية في تشكيل الهوية الفلسطينية وفافهات في
جنين هي تمثيل نفي للهوية الفلسطينية التي تميزها المعنى والشتات.
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Introduction

The Arab literature has reached universality only when it started to be writing in English which is the language of globalization. As a result, the intellectual Arab immigrants of the United States put in front of them one goal which is to universalize the literature of the Arab World and therefore its culture and identity. Nevertheless, not all Arab-American writers succeeded to provide a good representation of the distinctive Arab/Muslim identity. There were actually several issues that encountered them in the United States and prevented their works to see the lights. One of the most difficult tasks of Arab Migrant writers after their settlement in the United States was to cope with the American way of life and to maintain their position in the literary scene with the already existing prominent American writers. However, their literature was not taken seriously most of the time. This is due to the fact that in Arabs-Muslim early settlements in America, there were very few writers most of whom were writing just for the sake of writing and were not interested in spreading their indigenous culture. When the Arab-American writers embodied feelings of nostalgia and belonging to the Arab World in their literature, they produced creative literary works which were well received by the Americans themselves.

Mornings in Jenin is an outstanding novel written by the Palestinian-American author Susan Abulhawa. The novel was first published in 2006 by Bloomsbury USA under the title The Scar of David, but it was not well received by readers until it was translated into French language as Les Matins De Jenin. This translation contributed in the promotion of the novel; as a result Bloomsbury republished it with a new title which is Mornings in Jenin. This literary work tells the story of a Palestinian family through four generations and their daily life sufferings. The Abulhejas _ their family name_ were olive farmers who
live peacefully in a small calm village called Ein Hod. Subsequently, their life turns upside down because of the Israeli occupation of their land in order to establish a Jewish state in Palestine. Therefore, the family members were forced to move into a refugee camp in Jenin where they will live in miserable conditions.

*Mornings in Jenin* is a heart-touching novel that pictures the Palestinian struggle for freedom which continues to nowadays. This tale foregrounds themes of war, love, death, oppression...etc. However, the most prominent theme of this novel is identity, since Abulhawa’s aim behind writing this fictional work about a historical and political issue is to preserve the Palestinian identity which was distorted by previous Jewish writing son the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Although identity has often been questioned in literature, identity disorder was not studied deeply neglecting the role of colonialism in creating fragmented Arab identities. Thus, the research on this topic of identity is significant in the sense that it brings into light the Palestinian voice in Literature which is almost absent in order to remind the world and the Palestinians themselves about the importance of preserving their identity before going in a journey for gaining independence.

*Mornings in Jenin* as a recent piece of work is not given much attention by researchers. Additionally, The Palestinian affair has always been perceived as a political issue with high sensitivity. That is to say, the Palestinian identity has often been studied as a political issue that has nothing to do with literature. Subsequently, this research is going to bring the Palestinian literature to light and approach the concept of identity from the literary perspective.

This humble study aims at exploring the notion of the dislocated identity which is basically the result of both the trauma and diaspora of the Palestinian people. Interestingly, they resist all forms of colonialism including the cultural one which attempts to deform
their national identity. The concern of this investigation is to study the concept of identity disorder from a psychological perspective through analyzing the psyche of the Palestinian characters of *Morning in Jenin* in order to determine to what extent the war trauma affected their personal and collective identity. In doing so, the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud is implemented. In addition to that, Postcolonial diaspora is a significant notion which the study attempts to examine in relation to the Palestinian Identity.

Furthermore, the purpose of this research is to figure out whether Suzan Abulhawa has succeeded to present the Palestinian identity to the western world and inspire the Palestinians who live inside and outside Palestine to hold to their native culture and identity. This is not quite easy by regarding the fact that being a colonized person threatens the individual’s sense of the self. Thus, it is crucial to this study to be aware of the circumstances under which the Palestinian community was fragmented and see potential solutions to protect their National identity from the threat of colonialism. More than that, the study highlights the relationship between land and identity. That is to say, the Palestinians’ love and attachment to their land is the impulse for their collective identity.

Recently, several studies have identified the issue of identity dislocation but not in association with colonialism as it is the case of the Palestinian Identity. Clearly, there is very little number of the Arab literary works that are written for the Palestinian cause in the English language. Therefore, it was an ambition for Abulhawa to challenge the literary dominance of previous Jewish and American writings on the subject. Additionally, the literature that investigates this issue lacks objectivity since the majority of the writers in the field are Jews/Americans. This complicates somehow the process of research, but it is useful to look for some competent Arab American writers whose studies were not given much importance and explore other non-Arabic neutral works on the topic as well. This would be helpful in supporting the arguments of this research with different perspectives.
Among the few researches which are done to discuss the novel particularly the theme of identity is an article written by Abdulrahman Al-Ma’amari, Noraini Md Yusof and Ravinchan ravengadasany, entitled “Strangers in My Home the Quest for Identity in Mornings in Jenin”. It focuses on the representation of two types of identities in the novel which are personal and national identity, relying on Johann Herder’s theory of national identity and John Lock’s theory of memory and personal identity. The writers argue that the personal identity in this novel is depicted through the character of Amel and they relates her identity to her old memories especially those of her father when he used to read for her Arabic verses. Moreover, the writers of this article claim that the Palestinians are nostalgic people, and therefore their personal identity is constructed by memories of old days when they used to live peacefully in the land. Another element in the building of the characters’ personal identity is their relationship with the land i.e. the land for Palestinians resembles identity. The second type of identity which was looked up to in this article is national identity by asserting that almost all Palestinian characters are nationalists. That is to say, gaining independence and returning to their land became the impulse for their national identity. The writers applied Johann Herder’s theory of national identity to clarify the significance of everyday rituals, customs and traditions in the foundation of the national identity. However, this short article failed to explore well the theme of identity as a vast and complicated issue. In addition to that, the writers discussed the notion of personal identity only in relation with memory neglecting other elements that might contribute in the construction of the self like trauma. Furthermore, the national identity needs to be examined not only in relation rituals of everyday life but it has other dimensions. At last, both personal and national identity should not be studied focusing only on the character of Amel, neglecting other characters who involved in the quest for identity such as Yousef, Ismael and Yahya.
Another research is conducted by Aymen M Abu-Shomar in his article entitled “Diasporic Reconciliation of politics, love and trauma: Susan Abulahawa’s quest for identity in Mornings in Jenin”. He brings out the notion of diaspora as the creation of multiple cultural identities that transcend the realm of the “self” to that of the “other”. In other words, signs of diaspora in Mornings in Jenin are remarkable in the character of Amel who is dispersed between politics, love and trauma. According Abu-Shomar Abulhawa tries to a kind of reconciliation between love and suffering in order to universalize the political issue of Palestine. Moreover, the novel reflects the personality of the author whose life was split in various cultural contexts. Abu-shomar sheds light on Abulhawa’s rejection of this diasporic identity. Rootlessness is evident in the character of Amel who gains a scholarship to study in the US; so she leaves everything behind her and starts a new life in America as if she is denying her Palestinian identity. Personally I think that this article perceived the novel from a new perspective regarding identity as not easily achievable because of the multicultural identities which threaten it. However, this article didn’t stress well on the relationship between identity and diaspora and how a society can be fragmented through colonization.

This dissertation is divided into three main chapters. The first one gives a general background of the novel in order to find out the historical circumstances under which Abulhawa’s Mornings in Jenin was introduced into the American literary scene. Thus, the title of this chapter is entitled An Introduction to American multicultural literature. There are three basic parts in the first chapter. The first segment is entitled The Life Experiences of the Arab-Muslim Immigrants in the United State. This part considers their early settlements until the 21th century and the hardships which they encountered in their attempt to fit in the American society. In addition to the reasons behind their immigration to the United States and the outcomes of their experience as well as their different
reactions towards the American culture, whether to embrace it, accept it or face it with total refusal. The next division which is entitled The History and Progress of Arab-Americans literature sheds light on the Arab-American’s contributions in the American literary arena leading to the flourishing of a prominent new genre that was called the Arab-American literature. The writers of this genre foregrounded themes of wars, trauma, nostalgia and belonging to their original homelands. The last subtitles of the first chapter are The Massacres of Jenin (2002). The inclusion of such Historical event is part of the tendency to reveal Suzan Abulhawa’s main motive behind writing *Mornings in Jenin* since she was inspired by these bloody events. Therefore, this section starts by giving a general background of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and moves on to focus on the Massacres of Jenin refugee camps where most of the novel’s events take place. Additionally, this part highlights some reactions to the massacre which the Israel tries to cover and insist on calling it the battle of Jenin.

The Second chapter is entitled “Trauma and Identity Formation”. It approaches the novel from a psychoanalytic perspective by demonstrating the effects of psychological traumas of the main characters on the construction of their personal and national identity. Eventually, the characters of Amel, the protagonist, her mother Dalia and her elder brother Yousef are the most influenced ones by war trauma and the trauma of being refugees.

The last chapter which is entitled “a Diasporic Identity in Exile” entails the impact of diaspora on the construction of the self by analyzing the character of Amel who settles in the United States to continue her college Study. In exploring this theme of diasporic identity, the postcolonial theory is applied.

At the end of this research, it is evident to say that there is a great effect of trauma and diaspora on the constriction of individual and collective identity either by weaken or...
strengthen it depending basically on the individual’s ability to endure trauma and cope with dispersal.
American literature is not really American by regarding the fact that the United States’ native people are the Indians who were colonized by the British. Consequently, The American literature is originated from the British one. In addition to that, The American population is nowadays made up of various cultural religious and racial backgrounds. Nevertheless, the Anglo-Saxon race and its literature was privileged. This urged the need for a multicultural literature that would allow the voices of the underrepresented minorities to be heard. There are many historical circumstances under which the Arabs and Muslims of the United States contributed in the development of an American multicultural literature such as immigration and the traumatic wars in the Arab World.

This chapter focuses on The Arab American literature which is as the term suggests any literature that is generated in the region of the United States and that is written is the English language. This clarifies the idea that all literatures written in the United States are classified into the category of an original American literature regardless of its ethnic or cultural background. However, One should highlight the fact that the literature written by minorities living in the United states may be a pure representation of their ancestors’ cultures and beliefs especially if these minorities failed or refused to fully integrate within the American society.

It is very crucial to this study to give a general background about the literature of Arab Americans who became a fundamental part of the American community. Thus, the first chapter of the mémoire will be divided into three basic sections. The first segment will
examine the history of Arab-Muslim Immigrants in the United States, their experiences in this foreign nation and the struggles they faced in an attempt to be Americans especially after the 9/11 events. The following division of the chapter will underline the concept of Arab-American literature by studying its origins and development. The third section, however, will consider the historical background of the novel which is the case study. This will necessitate giving the bloody history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by emphasizing on the 2002 massacres of Jenin, the city in which most events of the novel take place. The aftermath of this event is the main inspiration for the author Suzan Abulhawa to write this piece of literature.

1. The life experiences of Arab-Muslim immigrants in the 21st century:

The birth of the United States of America as a new independent and underpopulated country necessitated a full gate opening for immigrants from all over the world to fill up the nation with population. As a result, thousands of people from different ethnic backgrounds flew to the United States attracted by the myth of America as the land of opportunities and escaped the various persecutions they faced in their native countries. According to Daniel pipes and Khalid Duran the largest number of immigrants derives from three main sources: South Asia, Iran, and the Arabic-speaking countries (1). The existence of Muslims in the west was beneficial and sometimes harmful for both civilizations (1). This is due to the fact that each civilization contributes in a way or in another in the construction of the other civilization. This interaction between the Islamic and the American civilization may be harmful as some Muslims tend to consider themselves Americans more than Muslims/Arabs and adopt all the aspects of the American life whether to be good or bad. However, there is no evidence of the Americans adopting the Islamic culture (Abd-Allah 2).
The Muslims in America exist in a considerable number as stated by the same report; there are Approximately Three million Muslims in The United States. Clearly, they tend to cluster in the largest American cities such as New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago (1). Eventually, There are many reasons behind Muslims immigration to the United States like Escaping wars, economic hardships and religious persecutions, in addition to looking forward to continue their academic studies and establish a successful professional career. However, The Pipes and Duran point out to the notion of Islamists ambitions as a crucial motif of immigration. They argue that Islamists arrived to the United States with a clear attention to conquer America and make it a Muslim state by seizing the fact of the United States being a land of democracy and religious freedom and try to establish religious movements that would facilitate this process for them (3).

Religious practices were permitted in the United States as long as the Christianity is recognized as the dominant faith of the region. However, Living in the United States made some Muslims less attached to Islam and even they let go of their religious rituals, because they feel that they are no longer bound by the religious restrictions imposed on them by their original societies. In contrast, one third of Muslim Immigrants stick to their faith and become even more religious because living in a foreign country made them want to resist the American way of life which is totally strange and sometimes contradicts with their religion and culture (4). Moreover, children were the most affected category by their shaking situation as Muslims in a non-Muslim community. An important example to mention is the case of a Muslim child who “attends an Islamic school, where she wears long dresses and Hijab (headscarf) and sits separate from the boys, but the Hijab comes off as soon as she’s out school” (5).

Since this chapter focuses on the Arab-Muslim immigrants of 21st century, One must highlight the changing circumstances of their American life after the 9/11 attacks and
the struggles they faced following this incident. According to the report on Hate crimes and discrimination against Arab Americans, Arab-Americans encountered several hardships following the 9/11 events including hate crimes, slaughter and discriminatory acts against them (17). This hostility toward Americans of Arab Muslim descent is not totally new but it notably intensified in the post 9/11 epoch (19). This discrimination against Arab and Muslims of the United States was not accurate because investigations proved that Al-Qaeda which is suspected of the attacks can appoint members from different ethnic and religious backgrounds (21).

The segregation of Arab and Muslim immigrants was not exclusively for men but Muslim women were subject of sometimes harsher treatment because they are considered the weakest category along with children. In an interview that was conducted with Karima Berkani of Madison, Wisconsin, a Muslim American political activist in Palestinian and Iraqi anti-war movements who no longer wears Hijab. She claims that the cause of her decision to take off the veil is not only discrimination but because she believes that the Quran does not oblige her to wear the headscarf. This is deceiving since Hijab is one of the main features of a religious Muslim woman which differentiate her from other woman of the world. The writer proceeds by saying that wearing Hijab is not quite easy in America for it makes the Muslim woman exposed to the risk of both physical and psychological assaults as well as a harsh discrimination in work places and schools. Hence, there were post 9/11 fatwa by some Imams in America who claims that Hijab is not required by Quran, homosexuality and alcohol are permitted in Islam (Siddiqui).

Additionally, a book that was written by Rodney P. Carlisle under the title Arab Americans, stresses on the life of Arabs in the United States in pre and post 9/11 era. The writer states that there was 1.2 million people of Arab Ancestry living in the United States in 2000 according to the US census bureau (143). Arab Americans are usually
younger and better educated if compared to the general population (145). Instead of trying to adopt the American way of life, many Muslim immigrants conceive the United States’ culture and society as corrupt and they think that such immoral behaviors like drinking alcohol, drug consumption and homosexuality are evidences of an expected collapse of this nation. However, Arab immigrants of non-Muslim heritage are more likely to absorb the American morals and values (146-147). Moreover, Arab males are the patriarchs of their families and females are often perceived as controlled, obedient and humble (148).

Most Arab American Muslims have chosen to integrate within the American society rather than adopting the negative view of America as an anti-Islamic nation. Yet, the majority of Muslim Americans did not give up their religious practices such as the five prayers and fasting on Ramadan (149). Although Arab American awareness towards political issues witnessed a growth especially when these issues influence their home lands, still most Arabs of the United States tend to be apolitical (150).

In the aftermath of 9/11 events, some Americans backed the Arabs and Muslims by trying to protect them from sudden attacks and even some American women wore veils to show their sympathy with discriminated Arab American women whose reactions were, conversely, taking off their headscarf to express their wishes to integrate into the American culture (159). “The Islamic faith has long been misunderstood, misrepresented, and viewed with Suspicion in the United States and throughout much of the western world. Yet nothing could have prepared Muslim Americans for the response that followed 9/11 “(Peek 5). Indeed, Arab-Muslim immigrants never expected such hatred and antagonism from the side of the Americans who claim to be democratic lovers. Accordingly, the era witnessed an increasing spread of Islamophobia, particularly “in 1991, the word Islamophobia which refers to a hatred of Islam and the resultant fear or dislike of Islam first appeared in print in an American periodical” (36).
Many Arab Americans whom Peek interviewed in his book suffered from a low social status in America. Ayesha is one of those respondents, her feelings of inferiority come from the standardized environment which favors the central religion of the United States i.e. Christianity and excludes other religious sects (41). Additionally, Muslims ‘prayer in public constantly draws the attention of the American people (43). That is to say, Americans are still viewing Islam as something bizarre and Muslims as strangers in their country. Furthermore, Muslim Americans endured what the Peek called harassment. This term is defined by him as “any non-verbal, verbal, or physical incident carried out with the intent to threaten, to intimidate, to harm, to offend or to otherwise ostracize on the basis of the person’s perceived minority religious or ethnic identity” (53). Muslim Americans were harshly treated by American citizens following the 9/11 events, about 80% of them were victims of physical assaults as well as insults and cursing in public (64). In addition to that, Muslim Americans encountered glances full of hatred and loathing(71). Furthermore, the aftermath of the 9/11 incidents caused Arab-Muslim Americans to be afraid that they will not be accepted when applying for jobs because of their Islamic names (78). In this period, Muslim Americans wanted to express their sympathy for victims’ families and relatives but they felt unwelcomed and isolated from the American community (123). This isolation from the American society made Muslims and Arabs feel more united and this created strong bonds among them.

2. The history and progress of Arab American literature

Regardless of the struggles which Arabs confronted in the United States whether because of their race, culture or religion, they were given the chance to participate in the American community more specifically in the literary domain. Most of Arab-Muslim Immigrants who flew to the United States were educated and sometimes of a high
intellectual position. Consequently, they contributed in the emergence of a new genre of literature in the United States that is known as Arab American literature. The history of the latter developed through different stages before it became as an important field of study as it is today.

The emergence of a new literature that is produced by Americans of Arab origins or Arab immigrants of the United States is clearly a recent phenomenon which needs to be distinguished from other minor literatures such as Jewish, Hispanic and Asian literature. There is a significant study in the field that is introduced by Carol Conrey in her book *contemporary Arab American literature* in which she argues that: “the last two and a half decades have witnessed an exciting flourishing of Arab American literature, as made evident by rapid increase in the number of literature texts published in an array of genres, including fiction, poetry, nonfiction, and Drama”(1). This demonstrates that Arab-American did not start writing immediately when they arrived to America, basically because they needed first to fit in the American society and be more comfortable with writing in the English language in addition to the possibility that their literature was not noticed and perceived by the Americans in the first place. In the recent decades, however, the Arab-American literature is increasingly becoming a discipline, since many critics are interested in Arab American studies, and a considerable number of Arab-American books are being published as well as several lectures which are being introduced in the academic sphere(1).

The Arab-American literatures depict the life of Arabs in the United states as a risky experience, resulting in an instable situation of Arabs which are seen by Americans as the inferior ‘Other’ in the dominant superior American cultures (1-2). This shaking position is often a cultural one for it is not easy for any human being to let go of his old strong values and perceptions and adopt new ones. Clearly, the Arab-American struggling
to make a kind of balance between the native and the American beliefs begun with their immigration to the area in the 19th century, and rose significantly in the 20th and 21st century (2). In this period, an orientalist view was stereotypically presenting Arabs as barbaric, uncivilized and primitive. These assumptions changed after the 9/11 events to identify the Arabs as brutal terrorists (2). Hence, Arab-American writers, critics, as well as artists and activists reacted against those stereotypes in their works (2). They adopted anti-imperialistic and Anti-orientalist views regarding their position in the American society and denied the concept of assimilation. That is to say, very few writers favored a full melting of the Arabs within the American society. On contrary, the majority of them remained faithful to the Arab world and reacted to every issue which would touch their Arabic countries (5).

Arab-American writers contributed in the creation of a different transnational discourse which in its production opposes a clear classification of Arab-American literature according to US ethnic standards (6). In other words, they wanted the Arab-American literature to be a distinctive discipline that is totally different from other minority literature and should not be classified as a part of it. This claim is true by regarding the fact that the Arab-American literature was shaped by different circumstances and represents a variety of issues that concern only the Arabs. Despite the fact that US national culture and literature became transnational in the recent decades, one should not forget studying the US military and political dominance which challenges the claims of the US as a tolerant nation concerning ethnic diversities (7). This indicates that the flourishing of Arab-American literature was the good evil i.e. something that is unavoidable and rights that cannot be denied to the Arabs and given to other ethnic groups like the African-Americans.
Conrey prefers using the term transnational in dealing with Arab-American literature to emphasize on other elements which affected and formed Arab American identity rather than the United States itself (8). This refers to the fact that the Arabic literature that is produced in the United States should not be called an American literature since it is influenced and shaped by a different culture, religion, and thought, even though the American culture has a little but insignificant effect on this genre of writing. Indeed, the minority literature as a vast literary field created a kind of Unity between ethnicities which share a common history of discrimination, a struggle to promote their disregarded identities and a tendency to solve the problems related to identity politics and Diaspora (8). Conrey is aware of the drawback of using the term Arab American literature since it excludes non-Arab ethnicities which are associated with and linked to Arabs in terms of religion such as Iran, Turkey, and Afghanistan (10).

The fathers of Arab American literary tradition are mainly two well-known Arabic writers, Gibran Kahlil Gibran and Ameen Rihani whose works were the basis for contemporary Arab American literature. Those figures are acknowledged as revolutionary writers in the dispersed Arab World. Gibran, on one hand, is famous by his book *The Prophet* (1923). On the other hand, Rihani is recognized by his the *Book of Khalid* (1911). Both works were written in English and translated into several languages. These prominent writers were called the Mahjar (immigrant) writers because they moved to live in the United States temporarily before they migrated to their Arab homelands. Eventually, they were the founders of what is called Al-Rabita al-Qalamiyya “The pen league” in New York (1920) which included Syrian and Lebanese writers like; Gibran, Rihani, Mikhael Naimy and Elia Abu Madi (17). Unlike, Early Mahjar writers who embraced a transnational prospect, the contemporary Arab American writers moved away from this traditional view of the Arab world as the only and final home for their dislocated identities.
This demonstrates the desire of nowadays writers to be assimilated into the American community along with a little preservation of the native culture. Nevertheless, both sides are considered to possess a transnational belonging to the native land (18). Moreover, the members of the pen league were more attached to their Arabic roots and always represented their original lands as a heaven which they long for. Modern Arabic writers tend to portray their experiences in the United States which they perceive as their perpetual home. (18).

The years between 1940’s and 1990’s are a shifting period in the development of the Arab-American literature, because they witnessed dissolving the pen league in 1940. This era was marked by different stages which begun with the second wave of immigrants and extended to the third one. In the first phase (1940’s-1960’s) no significant number of works were published except very few pro-assimilation writings (18). However, the second phase of this transnational period which was between 1960 to 1990’s was characterized by a spreading feeling of pride and nostalgia among Arab American writers towards their homelands. Samuel Hazo, D.H.Melhem, Eugene Paul Nassar, and jack Marshel are some of the prominent writers who contributed in the flourishing of an eminent Arab American literature in the 1990’s onward (19). Subsequently, it was in the period of US intervention in the Arab world from 1950’s to 1960’s that a transnational Arab-American literature emerged manifestly in the American literary scene (19).

The Arab-American literature was characterized by certain themes that differentiated it from other genres as it is stated by Conrey "For, one, their works for the most part reflect on experiences of displacement, exile, and dispossession caused by the political shifts and military conflicts across the Arab world from the mid-twentieth to the early twenty-first century" (20). The Arab-American literature which was written from 1990’s till nowadays focused on several issues of the Arab world mainly the themes of
war, exile, dispossession and Diaspora caused by the Israeli occupation of Palestine, the Lebanese civil war and what is recently called political uprisings in Egypt and Syria (20). Nevertheless, The Palestinian Nakba had greater impact in the spreading of the Palestinian Diaspora than other Arab issues had in the dispersion of the Arab world. Indeed, the 1990’s is considered as the year of the last phase in the development of Arab American literature.

The boom of the Arab American literature coincided with the political interference of the United States in the Arabic matters. This includes the American involvement in the first Gulf war, the invasion of Kuwait and its intervention to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (21). That is to say, The Arab writers of the United States became aware about political issues that affect their national homeland and they wanted to express their belonging to the Arab world. Hence, the birth of such Arab literature in an environment hostile to anything of Arabic origin especially after the events of 1993, the terrorist attack on the American world trade centre, would be very effective to resist this antagonism against Arab Americans (21-22). These circumstances mainly political and cultural confrontation between Arabs and Americans of the United States resulted in the creation of the literary organization Radius of Arab-American writers Inc in 1992 by Barbara Nimiri Aziz. This organization was named later "Rawi" which is a word in Arabic signifies "Storyteller" (22). Beyond that, the new stage of Arab-American literature started by the publication of: Post-Gibran in 1999 (22). The point is that a new era of a prospered Arab-American literature started:

Since the 1990’s, there has been a burgeoning of the Arab-American literary and cultural scene, made evident by the publication of more anthologies, novels, poetry collections, non-fictions and critical texts, as well as new and emerged genres such as spoken-word poetry, drama, stand-up comedy, film and graphic narratives, to name a few. The appearance of separate anthologies on Arab-American fiction and
poetry attest to the prolific contributions of writers in both genres, even though poetry has been, and still remains the dominant genre in Arab-American literature. (23)

The essential motive of the birth of a transnational literature is a cultural one. Conrey eventually believes that, in the light of the 9/11 events, there was a necessity of an Arab-American literature which would take the responsibility of promoting the Arab cultural forms which are still unknown for the Americans or misrepresented to them by the media (23-24). There were several themes which featured Arab-American writings of nowadays such as the Arab-American relations, matters of cultural and transnational belittlement, religious identity, gender, language, nostalgia, integration of Arabs in the American community along with worries about military and political conflicts that are occurring in the Arab world most of which the United States has a hand in (24-25). Conrey puts light on the literature which conveys the Arabic Political issues and create a kind of attachment of Arabs to their original homelands (25). That is to say, a literature that embodies a clear presentation of the Arab world and a refusal of displaced Arabic Identities.

It is very significant to emphasize on the notion of nostalgia and the remembrance of the fragmented Arab homelands. This suggests the fact that, the fissures and gaps prevalent in an older immigrant generation’s fragmented memories of an original Arab homeland are not always typified by the nostalgic and the mythical. As exemplified in “Sand Nigger”, the stark realities of war and dispossession seep into domestic re-enactments of the homeland, despite the older generation’s efforts to suppress them “(35). To clarify this, The nostalgia of the original homeland is present in the old immigrants stories. The latter often recall memories of their ancestral land and their sufferings from exile and displacement in the United States. As an illustration, the writer
refers to a poem by Suheir Hammd entitled “Argela Remembrance” (1996) in which there is an emphasis on the Palestinian loss of the land after the Nakba (1948) and the shaking situation of dispersed Palestinian-Americans (35):

We are a people
name our sons after our prophets
daughters after midwives
eat with upturned hands
plant plastic potted plants
in suffocating apartments
tiny Brooklyn style
in memory of the soil once
laid under our nails .(qtd in Conrey )

There is a bitter grieve in this poem which is clear in the imagery that describes the dislocated Palestinians who sustain exile, dispossession and diaspora. In this poem, the imagery of Planting plastic potted plate symbolizes the fact that natural olive trees were replaced by Plastic ones as the Palestinian identity was replaced by the American one .This just a simple example stated by the author to clarify the relationship between literature of the immigrant writers and their homelands and to show that there is an explicit presence of nostalgia, belonging, remembrance and mourning of the missed lands in their works.

3. The massacres of Jenin (2002):

In order to bring out the historical background of the case study, that is the novel entitled Mornings in Jenin by Susan Abulhawa, There should be given a historical
overview of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its consequences on the Palestinian people who are definitely the victims. As old as history is The Israeli colonization of Palestine which lasted 72 years to the present day. This occupation was presented most of the time in Israeli works as they try to hide the truth and attribute the land of Palestine to them. Albeit, there are few neutral books which present historical facts and stress this issue in details.

The story of the Israeli occupation begun by the first world war when Britain vowed the establishment of an independent Arabic Kingdom led by the Sharif Hussain of Mecca through what is known as: Hussain-McMahon correspondence, on condition that, the Hussain would ally with Britain against the ottoman Empire in the war, along with the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine via the Belfour declaration (1917). This indicates that Palestine will be excluded from the Arabic province handed to Hussain. Subsequently, Britain and France decided to share the spoils of the Ottoman Empire between them by the Picot Agreement of May 1916 (Kumaraswamy xlviii). In 1922, Britain took over Palestine as mandatory state. As a result, it tried to encourage a large number of Jewish immigrants to Palestine for which Britain wished to have the Arab approval in order to fulfill the promises of the Belfour declaration (xlvii-xl ix). This Zionist inspiration to create a Jewish state in Palestine angered the Arabs leading to peaceful strikes and sometimes violent outrage which was known as “the Arab revolt” (1936-1939). Eventually, the opposition from the Arabs forced Britain to temporarily let go of its commitment towards the Jews and slow down the process of Jewish settlement in Palestine (xlix). After that, the situation developed to the worst through giving the land by those who don’t possess it “the British” to those who don’t deserve it “the Jews”.

The conflict intensified between Arabs and Jews over the destiny of Palestine which was still a British mandatory. However, Britain decided to let go of Palestine for the United Nations to determine the future of the country. Subsequently, the members of the
UN committee took the decision to partition Palestine. This resolution was called the UN partition Plane by which Palestine was divided into two states. This gives 56% of the area to the Jews and 43% to Palestinians who were the majority of the Population (Beinin, Hajjar 4). Through this Plan the State of Israel was officially established in 1948.

As a result of the Nakba, Most of the Palestinians turned out to be refugees who were forcibly expelled and displaced from the area occupied by the Jews. Hence, by 1948 only 150,000 Palestinians continued living in the state which became known as Israel and they were given political rights as citizens, yet they were classified as second class citizens since they were non-Jews (6). The statistics had shown that the number of Palestinians living in Palestine is less than the number of those living outside the country. “Today this term [Palestinians] refers to the Arabs—Christian, Muslim and Druze—whose historical roots can be traced to the territory of Palestine as defined by the British mandate borders. Some 5.6 million Palestinians now live within this area, which is divided between the State of Israel, and the West Bank and Gaza; these latter areas were captured and occupied by Israel in 1967” (5). In the present time, 1.4 million Palestinians are living in the territories given to the Jews as their homeland, about 2.6 are inhabitants of the west bank and 1.6 reside in the Gaza strip. The rest of Palestinians whose number is about 5.6 millions are living as refugees outside their original homeland. The largest number of them inhabits refugee camps in Jordan as it is geographically the closest country to Palestine and they are guaranteed the citizenship (5). Palestinian refugees, however, exist in other Arab countries like Syria and Lebanon (5).

From the first time Israeli forces stepped the Palestinian lands, they started killing and destroying every sign of life in Palestine by committing crimes against humanity. The massacres of Jenin (2002), however, were not recognized by most of the international public opinion as genocides but rather an equal battle between both sides. This is due to the
fact that Israel constantly tries to hide its murders. As stated by Arjan Elfassed the events of Jenin (2002) should be perceived as war crimes against humanity as well as a breach of the convention on the prevention and punishment of the crime of Genocide. Jenin a city of 15,000 refugees was invaded by over 150 Israeli forces supported by F-16my aircrafts. Starting from April, the Israeli troops bombed the refugee camp of Jenin using all kinds of internationally prohibited weaponry to kill mercilessly Palestinian civilians.

In April the 3rd, electricity and water were cut off from the camp, food and medicine aids were not able to reach the Palestinians most of whom were injured and their home were destroyed in addition to Plenty of refugees who were murdered or lost under the grounds. Additionally, the majority of the victims were women, children and the aged, and the injured have been deprived of any medical care. Therefore, more than 100 refugees were killed within just three days.

Although, many Jewish and American writers wrote about the incidents of Jenin in their attempt to distort the facts and show Israel under the leader of Ariel Sharon as innocents few eyewitnesses were brave enough to speak out the truth like Phil Reeves who refers to the massacres of Jenin by comparing them to those of Sabra and Chatila, Qana and Deir Yasin just to name few of the genocides committed by Israeli forces against innocent Palestinians. Indeed, what Israel has done in Jenin and other regions is imposing its military hegemony through murders and mass devastation. The writer makes it clear that the American media is always on the side of Israelites and the American government which is certainly pro-Israel. The British media, however, is more honest in presenting facts about Israeli deeds and war crimes in Palestine. In Jenin refugee camps, there were evidences of a clear violation of the human rights via horrible crime which Israeli soldiers were responsible for; thousands of residents were killed, wounded, missed under the ruins
and, therefore, denied the right of burial. Nevertheless, Israel is still claiming that these stories are merely exaggerations in its attempt to cover up these devastating war crimes.

Linda Tabar also reacted to the events of Jenin (2002) which were subject to ignorance and neglect. In order to reclaim the province of the west bank, the Israeli troops launched military raids on the refugee camps of Jenin on April, 3th 2002 using dangerous weaponry such as bullets, shells and bombs. This destructive attack, humanitarian aids and reporters were not permitted to enter the refugee camp until April the fifth and they were shocked of the huge damage caused by the invasion particularly the sight of dead bodies everywhere and the destroyed buildings (6-7).

In literature especially poetry, there was a representation of the massacres by Ibrahim M. Ab-Rabi through his poem entitled “To the Martyrs of the Jenin Refugee Camp” in which he praises the Martyrs and mourn their departure:

Oh Departed Ones,
Farewell to you with your excessive idealism
Farewell to you with your untold stories
Farewell to you with your broken noses
Farewell to you with your wounded spirits
Farewell to you with your hungry stomachs
Farewell to you with your trampled upon graves
Do not forget us
Do not condemn us
Do forgive us
We have failed you
We have spoken behind your back
We have engaged in many trivialities while you sacrificed your souls for us.

Yesterday, they stormed a huge refugee camp and killed many infants;

And here I stand perplexed, confused, angry, depressed

I find myself in frenzy; standing still, moving fest with a purpose; eating

Obsessively, fasting to death, praying, and traveling the high corridors of the

world wide. (Line 36-53)

Susan Abulhawa the Palestinian American novelist and political activist tells in an interview conducted with her that after the news were heard about a massacre in Jenin, she went there to see by herself the aftermath of this violent invasion and brought with her international eyewitnesses. Abulhawa narrates the compassion and kindness of the people of Jenin whose story should be told to the world. When Abulhawa came back to her home the United States, she started to write without even realizing that was writing a novel which is entitled *Mornings in Jenin* ("Susan Abulhawa|Mornings in Jenin").

This chapter gave a historical background for the literary work which is the focus of the whole Study that is Suzan Abulhawa’s Mornings in Jenin. This piece of work is considered as an Arab American literature written by a Palestinian author whose major concern is to promote the Arab identity especially the Palestinian one in the worldwide. It is significant, therefore, to approach the novel from a psychological perspective in order to figure out the impact of war and colonialism on the Palestinian identity.


Reeves, Phil. “ Amid the Ruins of Jenin, the Gisley Evidence of a War Crime”. *Phil Reeves, Amid the Ruins of Jenin, the Gisley Evidence of a War*


Chapter two

Trauma and Identity Formation

Colonial traumas of the Arab Word paved the way for the flourishing of an Arab American literature which would depict the sufferings of the Arab communities at homes well as preserve their disregarded identities abroad. Suzan Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin* is among those Arab American literary works that aim at presenting the Palestinian affair worldwide. The prevailing theme of this novel is trauma which the Palestinians endured during the Israeli colonization of their lands.

Trauma is discussed in this chapter in relation to colonialism in order to show its affect on identity construction of the characters via applying the psychoanalytic approach. Indeed, the main raison behind the Palestinian traumas is colonization and its catastrophic outcomes on the native people, creating Palestinian diasporic communities all over the world. Colonization commonly refers to a political, military, economic and social domination of a country over another one in order to exploit its natural resources and control its people. Additionally, the strict policies pursued by the colonial powers negatively influence the financial situation of the native people who also suffer from the spread of poverty due to the absence of natural resources.

In the Palestinian case the Israeli central motive is to find a land for the Jewish people as they have been dispersed for ages. Consequently, they want to take Palestine and claim it to be their own land. What would resolve the Jewish problem according to Zionists, created another problem of Palestinian refugees who were expelled from their homes and deprived of their natural rights through military arbitrary explosions and repressive practices which aim at forcibly displacing them from their land. Thus, the
Palestinians are put in front of two choices either to run away and survive or to die as part of the Israeli tendency to exterminate lives and replace the Arab population with a Jewish one.

The psychoanalytic literary theory is basically a fusion of psychology and literature in order to study the psychology of literary characters and the author as a mean of interpreting their actions. Ann B.Dibie argues in her book entitled *Theory into Practice* that human beings are bizarre creatures whose motives and behaviors are hard to interpret. Thus, the task of the psychoanalytic is to explain the development and the construction of the human psyche.

Sigmund Freud is considered to be the pioneer of the psychoanalytic approach through introducing one of the most important elements in the interpretation of the human psyche which is the concept of the unconscious. Freud’s notions were applied to literary works in order to highlight the fact that literature is a pure representation of the self. Jack Lacan is also credited for his contribution in the psychoanalytic theory. The latter worked on Freud’s notions, yet he argued that language influences our unconscious and conscious which shape our identity (54). Through using Freudian theory in literature, the reader is able to interpret the character’s behaviors, understand the themes, and even figure out the implicit impulses of the author (54). Freud’s theory is mainly based on the idea that the unacceptable desires which are repressed and buried in the unconscious controls our thoughts and actions and even emerges in our dreams. Freud also identified the symptoms of hysteria as a result of pending memorable traumas in the patient’s childhood (55). This reveals the fact that the development of the human psyche is associated with the traumas he faced in his life, particularly in his early childhood.
Lacan’s addition to the work of Freud is shown in the inclusion of structuralism and poststructuralist concepts. Unlike Freud’s perception of the unconscious, Lacan claims that the latter which is the centre of our self is well structured rather than chaotic and disordered (68). In *Mornings in Jenin*, the characters undergo a great deal of colonial traumas under the Israeli occupation of Palestine. According to the psychoanalytic perspective, the human being has past experiences in his childhood which shape his identity as a grown up. This is evident in both the Freudian ideas and Jack Lacan’s notions of the mirror stage theory in which he indicates that the child starts to recognize himself in the mirror at the age of 18 months.

Trauma is clearly manifested in *Mornings in Jenin* after the Nakba of 1948 which turned the life of the characters upside down. Before this period Abulheja family was living peacefully in their calm village “Ein Hod”. Yahya the patriarch of his family was preparing for the olive harvest along with his wife Bassima and his two sons Hassan and Darweesh and tries to perform better than his friend Haj Salam With whom he spends much of his time .“ By evening, the two friends would be smoking hookahs together “(7). This describes the ordinary life of the family prior to the catastrophe. The years 1947-1948 changed the fate of Palestinians forever. Ari, the Jewish friend of Hassan tells him, “Hassan; they are going to take the land, they’ve launched a campaign across the world calling Palestine ‘a land without a people’; they are going to make it a Jewish state” (20). This is actually what happened in May 1948; “The British left Palestine and Jewish refugees who had been pouring in proclaimed themselves a Jewish state, changing the name of land from Palestine to Israel “(22). Thus, the Palestinian trauma begins as Israeli soldiers invaded the village of Ein hod which was “led to ruin and Dalia lost all but two sisters that day .The father who had burned her hand lay charred in the same town square. “ He found Dalia frozen in the awesome silence of the aftermath”, but Hassan has promised
to protect his wife and his two children Yousef and Ismael. “Allah will protect us son, and I will protect you and your mother and your brother, especially “, Hassan says (23). “But Yousef wouldn’t let go, wouldn’t open his eyes. His arms, legs, fear, and soiled pants were securely fastened to Hassan, his refuge” (23).

The traumatic experience can have a great effect on the personality of the distressed even if it didn’t cause a physical harm and instant psychological one. Hence, it is quite hard to decide what actually trauma is since it depends on the individual’s ability to resist the event and the toughness of it (58). For Dalia war costs her a lot, she lost not only her sisters and father, but also her son Ismael who was kidnapped by the Israeli soldier named Moshe. The latter wanted a child for his depressed wife Jolanta who lost her ability to bear children after the sexual assaults she endured in the holocaust. Like the Jews who believed Palestine to be their land, Jolanta convinced herself that Ismael was her son and named him David without questioning her Husband about the boy’s roots; “He’s my son, this is the only truth he needs, she decided caging the butterfly” (62).

The disappearance of Ismael filled Dalia’s heart with melancholy to the extent that she became a stoic mother to her two other kids Yousef and Amel. As the narrator says, “Dalia learned to be a stoic mother communicating the demands and tenders of motherhood with the various tempers of silence “(36). When Moshe snatched the baby Ishmael “[Dalia] screamed like she hadn’t when her father burned her hand “(25).

Dalia’s loss of her son and the miserable life of refugees she had to live after the Israeli occupation of Palestine made her a strong woman at the first Place and changed her personality completely. The careless Bedouin girl was never the same after the war. “Dalia was willful and paid little mind to convention “(17), and her “vulgar careless was sexual, more so because she didn’t know it “(19). However, the loss of Ismael was unbearable for
her, she “spent the last of her energy in tears, replaying that instant, over and over and
over” (25). Nevertheless, Dalia managed to hide her sadness in order to take care of her
family and comfort them. She, therefore, kept insisting on strength. Additionally, The birth
of Amel, her third child, brought to her some hope since the daughter was a new soul to
care for. As the narrator says; “the birth of new child was said even to have restored a
glimpse, however brief, of the spirited gypsy she had once been” (36).

Dalia’s traumatic experience of the war intensified after the 1967 Attacks on Jenin
refugee camps as her husband Hassan disappeared and never returned back, and her son
Yousef was jailed and tortured by the Israelites. Therefore, Dalia could endure no more of
traumas and she fell apart. Amel noticed that when she met up with her after the
catastrophic events. “I hated mama for being in shock, whatever that was, for not being the
one to put her arms around me, for always having been different from the other mothers”
(50), Amel says. Decisively, Dalia was gone made after she lost hope for the return of
Ismael and her husband. Though Dalia was aware for a moment of what was happening
around her and said “Yousef is leaving”, she eventually returned to her depths. “Come
back mama! Amel’s heart called, but mama had already retreated into her mind” (77).

The traumatic experiences of Amel as a child and the obstruction of her
development may strengthen the alertness of her individual autonomic structure, because
of changes in the brain. Freud’s concepts on psychoanalysis reveal three major forces that
drive the human beings’ actions which are biology, society, family and gender dynamics,
refuting all the claims that the human beings are rational creatures who are responsible for
their deeds and that their roles are set by god or nature. It is commonly known that a
traumatic infancy frames a disturbed adulthood. In other words, our current reality and our
memories are used by the unconscious to satisfy our needs and desires. Trauma, therefore,
plays a key role in the development of the psychoanalytic theory (60).
Amal, the protagonist of this novel had experienced terrible horror as a child in the kitchen hole with her friend Huda, when the Israeli forces first attacked Jenin refugee camps in Jun 1967. By then Amal was almost 12 years old. She says describing the incident, “Huda, I whispered, still holding on to her as tightly as she held on to me” and “she was trembling. Days passed, I think. The baby was inconsolable at times. Huda and I joined her, the two of us sobbing in terror with the child (47). This childhood experience strengthened the friendship of Amal and Huda. However, war destroyed the relationship between the mother Dalia and her daughter because Dalia became a cold emotionless woman who insisted on hiding what she feels.

For Amal, the terror she faced in the 1967 war made of her a powerful woman, but she seemed to resemble her mother who kept saying to her each time a trouble occurs; “whatever you feel keep it inside” (39). This affected Amel’s personality as a grown up especially when her child Sarah was born. The mother was emotionless towards her daughter who was in need of affection. In other terms, to be a tough woman was a flaw in Amel whose identity was altered because of the traumas she endured as a child.

Subsequently, Alayarian points out the difference between Internal and external trauma as follows:

A traumatic event, which is almost impossible to forget, can result in psychological difficulty or psychological growth. Object relations theory is helpful in distinguishing fundamental differences between internal and external trauma, and their consequences. The external characteristics of the potential traumatic event can start indirectly and become the most severe and direct trauma. Trauma can be the factitious result of early experience and development of one’s mind. Stimuli can be either internally induced or externally inflicted, such as with a natural disaster or
man-made traumatic events such as torture, war, rape, domestic violence, and so on. (61)

Trauma is actually any event that leads the individual who experiences it to feel weak and defenseless not necessarily immediately but in the long run, resulting in psychological disorder (62). External trauma in the novel is the result of immediate destructive war which changed the identity of all the Palestinian characters and disturbed the psychology of most of them. This was clear in Dalia’s madness and also in the changing of Yousef’s personality from a romantic peaceful man to a killer and a revenger after the Israeli forces murdered his wife Fatima and their daughter Filastin in the massacres of Sabra and Shatila refugee camps. Yousef says,” For the first time in my life, I hold a gun” (67). Concerning his feeling, he says; “I no longer possess myself, I drown in a sorrow you cannot fathom, and a rage you cannot imagine presses upon my heart “(150). Trauma of war distorted the identity of Ismael as well. The kidnapped son of Dalia and Hassan became a Jewish man who fights against his people and figuring out the truth later on in the novel made him feel lost. This is clear in Amel’s first meeting with him. She actually called him David since “he had not been Ismael for fifty-three years“(163).

In determining what is trauma and what is not, one must distinguish between traumas and stress. While the later can affect the nervous system immediately then its Symptoms are vanished with the passage of time, traumatic occurrences have long term effects on the psychological life of the individual and a significant impact on his social relationships (62).In Mornings in Jenin, the traumatic experiences of war and displacement had great impact on the psychology of the characters in the long run as it is the case of Dalia who used to control her sad emotions and be strong , but the intensification of trauma in her life drove her to insanity along with becoming a paralyzed woman. Amel says explaining the situation of her mother; “ By then Mama had plunged far into the abyss of
her mind, defecting even from her own body, leaving it to the epidemic of misfortune, and it become necessary for her to wear a diaper” (84).

Amel also was affected by war which caused her a physical injury as she was shot by an Israeli bullet in her belly, in addition to a psychological harm since she lost the dearest person to her heart, her father, then her love, Majid. More than that, her stoic mother was dead and, therefore, “[Amel’s family] was gone and [she] was closing in on fourteen with a disfigured body” (84). Eventually, she had to continue her life in an orphanage. Before the events of 1967, “the backdrop of Amel’s life had been colored by Baba’s love at dawn, Mama’s stoic rearing and Yousef’s clandestine love affair with Fatima. Now, those hues were replaced by military green and the pale emanation of depletion” (74). The third character that was influenced by the bloody war launched by the Israelites is Yousef whose wife and daughter were murdered in a horrible manner. This psychological shock angered him and filled his heart with hate and a desire for revenge.

The effects of trauma are not fixed but rather vary from one person to another. This is mainly due to the fact that people may undergo the same degree of tough events though their reactions maybe extremely different. More specifically, some people are not really affected by the traumas they face in their lives yet they manage to cope with them and get stronger and vice versa. Eventually, The individual’s values, beliefs, ability to cope, environmental factors and social support are reasons which justify this idea (63). This is well demonstrated in the novel through the variation in the characters’ ability to endure the trauma without causing them great psychological harm. That is to say, Amel’s reaction to the trauma in her life differs from Yousef’s or Dalia’s reactions. Otherwise stated, Amel is considered to be the most powerful character of them all because she managed to survive the trauma without falling apart or becoming evil herself.
Alayarian sheds light on the trauma of being a refugee by arguing that refugees are the most affected people by trauma since they experience cruel, regular and massive destructive wars which displace them from their home. Psychologically speaking, the bond which is created by the relationship between the individual and his objects (home) is shattered because of the lack of resilience and adaptation with the new environment. (63). This is actually what happened to Yahya when he was displaced with his family from their village “Ein Hod”. He never got used to the life of refugees in Jenin, but rather he always looked forward to come back to his original home. This desire costs him his life in one of his trips to “Ein Hod”. Yahya was not the only one who hated being a refugee; all the villagers longed for their old days in the village and couldn’t cope with the new miserable life in the refugee camps of Jenin. Yahya’s return to the village is described as going to heaven; “He came back from his sixteen days in the paradise of realized nostalgia” (32).

One of the difficult tasks for Amel, Dalia and Yousef who were affected by trauma is the feeling of loss, including the loss of the self, or at least, a part of the self, and the lack of mourning of the self which is lost, or at least, partly lost: loss of social life, as well as ownership and sense of belonging, such as home, family, social and professional status, language and other cultural aspects. This is quite different from childhood mourning in the process of development (63). This is actually the case of all refugees who are subjects to identity loss in a way or in another. After the cruel exclusion from their village, the refugees “rose from their agitation to the realization that they were slowly being erased from the world, from its history and from its future” (34). They felt that “[they] were existing somewhere between life and death, with neither accepting [them] fully “(51).

Amel’s life in the United States changed much of her character as she tried to escape her bitter memories of war and wanted to live peacefully like the Americans.
Indeed, she managed somehow to leave the past behind her and start a new different life as an American. She says, “...the Palestinian girl of pitiable beginnings was trampled in my rush to belong and find relevance in the West. I dampened my senses to the world, tucking myself into an American niche with no past” (109). It is true that people who neglect memories about their traumatic experiences are likely to have psychological stability, a clear sense of the self and the ability to manage a healthy dissociation (Alaryarian 64).

Amel’s family endured the feelings of homelessness and the lack of belonging to somewhere when the Jews displaced them from their land. Nonetheless, Amel experienced these feelings through her life in the United States. Furthermore, both Amel and her family felt no more secure in the new environment. This is true by regarding the fact that the displaced villagers of Ein Hod never felt themselves at home and they always had the desire for return. Additionally, several values processing sub-systems can be affected by trauma.

Sexual abuses, on one hand, destroy a healthy relationship, resilience and personal freedom. Slaughter, in the other hand, may shake collective identity, interdependence, as well as community subsystems. Such traumatic experiences may wreck values, perceptions, thoughts of the individual about his own identity and that of the others along with his outlook on the entire world around him. The developed system of accustomed social contingencies which is fixed in our psyche as a provider of safety and security can also be devastated by traumatic incidents such as torture (65). Alayarian clarifies this more:

Trauma in general can disturb psychological connectedness and cause feelings of loss, living the person helpless, and disturbs the development of resilience, healthy object relations, autonomy, and identity formation. What distinguishes the trauma of refugees, and specifically political refugees, who have been persecuted and
cannot go back to their home country, is the loss of home and psycho-social being, which can cause added stress. (65)

The individual’s experience of trauma in his early childhood influences the construction of the person’s own identity and the development of a stable personality as well as its impact on his social relationships. Furthermore, traumatic occurrences may build a self-destructive, weak person with no ability to make choices and develop successful relationships, in addition to violent attitudes against other people as an attempt to play the role of the oppressor (66). The childhood trauma of Amel shaped her identity as grown up for she turned out to be an emotional mother who feared to be close to her daughter Sarah because of the losses and sorrows Amel endured in her life. Thus, she avoided her daughter most of the time to keep her away from her traumatic past. Amel confesses, “I shut down, my defenses picked anyone who dared to come near me, including Sara, though I secretly continued to consume her scent at night while she slept “(145).

Yousef, on the other hand, has been through a great deal of trauma. As a child, he witnessed the Nakba including the coercive displacement of the villagers from their lands and the martyrdom of his grandfather Yahya;” No one noticed the trauma in Yousef’s young face during the funeral” (34), then he was jailed and tortured as a young man;” Within six months, Yousef had endured torture and random beatings that had marked nearly every part of his body” (73).After that, He lost his father, wife and daughter. All these tragic events drove Yousef to become a revenger and executer himself.

The early traumas that are experienced in life such as persecution, sexual abuse may alter the assumption about one’s self, others and the world. This change is a form of psychological defense that the traumatized develops in order to feel in control.
Subsequently, the persecuted person may generate an idea about the world as a dangerous place and all people as potential executors. This occurred to Yousef in the aftermath of Sabra and Shatila massacres in which Fatima and Filastin were slaughtered. Yousef hated everyone and “cursed Israel, the Americans, Ronald Reagon, Arafat, and the world, sparing no leader, no god and no devil “(142).

On the other side, Amel constructed the feeling of low self-esteem by assuming she is a bad person and the traumas she endured in her life are a punishment from God for her wrong deeds. When Amel got shot by an Israeli bullet; she assumed that what happened to her was God punishment for her misbehaviors. “I believed the horror that marked my body was punishment for the sin of masturbation” (84), Amel says. However, this bad attitude towards the self and the others may change leading the traumatized to believe that the painful experiences he went through don’t mean that he is awful since sometimes bad things happen to good people and the world is actually a safe place to live in (67).

In the case of refugees, groups are very crucial to the progress of personality by regarding the fact that belonging to a group or nation is so important for the individual in the process of recognizing the self through his affiliation with his own group against the enemy (67, 68). For the Palestinian characters what unifies them is the sense of belonging to Palestine and losing it will cause them a great identity loss ; “Attachment to God, land, and family was the core of their being and that is what they defended and sought to keep” (22). Indeed, the group is so important in the formation of the traumatized identity. As Alayarian puts it, " Having a sense of self, psychic space, the capacity for healthy dissociation, the ability to adjust, and the management of a life in a new environment are signs that can be used to establish the effect of trauma on an individual" (69). That is to say, the extent to which the traumatic events can ruin one’s life depends on his
Psychological strength to overcome such frightful situations. Concerning Understanding trauma and creating psychic space.

Trauma as psychological phenomena greatly affects one’s way of life. This is evident in the case of the villagers of Ein Hod who were displaced of their homes by coercive means and found themselves in Jenin refugee camps, living in a totally different and bad conditions which they are not used to. This displacement results not only in the loss of shelter but for Dalia she lose their loved ones including her family and her son Ismael who was taken forcibly from her lap. In order to cope with this new life, the refugee must have a resilience which is built basically past occurrences and his capacity to handle them. This coping ability would create a psyche space for the person that allows him to survive in common situations (72). The ability to have a psyche space which is associated with the development sense of the self did exist in every resilient person but it was disturbed for a short period of time as a result of a tough experience. (73) Amel did succeed in creating a psyche space and preserving a healthy psychology.

Amel’s experience of flashbacks, nightmares and memories about her traumatic life in Jenin is one of the most important symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. The PTSD is characterized by vividly re-expressing the traumatic events as if they are actually happening at the moment. However, Amel always tried to remember only the good days and neglect the traumatic ones. Though Amel and her friends were living in bad conditions in the orphanage of Jerusalem, those days became among her sweet memories. Amel says, “I think for those years with nostalgia. It is true we had no heat to warm our nights or our weekly bathing water, but we had much of the stuffs that warmed our souls. We were friends who doubled as mothers, sisters, teachers, providers, and sometimes as blankets” (105).
Resilient is defined by Alayarian as “the ability to experience severe trauma or neglect without a collapse of psychological functioning or evidence of post traumatic stress disorder” (133). Unlike Dalia who lost her mind and Yousef whose personality changed to a killer, Amel was a resilient character and war contributed in making her stronger. That is to say, the presence or the absence of this psychological capacity is what determines people’s reactions to similar traumatic occurrences. Another psychological ability which Amel acquired in correspondence to her traumatic experience of war and displacement is called dissociation. The latter is considered as a defensive mechanism used by the nervous system to protect the traumatized from potential psychological collapse. In this case the person develops a sense of unawareness about the trauma that is threatening his live in order to survive it (149). In addition to that, Amel’s detachment from her painful memories in Jenin was in a way helpful in protecting her psyche. In order to highlight this concept, Alayarian maintains that:

Although the effects may still vibrate in the unconscious, dissociation makes it possible to cut off the thoughts, feelings, and memories of particular trauma. This can be affected through knowledge of otherness, or of the failure of the self and the self’s connections, or of the principle and certainty of death, which is a way of successful mourning that allows one to overcome the severity of trauma and its memory( 150).

The prior identity-guiding social roles that promoted Amel’s and Dalia’s construction of a stable identity were vanished due to the breakup of social orders. That is to say, the loss of Hassan, the husband for Dalia and the father for Amel had destructive effect on their personality. However, bonds between people and places started to lose its significance in the new materialistic society (Bohleber 50). Dalia and Amel were really affected by trauma since it changed the identity of the former to a fragmented one and
strengthened more the personality of the latter. Werner views the modern notion of identity in relation with the development of personality in the adolescent period. This conception of identity is basically associated with contingency, difference and alterity, as well as the experiences of crisis that influence one’s construction of a strong identity (66). The experience of identity is considered as an internal process by which images of these fare examined to determine whether these images are consistent with vital self representations (67).

There is a manifest impact of the relationship between the child and his mother on the formation of his identity as an adult. Amel’s relationship with her mother influenced the construction of her identity. Dalia kept repeating to her daughter that; “Whatever you feel keep it inside” (39). Indeed Amel resembled her mother and became a strong but cold and emotionless woman. Dalia’s advice of resentfulness was followed all the time by her daughter except when Amel fell in love with Majid; she disregarded her mother’s saying. The child, therefore, constructs an identity that is based on his mother’s perceptions about him. Hence, this self-reflection of the child is rooted in his early relationship with his mother (68). To simplify it, Werner argues that:

When the mother mirrors the affective state of the child in her behaviour and expression, she simultaneously marks it through distinguishing features of perception such as nodding her head, raising the pitch of her voice, etc., which help the child to recognize it as a reflected emotional “as-if” expression of his self and to distinguish it from a direct self-expression of his mother. In the mother’s conspicuous mirroring of the child’s inner state, the child is prepared for the knowledge that the mother symbolically represents his or her intention. In this way, the capacity is developed within human development for reflecting actions, feelings, and thoughts. (67)
The concept of identity as a fragmented structure of the self that includes reflective system of comparison in which fundamental self-representations are contrasted with social roles, behaviors, emotions, dreams ...etc. (68). There was an urgent need for the development of traumatizing theory in psychoanalytic because of the spread in wars, social violence, sexual assault of children and domestic violence (75).

According to Oliner the illness which is resulting from the feeling of loss, and the defenses of the nervous system against its impact don’t bring about flashback memories but rather sorrow and depression (xxvii). In the novel, Amel tried to protect her daughter from the past but the appearance of her lost brother Ismael obliged Amel to tell Sarah the whole truth. This actually strengthened the mother-daughter relationship due to Sarah’s sympathy with her mother. Thus, the trauma of the parents is passed on to their children resulting in traumatized second generation (xxviii). This kind of reflections on object loss makes the children sympathize with the suffering of their parents and the traumas they endured (xxx).

Memory and the assimilation of trauma are key concepts that should be studied deeply. The protagonist Amel who suffered war trauma in the kitchen hole with Huda was exposed to re-call the event in her memory leading to inner sufferings. Psychologically speaking, "The accuracy with which the events are remembered is deceptive and is based on the assumption that unconscious processes can remain forever isolated. Indeed, on the surface it appears possible that external events are of such an overwhelming nature that total attention and atonement to the external world, which is needed, remain isolated indefinitely" (Oliner25).

The recalled events in memory that are similar to actual events can mirror the auto hypnotic process which guaranteed psychological endurance for the traumatized person
This is actually what happened to Amel in the United States. For instance, the incident of the sewage which occurred in her campus in America brought to her memories of her traumatic past in Jenin where the drains sometimes flooded and they rush to block the joints of their houses with old clothes and towels. Despite of the nastiness of the experience, Amel and her friend Huda were so excited by the idea that they will be allowed to sleep in the roof to avoid the bad smell. Nevertheless, Amel as a survivor of trauma has often managed to make a kind of detachment of the remembered events of her past from her actual American world in order to maintain a healthy psyche. Therefore, the possibility of a traumatic event tore-emerge as vivid as current incidents depend on its similarity to the external reality which would curb the unconscious authority to suppress those unwanted memories (28). Oliner asserts that:

Being deprived of the confirmation of the reality of the events that supports the denial makes that personal history unsuitable for the creation of personal continuity. After the traumatic events, the memories that were suffused with cognitive, factual, historic, and lifeless elements, for whose existence all external validation vanished, could only be integrated into personal history with great difficulty and over long periods of time. Instead, the actual characteristics of the experience weakened through the search for personal continuity” (32).

Amel’s physical injury always kept her attached to the past and some of the incidents in the united states brought her old memories of Jenin, her lost family and her friends especially the closest of them Huda. Moreover, it is important to study the postcolonial history as a history of trauma. This is due to the fact that the Israeli colonization regardless of its catastrophic impacts on the materialistic level of the villagers caused considerable damage to their psychology leading to Dalia’s madness, Yousef’s criminality and the loss of Ismael’s identity since he grew up as a Jew. This effect of
colonialism, eventually lead to the creation of fragmented identities that need to be restored. This difficult task cannot be accomplished by neglecting this relationship between colonization and trauma (Ifowodo 2).

According to Steven L. Berman, not all traumatic events affect the construction of one’s identity. For instance, experiencing a car accident will not have serious impact on the self. Enduring the trauma of being a refugee for Amel’s family and the villagers altered their perception about themselves and created doubts about their identity, values and assumptions (1). In other terms, trauma can disrupt the identity if we define the latter as the self which is shaped by our values, perceptions, desires, and goals which we dedicate our lives to achieve. Dalia used to look at herself as a wife and mother of three children and this gave her a sense of comfort and stability. Thus losing her husband and one of her kids, Ismael, because of war provoked in her a feeling of losing her identity. Berman states that: “One who defines herself in regard to her relationships and life roles (e.g: wife, mother, and care-taker) may be faced to re-evaluate those roles when the partners in the relationship are suddenly taken from her through death, particularly when the death is violent, premature, unexpected, and/or painful” (1). Nevertheless, Identity can influence our ways of understanding the trauma. That is to say, having a low self-esteem can result in the person’s negative thoughts which tell him those traumatic experiences occur only to bad people and he is one of them (1). Therefore, identity can either help the traumatized overcome the trauma in his life or obstruct the process of recovery (2).

Trauma and identity are interrelated and have a mutual influence. What is important, however, is to focus on the effects of psychological trauma on the construction of the self because figuring out the causes of identity crisis will eventually be helpful in suggesting solutions to this problem. Another reason behind the emergence of fragmented identities is diaspora which will be the target of the next chapter.


Chapter 3

A diasporic Identity in Exile

Identity is a complex issue that is affected by various concepts which intervene in the process of its construction. This chapter will study the impact of diaspora in the formation of both personal and collective identity of the Palestinian characters throughout the novel. Most of the second half’s events in Suzan Abulhawa’s Mornings in Jenin basically revolve around the life of the protagonist Amel Abulheja in the United States after she gained a scholarship to carry on her college studies. She eventually endured the experience of exile which was not quite easy for her. Hence, the concern of this chapter is to investigate the aspects of diaspora in the novel through examining the character of Amel and approach the novel from a postcolonial perspective.

Post-colonial theory as the term suggests study the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized in the literary works. According to Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, this literary theory entails many concepts some of which are embodied in Mornings in Jenin. To begin with, alterity which is derived "from the Latin alteritas, meaning the state of being other or different (Ashcroft et al 9) is actually what Amel was subject to when she arrived to the United States to continue her studies, she felt herself different and even the Americans recognized her disparity as she said, “my foreignness showed in my brown skin and accent” (107). Alterity was used by philosophers to refer to the idea of ‘Otherness’ which is developed by the west to distinguish between them as ‘the self’ and us as ‘the ‘Other’ .Moreover, one should emphasize the issue of the colonizer’s perplexed identity by viewing that the self-identity of the colonizing subject, indeed the identity of imperial culture, is inextricable from the
alterity of colonized Other, an alterity determined according to Spivak by a process of Othering. The possibility for potential dialogue between racial and cultural others has also remained an important aspect of the use of the word, which distinguishes it from its synonyms (10).

Another significant notion that is associated with the post-colonial theory is ambivalence which Amel underwent in the United States. She had those opposing feelings of appreciating the Americans and hating them at the same time. For instance, she made friendships in America and enjoyed the safety which she lacked in her country as she said describing her new life “no soldiers here, no barbed wire or zones of limits to Palestinians. No one to judge me, no resistance or cries or chants”, but this does not eliminate the fact that she was “anonymous” and “unloved” (112), in addition to that Amel seemed to envy the Americans for their stable life and wished that they were the ones who suffers not the Palestinians. Ambivalence was embraced by the post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha to denote the complexity of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, which is characterized by both inclination and revulsion. More specifically, the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is changeable as the colonized is not totally hostile to the colonizer and the latter himself consider his relationship with the colonized as both abusive and nourishing (10). For Bhabha, Ambivalence disturbs the explicit supremacy of the colonizer because it creates a complex relationship between the colonizer and the colonized subject. That is why ambivalence is objectionable by the colonial powers.

Amel’s imitation for the Americans by drinking alcohol and engaging in relationships with guys was an attempt from Abulhawa to put light on the immorality and the lack of ethics in the American society. Therefore, imitation and mockery are two sides of the same coin:
The problem for colonial discourse is that it wants to produce compliant subjects who reproduce its assumptions, habits and values—that is ‘mimic’ the colonizer. But instead it produces ambivalent subjects whose mimicry is never very far from mockery. Ambivalence describes this fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery, an ambivalence that is fundamentally unsettling to colonial dominance (10).

The relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is, therefore, destined towards its collapse because of its ambiguity (11). More than that, the whole novel is categorized as an anti-colonialist literary work, it involves the political struggle of the Palestinians to resist certain coercive practices of Israel and maintain independence. Consequently, Yousef joined the Palestine Liberation organization (PLO) which was formed under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. Correspondingly, he participated in the battle of Alkarama and was considered by the people of Jenin as a hero through celebrating his return from the fighting (83).

Abulhawa endorsed the perception of appropriation which indicates the adaptation of style, language and form of writing of the colonizer by the colonized and use them in order to promote his native culture, traditions and identity. Indeed, Abulhawa used the English language which is actually the language of her country's ex-colonizer 'Britain'. Writing in English, however, was a form of resistance to the hegemony of the western culture and an attempt from the writer to universalize the Palestinian issue. Nevertheless, some post-colonial writers like Ngugi Wathiong’o rejected the use of colonial language in writing. The latter moved away from writing in English to write in his native language ‘Gikuyu’. However, using the colonial language in postcolonial works is actually not a
way of undermining the indigenous language but rather a tendency to represent the culture of the colonized to the whole world and the colonial language is the adequate one to do so (16).

The life of Amel in the United States was characterized by the concept of binary oppositions which is derived “from ‘binary’, meaning a combination of two things, a pair, ‘two’, duality (OED), this is a widely used term with distinctive meanings in several fields and one that has particular sets of meanings in post-colonial theory” (18). Amel did experience this division between the American society and the Palestinian one in which the former was privileged. Amel felt that she was undermined when she recalled her encounter with an American woman, Amel says: “she referred to me not infrequently as the ‘the arab’, pronounced ‘ay-rab’, or as ‘the rag head’ “(108). Binarism, therefore, is implied to post-colonial theory by promoting the dominance of the imperial powers which perceive the world within the concept of binary opposition in order to control what is viewed by them as the primitive, marginalized and colonized Other (19).

Colonialism is an important theme of the novel which includes the specific forms of political, economic and social exploitation of the Palestinians by the Zionists (40). Beyond that, the contact between Amel’s Palestinian culture and that of the Americans caused her cultural confusion. For instance, she was not sure of the proper answer when someone gave her assistance. She thought that a simple ‘thank you’ is not enough for she came from a culture which react to such case by “an infinite string of prayerful appreciation” (107). Clearly, the contact zone is a term which was adapted to postcolonial theory to refer to the space of engagement between the colonizer and the colonized cultures which are subject to either agreement or confrontation (49).
In order to resist forms of hegemony which are represented by the colonizer through the colonial discourse, the counter discourse was introduced. Thus, Abulahawa's *Mornings in Jenin* is a counter discourse. The latter challenges the subversion of canonical texts (50). Additionally, the experience of Amel in the United States was featured by cultural diversity and cultural difference. Amel says, “I found no commonality with men and women who walked in with purpose and self-possession, nor with the human beings asleep on the city sidewalk “(108).The post-colonial theorists are aware of the existence of different cultures which should co-exist together. However, Bhabha argues that the fusion of this culture creates what he called the third space. The latter is actually the space of hybridity in which every culture and identity contains aspects of other cultures and identities (53-54).

One of Suzan Abulhawa's inspirations behind writing is decolonization. It is the process of destroying all aspects of colonial domination particularly in the cultural level which continues even after the end of political and military occupation. Amel's adaptation of the American culture was also derived by the concept of Globalization which is actually the main raison behind the maintenance of new cultural and economic power of the colonizer over the colonized (57). Indeed, Amel was culturally colonized in the United States.

Amel's experience of exile was characterized by a state of being lost between two different cultures with neither adopting the American culture fully nor holding to her Palestinian culture i.e. she was stuck between her past in Jenin and her new life in America. Thus, her identity became ambivalent and dislocated as she says:

I metamorphosed into an unclassified Arab-Western hybrid, unrooted and unknown. I drank alcohol and dated several men… I spun in cultural vicissitude,
wandering in and out of the American ethos until I lost my way. I fell in love with American and even felt that love reciprocated. I live in the present, keeping the past hidden away. But sometimes the blink of my eyes was a twitch of contrition that brought me face-to-face with the past. (109)

In the United States, there was no mutual cultural exchange between Amel and her American few friends. It was only Amel trying to assimilate into the American society and deny her Palestinian identity, but she eventually failed to do so. This perception is referred to as hybridity which is a term coined by the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha to highlight the exchange in the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized through the cultural contact which creates a third space that is a new distinctive culture (108). Conversely, the concept of hybridity is criticized for it implies just for the colonizer who follows in the steps of the colonial power:

Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to mean simply cross-cultural exchange; this use of the term has been widely criticized, since it usually implies negating and neglecting the imbalance and inequality of the power relations it references. By stressing the transformative cultural, linguistic and political impact on both the colonized and the colonizer, it has been regarded as replicating assimilationist policies by masking or "whitewashing"; cultural differences. (109)

The protagonist Amel fell into the trap of mimicry. She imitated the Americans blindly by drinking alcohol, dating guys and paying no attention to her religion and culture which forbid such behaviors. This highlights the fact that the ambivalent relationship between the colonizer and the colonized is based on imitation, since the colonized always tries to copy the colonizer's cultural forms. This can be very dangerous to the identity of
the colonized people (124-125). Beyond that, Abulhawa was influenced by Edward Said's notion of orientalism which he first introduced in his book: *Orientalism* to maintain that the west is responsible for the creating the image of the orient i.e. the east as an inferior subject which lacks knowledge and needs the imperial power to civilized it (153).

Diaspora is considered to be one of the most influential postcolonial concepts on the identity of the colonizer. Another term which is closed to diaspora is dislocation, which is mainly used to refer to those who moved from their imperial country to live in the country of the colonized for the sake of colonial settlement. However, this concept can be applied for all people who were subject to displacement as a result of colonialism (65). In addition to that, exile is a form of separation from one’s original homeland. This concept is somehow similar to diaspora and dislocation, but they are not entirely the same; "in a sewe, only the first generation of free settlers (of all the many people of the varied colonial societies) could be regarded as expatriates rather than exiles" (85).

According to Helena Schulz in, the primary cause of the Palestinian diaspora is: the Nakba (2). Amel and her family suffered from diaspora which indicates the dispersal of people between two or more different countries in the world, whether through force or willingly (8). While, the villagers were expelled from their land by means of coercion, Amel went to the United States to fulfill her father's dream of having a high educated daughter. After Amel's arrival to the United States, she felt the sense of statelessness and isolation and it was very difficult for her to cope with the American style. “Feelings of inadequacy marked my first months in America. I floundered in that open-ended world, trying to fit in. But my foreignness showed in my brown skin and accent. Statelessness clung to me like bad perfume and the airplane hijackings of the seventies trailed my Arabic surname” (107), Amel says. Thus, Amel’s sufferings in expatriation created obstacles in formulating her personal and national identity (2). Nevertheless, memories of her country
and people often come to her mind. When she first arrived to the United States, she had no desire but to integrate in the American life and forget about her traumatic past. As a result, she neglected talking about political issues and didn’t keep in touch with her family members and even changed her name to Amy “Amal without the hope…a word drained of its meaning. A woman emptied of her past. The truth is that [she] wanted to be someone else” (112).

Yousef also endured the experience of exile when he was expelled by the Israelites from Jenin to Lebanon because of his involvement with the resistance. This military action continued and even intensified in the refugee camps of Sabra and Shatila where Yousef’s wife and child were murdered in horrible massacres. That is to say, resistance is basically originated in the setting of exile (2).

It is true that the villagers of “Ein hod” were not exiled outside Palestine but they were displaced within the borders of their country, yet this loss of the land far from creating a dislocating identities, it served as a bound which unified the Palestinians under a common goal which is to return home. Conversely, Amel wished to be assimilated into the society of exile and the right of return was no longer important to her as she says “And to honest I wanted to be an American .I wanted to pack away my baggage of past and tragedy and try on Amy for size “(116). However, once Amel received a call from her brother Yousef and his wife Fatima she “thought of little else but to return” to her family and to herself (114).

Amel’s life in exile was a life of isolation and statelessness. Indeed, the diasporic identity applies to the connection and affinity that is developed between dispersed numbers of the community and a kind of isolation from the society of exile which they live in (9). Subsequently, Diaspora indicates different concepts such as: exile, migrants, and refugees.
The implication of such term requires the dispersed population to be living in the community of exile for a considerable period of time and in certain persistent conditions (9). Moreover, diaspora communities are created by the absence of a place to live in. The identity of Amel is, therefore, constructed and preserved via displacement as long as she yearns for her country and family whom she left behind (9-10). “Having a homeland to relate to is supposedly a way of positioning oneself in time as well as space. Furthermore, ‘homeland’ must not necessarily represent a national entity, but in concrete commemoration and longing for a homeland might be represented through local places and experience” (10).

Amel lived a dispersed and instable life away from her original homeland which led to a shaky situation of the protagonist (10). The dispersion of Amel was actually nostalgic, still she succeeded somehow in creating a new life in a stateless situation and formed unfamiliar home in a different location which resulted in the creation of boundless identities for her character. Amel says when she was leaving America to meet her brother in Lebanon, “I had also forged real ties in America and in many ways, the place I had called home for the past years had became part of me” (144). In other terms, Regardless of the eternal yearning for specific home, diaspora forms new lives that are not limited by a home. This, however, created a fierce conflict between Amel’s feelings of inclination towards her new created, transnational unlimited experience of diaspora and those of nostalgia towards her original, firm, settled past and identity. Thus, homesickness is not a desirable situation (11).

Amel was influenced by the idea of globalization which encouraged her integration in the American community since, the notions of ‘Home’ and ‘host’ became co-operating and the globe became one unified place. Although, Amel inhabited in America for a considerable period of time, she always felt that she belongs to nowhere but Palestine
“How it hurt, every sweetly, satisfyingly, to be Amel again – not anonymous Amy” (121). Even though she claimed that she wanted nothing to do with her past, she eventually contacted her family and came back to Jenin at the end of the novel's events. Additionally, diaspora reinforces the concept of globalization via building connections between people from different parts of the world (12).

The case of the Palestinian refugees is different since they are prevented from traveling or returning home. Therefore, they remain attached to Palestine via precious memories and nostalgia and keeping contact with their families (13). Hybridity has great effect on the diasporic community through creating new identities from the contact between host and home societies. According to Schulz, the use of the terms, ‘mixing’, ‘mingling’, 'hybrid' and 'creoles' is problematic as it demonstrates the presence of two or more fixed entities which are blended together. Amel maintained a diasporic identity through her sense of belonging, yearning and nostalgia for her original homeland, and therefore, she created for her a new dislocated identity. Hence, the actual presence of the original home is not very necessary to construct a collective identity (14).

There is a clear representation of nation and nationalism in *Mornings in Jenin*. Although their land is occupied, the villagers of "Ein Hod" were nationalists who kept their aspirations to get freedom and return to their homes. Among them was Yousef whose life was dedicated to the resistance. This nationalism was the motive to preserve their Palestinian identity. Their land means for them everything, “Attachment to God, land, and family was the core of [the Palestinians] being and that is what they defended and sought to keep”. Nation is unavoidably subject to instability, yet the perception of nationhood sustains nationalism which eventually preserves collective identities of the indigenous people (135). Amel says describing the way by which she and her friends overcame the
miserable life of the orphanage; “Our bond was Palestine. It was a language we dismantled to construct a home “(105).

There is a manifest relationship between diaspora and nationalism. As stated by Schulz, diaspora communities often hold nationalist views and strong attachment to their homelands regardless of the displacement and the long separation in the setting of exile (15). "Nationalism is an ideology of boundedness and a believed or claimed congruity between people, territory people, and state, or population, geography and politics" (15). Amel’s family along with the displaced villagers of Ein Hod had strong attachment to their land as they were peasants whose olive trees meant for them rootedness and belonging. In the case of Amel’s grandfather Yahya who found himself a refugee in Jenin, there was strong tie between his identity and his lost land, which means that to preserve his personal identity, he should have a sense of belonging to his old place and he should return no matter what happens to him. A place, therefore, is very essential to the construction of personal and national identities as it distinguishes between the terms; ‘us’ and ‘them’.

The tree is an example for the symbolic feature of nature which symbolizes rootedness. For the Swedish they are famous by the fir and the birch, the Lebanese are known by the Cedar and the Palestinians by the olive tree. The depiction of farming traditions such as the olive harvest in the novel indicates bonds and connection of the Palestinians with the land (15). Amel’s father told her when she claimed to own the tree named ‘old lady’: “No one can own a tree, he continue, It can belong to you as you can belong to it. We came from the land, gave our love and labor to her, and she nurtures us in return. When we die, we return to the land in a way, she owns us. Palestine owns us and we belong to her” (44).
In the setting of exile, Amel’s memories of Jenin kept her sense of belonging to her country and people. Consequently, the act of recalling the old days in homeland creates a kind of unity in exile (16). Diasporic communities do not aim at integrating into the society in which they live, but rather they always have the desire to return home. The political aspiration is, therefore, to reunify those refugees with their original homelands and put an end to their sufferings in exile (16). As mentioned by Schulz: “diaspora relations to the nation-state, nationalism and national identity became especially intricate” (18).

Amel’s labeling as an outsider, prejudice and discrimination against her produced her feeling of instability by being away from home. However, Amel managed to create a home for her in the United States where she brought up her daughter Sara and made few friendships with Americans. Hence, the loss of territory can be very disturbing to the diaspora communities but, their situation can be handled through establishing institutions which would promote their concerns. Schulz maintains that:

In a globalised world, however, home becomes ever more relative and to some extent stripped of its cozy associations. Instead, home can be brought with you and home can be recreated, home can be recreated, home can be placed in interpersonal relations rather than in a certain house/place/ geography or it may be placed in habits, styles, memories. Home can be constructed through the journey /the route. (19)

In the light of the distinction between the concepts of ‘them’ and ‘us’, Amel was expelled to live in a land of them “the west” without the possibility of returning to her home in Palestine (19). The use of the term diaspora for the Palestinian case suggests the variation of the Palestinian experience in exile. Al-shatat is actually a term implied in
Arabic to mean dispersal, separation and displacement. However, In *Mornings in Jenin*, the term ‘Algurba’ is used to describe the torments Amel as a stranger in host country “the United States”. Schulz claims that: “the Palestinian diaspora, in general terms, certainly relates to the dispersal in the late 1940’s as well as the second exodus in 1967, but not all members of the Palestinian diaspora community are refugees or decedents of refugees” (20-21. This is due to the fact that some Palestinians migrated to different parts of the world in order to look for employment or carry on their academic studies. Nevertheless, the majority of them are refugees who were exposed to displacement because of the miserable life conditions in their homeland.

Despite the fact that Yousef and his wife Fatima found refugee in Lebanon which is an Arab country with matching social, ethnic and religious backgrounds, they were perceived as outsiders. Additionally the villagers of Ein Hod who settled in Jenin refugee camps in the process of their displacement were seen by the original inhabitants of Jenin as refugees. In order to refer to the meaning of homeland in exile, Schulz maintains that:

The exile condition is by necessary a rootless condition, a condition of wandering and unwanted ‘mobility’. Rootlessness has a tendency to trigger sometimes desperate searches for roots that have been lost. A state of nostalgia, of sad interrogation of the past, of the homeland that is grieved and longed for its very much time of the Palestinian diaspora, nurturing a constant dream of reversing the present condition of denial, exclusion humiliation and estrangement into a triumphant nature” (85).

Amel’s identity is identified via displacement i.e. to be Palestinian is definitely to be involved in the experience of exile.. In other words, Amel’s identity is a diasporic dispersed identity (86). Moreover, the common history of terrifying wars and struggles for
freedom shaped Amel’s Palestinian identity in Exile (87). As Schulz puts it “the term that
the Palestinians have italicized for their diaspora is ‘Ghurba’, signifying estrangement from
home and meaningful belonging. Loss, denial and injustice have produced a self-image
partly constituted by suffering and vulnerability. One side of Palestinian self-identity is as
the ‘victim’ “(91).

The transformation of the Palestinian characters from owners of their village Ein
Hod into refugees in Jenin shacked somehow their self-esteem as they became in need of
humanitarian assistance, in addition to the feelings of loss of home and therefore the loss of
security and stability. There is absolutely a manifest link between the individual and his
land. Such link can be destroyed via dispersal (98). There is a clear relationship between
memory and identity for Amel who lived in exile held memories and history of her
homeland. “The traumatic loss of homeland strengthens the connections of refugees and
exiles to the homeland, and it continues to play an important role in their individual and
collective imagination, constituting a central aspect of their self definition” (50). That is to
say, diaspora far from shaking Amel’s identity, it reinforced the ties with her Palestinian
roots and unified her eventually with her family in Jenin. Additionally, Amel who was
obliged somehow to leave her country and study abroad kept herself attached to the
traumatic past via memories of her old days in Jenin. This connection with the past meant
for Amel the preservation of the Palestinian identity. Therefore, the existence of collective
memory is essential to the formation of the Palestinian identity.

It is clear that Amel’s National identity was preserved through memory of her past
experiences in her original homeland and it was influenced by social and political effects in
the setting of exile. “ The collective identities that are formed can eventually take on a
monolithic and exclusive nature, profoundly affecting a disputant’s sense not only of the
self, but also of the in-groups, the issues, outgroups, and the options available to them in
the conflict. This demonstrates the fact that personal and collective identities are interdependent (Coleman, Lowe 381).

Susan Abulhawa’s Mornings in Jenin is one of the Palestinian narratives which try constantly to challenge the Zionist discourse that aims at distorting the Palestinian Identity. Such narratives represent the Palestinian sufferings to the world and remind the dispersed Palestinians of holding to the right of return and preserving their national Identity (Aljahdali 218). Hence, Abulhawa dealt with diaspora as an issue which almost all Palestinians have been through by trying to reunite them with Palestine and remind them for the need to serve their affair wherever they are.


Conclusion

Literature is commonly known as the mirror of its society. It depicts people’s lives, their attitudes, values and perceptions. Therefore, the Arab immigrants who settled in different parts of the world particularly in the United States were in need of a distinctive literature that represents their interests and concerns. As a result, the Arab American literature emerged allowing the voices of the Arab minorities of the United States to be heard. Suzan Abulhawa is among very few contemporary Palestinian-American writers who contributed in universalizing the Palestinian affair. Despite Suzan Abulhawa’s sufferings in the setting of exile, she offered through her novel, *Morning in Jenin*, a successful representation of her original homeland and, therefore, her Palestinian identity.

The Palestinian American novelist Suzan Abulhawa is also a political activist and the founder of Playgrounds for Palestine, an organization which builds playgrounds for Palestinian children in the occupied territories and in refugee camps around the world. Clearly, what inspired Abulhawa to author her novel were the massacres of Jenin (2002). The aftermath of these tragic events were witnessed by the writer who sympathized with the people of her country and expressed what she felt through her literary work. Themes of war, dispossession, trauma, nostalgia and dislocation are well manifested throughout the novel. In addition to that, the Palestinian way of life, culture and traditions are key elements of the plot. Abulhawa also succeeded in depicting the sufferings and traumas of the Palestinian people under the Israeli occupation. Thus, representing the Palestinian identity is the main aspiration of the writer.

Several circumstances contributed in creating a fragmented identity of the Palestinians including war traumas, the state of being refugees and the emergence of
diasporic communities around the globe. Trauma and displacement had affected the construction of the Palestinian personal and national identities. Nevertheless, the war traumas which the Palestinians endured, far from creating instable identities, it strengthened the Palestinians’ sense of the self and reinforced bonds between themselves and between them and their land. The notion of land is very crucial in the formation of the Palestinian identity since to have a sense of belonging to somewhere is actually what gives the person a stable identity. Furthermore, the dispersed Palestinians all over the world maintain strong identity through experiencing memories and feelings of nostalgia to their homeland. The shared traumas of war and dispossession unified the Palestinians inside and outside Palestine under common goals which are to promote their identity and to spread awareness about the Palestinian issue worldwide.

The psychoanalytical and postcolonial theories are chosen to conduct this study because; they are very useful in highlighting the two major themes of Abulhawa’s *Mornings in Jenin* which are trauma and diaspora. These concepts, however, are examined in relation to the notion of identity since they play significant role in the formation of the latter. This research, therefore, deeply examined the theme of identity via analysing the novel’s main characters: Amel, Dalia, Yousef and Ismael. Eventually, the dislocated and traumatized identity of the Palestinians created a strong sense of belonging and feelings of pride towards their national homeland Palestine.

Identity is a problematic issue which needs probably a book to be devoted to it rather than a simple dissertation. However, this study attempts to approach this concept from a different perspective. Hopefully, this humble work has brought something new to the field of research by considering the difficulties which hindered its accomplishment such as the lack of time and the insufficiency of sources. This is due to the fact that the novel itself is a recent one and there were very few attempts to investigate its themes or
analyze its characters. Yet *Mornings in Jenin* is a very interesting piece of work which tells historical events in a literary frame. Indeed, it is a challenge to bring this Palestinian-American novel into light and make a research about it.

The study has come to the conclusion that the literature of Arab migrant writers like Abulhawa can suggest a clear representation of the Arab identity and culture to the western world. In other terms, neither diaspora nor the traumas of the Arab World can prevent the Arabic voices from reaching the world. Thus, The Arab issues and the Arab identities can be universalized through literature. This is what Suzan Abulhawa maintained via her prominent literary work: *Mornings in Jenin*.

Regardless of identity, war trauma and displacement, several other themes can be studied in *Morning in Jenin*, such as love, nostalgia, and religion...etc. Additionally, another research can also be conducted on the novel by analysing the female struggle to preserve their identity in a colonized nation. Thus, the feminist approach may be useful in investigating the notion of double colonization for the novel’s female characters. That is to say, women may be subject to both colonial and male dominance.
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